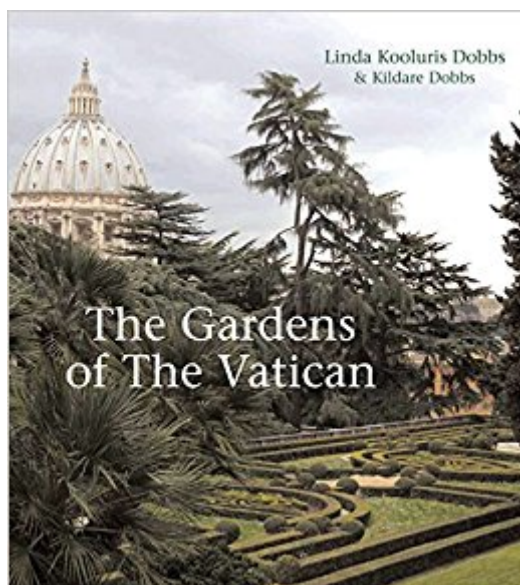


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The Gardens Of The Vatican



Synopsis

Twenty-seven years in the making, *The Gardens of the Vatican* is a private photographic tour of eight centuries of "green thoughts in a green shade." Reflecting the general history of gardening, the several gardens in the Vatican span worlds — the Persian-influenced quadrant gardens of the Teuton Cemetery and the Secret garden (adorned with lemon-trees in pots) are joined by gardens in the Italian, French, and English styles. The book is also rich in anecdote and detail: Pope John XXIII liked to ramble along the pathways and chat with the gardeners whereas his predecessor, Pius XII, wanted solitude, so the gardeners were obliged to hide. There is a fragment of the Berlin Wall, a Chinese pavilion given by the Catholics of that country, and a gnarled old olive tree transplanted from Gethsemane in the Holy Land. This gorgeously illustrated book offers a fascinating and inspiring glimpse of a bachelors' refuge, through nearly a millennium of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is an essential addition to any garden bookshelf. San Diego Home In a skillfully written survey of these sites, author and photographer Derek Fell walks the reader through the grounds after first detailing the design plan for each; he then provides powerful photographs that illustrate the features. Fell discusses the influence of Jens Jensen, Wright's friend and mentor, who promoted indigenous planting; provides a listing of plants used in the gardens; and finally gives tips on garden design, taken from Wright's records. *The National Gardener*

Linda Kooluris Dobbs began her photographic record of the Vatican Gardens in 1981 with a very old and trustworthy Nikon F2. Her photographs have been published in The National Post and have been the subject of a major exhibition in Toronto in 2002. To visit Linda's website [click here](#) Kildare Dobbs was an award-winning essayist and poet, author of some 16 books including *Running in Paradise*, for which he was given the Governor General's Award. He was born in India to Irish parents and for many years has been Canadian. His work has been widely anthologized, and in 2000 he was invested with the Order of Ontario. He died in 2013.

This book provides excellent and engaging photographs of the Vatican Gardens. There is a minimum of text by way of introduction. A fine souvenir for anyone who has had the opportunity to tour the gardens behind St. Peter's Basilica. Recommended.

This historical and literary art book is wonderful in the scope and detail of the gardens and the concepts behind the artists who created them. The description of the details of the statuary and garden composition is delightful.

Lovely book.

The Gardens of The Vatican By Linda Kooluris Dobbs & Kildare Dobbs Published in 2009 by the following companies [...] ISBN 978155287663, 160 Pages, 150 Color Photographs, [...] Kooluris Dobbs is an American born artist who has specialized in commissioned portraits, photographs and watercolours known for their jewel like intensity sense of colour. Her work is in corporate and private collections worldwide. Kildare Dobbs, her husband is an Irish writer, born in India who has lived in Canada for many years. He is famous as a travel writer, essayist and has published some sixteen books. They are both based in Toronto. These two internationally respected artists have opened a window on a little known Vatican treasure, one that is usually glimpsed only through windows of St. Peter's Dome or the various Vatican state museums by visitors. Tourists may take a furtive glance from locked windows, straining to see a glimpse of the pope himself, at ease in his own garden. It is possible to tour the gardens, but tours have to be booked in advance and the gardens are only open on certain days. Few seem to take advantage of this hidden world. And these days when the pope is in the gardens, sadly, they have to be cleared of people for security reasons. Those already familiar with Kooluris Dobbs photographs and vibrant paintings will recognise her as a genius of "atmosphere". Her mother Hortense Kooluris, was a famous dancer, repeatedly photographed by

the seminal American photographer Arnold Genthe during the 1920's and 30's. Genthes' style has deeply influenced Kooluris Dobbs work. There are three photographs in the book done in the Poloroid transfer technique that reveal Genthe's stylistic and atmospheric softness and dream-like qualities. These three are all masterpieces. Kooluris Dobbs has a penchant for highly developed compositions within each of her photographic frames. A superior grasp of geometry gives movement, guided pathways as the viewers eye moves over the surface of each photograph, very much in a painterly style. This adds much to the interest and enjoyment of the images and constitutes a choreographic sense of ocular vision. These are extremely well thought-out photographs. Raised in a family that has produced generations of professional artists (musicians, writers, dancers), her aesthetic is one of beauty. However, her style must be considered modern, though not of the "school of the ugly". This makes for a judicious blending which replicates many of the compositional elements of the shots in the book. Classical architecture and statuary, the Italian style of gardens all blend with modern technique, and the ephemera of technology, graffiti and or modern world. A few examples follow. On page 23 there is a photograph of the first century Castel Sant'Angelo, the former Papal prison, now a museum taken from across the Pons Aelius bridge. Clearly in sight on the lower-left is some modern graffiti spray painted on a parapet wall. Graffiti was also a problem for ancient Roma, through the mediaeval era and down to our own time. In fact Rome has always been known for its graffiti. The artist has consciously chosen to include this human element, one that makes a direct connection with the viewer. Page 30 reveals just how the modern world has changed. After Pius IX became "the prisoner of the Vatican" in the 19th century with Italy's unification and the loss of the Papal States, the railway became the main artery in and out of the Vatican. The shot shows a lone railway car, spray painted with recent graffiti, in front of massive closed gates. The tracks are now overgrown, covered in grass that conceals the rails completely. An arresting image for those who know the isolation the Papacy has increasingly experienced in these materialist times. The world has seen the marginalization of the Vatican in general as a victory. The photographer had the honour of developing a friendship with former director of the Patrons of the Vatican Museums, the American, Fr. Allen Duston, O.P. a Dominican who was central in the artist's photographic journey with the gardens, which started in 1981. Fr. Duston, now retired, found the millions from worldwide donors of all faiths, to restore one of the greatest architectural jewels of the Vatican, the Casina of the Medici Pope Pius IV. Built originally between 1553 and 1562, this Renaissance marvel of classical beauty and proportion strikes one as a little part of heaven. With its splashing fountains and colourful exterior wall mosaics, all in play-full manner, Pius IV would sit and converse on poetry and philosophy with his architect Pirro Ligorio.

Pius never lived to see his dream completed. Today it houses the Pontifical Academy for Sciences, in an age that has separated religion and science totally. Maybe the beauty and serenity of the Casina will re-humanize these people who now seem to view mankind in a utilitarian, machine-like and expendable fashion. Kildare Dobbs the author of the book's text is considered one of Canada's greatest living writers. Rome is his favourite city. So the reader is treated to an intimacy and familiarity, with a historical overview of the garden itself, ranging down through history from the Bible onwards. A myriad details, poetic excerpts and anecdotal historical material make the book's twelve page essay a very enjoyable read. Pages are dedicated to the numerous grottos and statuary dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy Savona, Our Lady of Loreto, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima and various saints. The Vatican Gardens even have a small section of the Berlin Wall. Some of the monstrous modern statuary is also represented, though their incongruity is self-evident, despite the high quality of manufacture and finish. The Vatican radio tower, Swiss guards, governor's palace, train station, heliport and head-gardeners house all have their place also. And the magnificent roman pines and monumental trees are positively spectacular that have influenced landscape artists for over four centuries. When souls drawn to purity, holiness and the divine contemplate the beauty of nature, they see, understand and commune with the Creator Himself. This is an important book that clearly reveals in all its glory and majesty, the millennia old continuity and civilizing legacy of the Roman Catholic Church, the heirs of St. Peter, the Papacy and the connection between earth and heaven that is the garden. The cares of the modern world slip silently away upon meditating on the timeless beauty, order and vibrancy of these marvellous photographs. This book is a magnum opus well worth your consideration. Paul-James Dwyer

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