



ISSUE 2

The hottest colour of the year, Interview with Menno Kroon, Dinner Plate is your best friend forever, The personal peony trainer, Discover the epic elegance of peonies



MY PEONY SOCIETY  
THE MAGAZINE

INTRODUCTION

Dear peony fan,

We're proud to present a new, fresh magazine to celebrate the world's best peonies. Join us in the next pages and discover their fantastic colours, experience their timeless elegance and learn about their epic history. If you aren't madly in love with peonies already, prepare to be swept off your feet!

You'll also read about My Peony Society's ongoing efforts to bring the world's finest peonies to fans all over the world. To accomplish this, we unite the best growers on the planet with expert traders and wholesalers. Together we achieve amazing results, with still more to look forward to: realising a longer season, smarter production (check the interview with our personal peony trainer on page 17) and bigger, bolder promotion. As always, we'll keep you posted.

For now, enjoy and get inspired!

See you next time,  
Marty Star

My Peony Society





# Fashions fade, style is eternal

Find out all about Nick Shaylor and its availability at  
[mypeonysociety.com](http://mypeonysociety.com)

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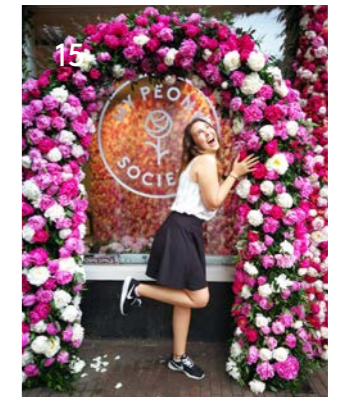
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# Living Coral, the hottest colour of the year



## Coral Charm

Coral Charm is one of the rare peonies that change colour over time. After a day or three this peony will slowly start changing from teaberry pink to living coral. Give it some time, and Coral Charm keeps

transforming until the ultimate finale: a vibrant cream colour that takes you by surprise. In all honesty, a picture doesn't do Coral Charm justice. Let's say it gives you a hint of what this enchanting charmer looks like!

Every year, Pantone's colour gurus and trend watchers pick the colour that best represents our zeitgeist. This year's hot new colour? Living Coral! These stunning varieties make our hearts flutter.



## Lois Choice

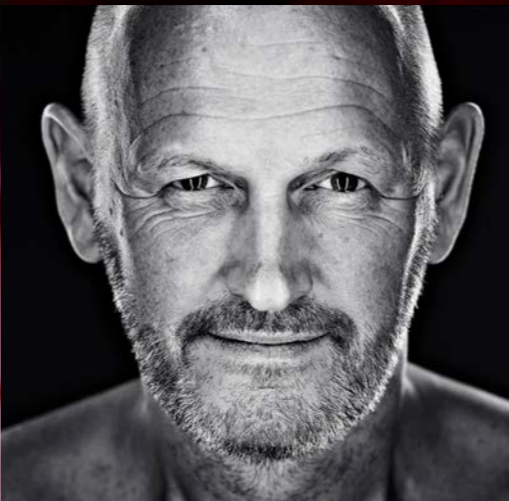
Some peonies turn superlatives into understatements. Lois Choice is a near impossibly stunning coral peony. In bloom, her flowers transform from tiny rosebuds into enormous balls. With her breathtaking colour and mood-raising personality the ever-popular Lois Choice is always in high demand. With Living Coral being this years hottest colour, there might be a rush for this belle of the ball. And understandably so.



## Coral Sunset

Who doesn't dream of a coral coloured sunset in the Caribbean? Add a pool lounge and maybe a bottle of rum and we've got everything we could ever desire. Well, almost. Because there's one flower we'd rather have, still: Coral Sunset is a beautiful orange peony that is a flower-shaped summer holiday. Hybridiser Samuel Wissing gave Coral Sunset its name in 1965. Today it's as fresh, cool and trendy as it was back in the sixties, and Coral Sunset could become the crown jewel of many bouquets this year.

# Madly in love with peonies



## About Menno Kroon

Menno Kroon (1961) is educated as a master florist and perfected his craft working with the best arrangers and florists in the Netherlands. By the end of the 90's he opened his own concept store in Amsterdam. It combines his creative studio with a storefront annex exhibition space, filled to the brim with eccentric, colourful compositions. For more information visit [mennokroon.nl](http://mennokroon.nl)

Master florist and interior designer Menno Kroon is just as happy designing for the customers of his concept store in Amsterdam as he is dreaming up spectacular arrangements for jet set weddings and international clients such as the Concertgebouw and Hunkemöller. On the power of nature, slowing down and timeless beauty.

## Inspiration

"My love of nature started early", Menno says. "As a child I would watch flowers grow from tiny seeds, seeing plants take root and bloom into something beautiful. It was such an amazing feeling, it just stuck with me." Nature's cycle – growing, blossoming, the inevitable goodbye... and then beginning again in spring – remains an important inspiration for Menno. "I never stopped being in awe of nature's energy, growing such beautiful flowers... you can feel it in the heart."

## In love with peonies

Menno: "Every year I look forward to 'peony season'. First you have your summer flowers, then branches in fall. In winter you think: we'll never see the end of it! But then, as if by magic, the weather changes and nature powers up again. Isn't that

phenomenal? After the tulips, it's peony time. They're only available for a short period, and during those weeks I'm madly in love with peonies. Their limited availability makes them all the more special, I think."

## Magical quality

"Peonies are truly special flowers, you know. They continue to be exclusive, and personally I don't think that's changing any time soon. A peony is like magic: a single flower changing colour, shifting from green to pink to cream. In our concept store a peony is never "just" a flower. In the right setting it's an entire bouquet all on its own."

## Trends

What are current trends? According to Menno, peonies are timeless rather than trendy.



“People are so often rushed”, he says, “you could consider that a trend. Parents bike past in the morning with their children, hastily having a breakfast yoghurt to go because they don’t have time for proper breakfast. And it’s the same with flowers. People take a photograph of a beautiful flower to post on Insta, but they seldom take the time to truly enjoy it.”

### Peonies take their time

Peonies can’t be rushed, blossoming in their own time. “People look at me funny when I suggest they carry a rose with them, put it on top of their nightstand in the evening, enjoy its scent throughout the

day. But you’ll experience so much beauty!” Menno: “A good florist makes you realise you’re witnessing a tiny miracle in each flower.”

### Store

For over 22 years, Menno has been creating fantastic designs out of exquisite flowers in his concept store in Amsterdam. “The store is a great place to work”, says Menno. “We’re visited by so many different people, from famous designers to locals. We welcome everyone who loves flowers!” He thinks for a minute, then adds: “Except spoiled people, they usually visit different shops anyway.”

### Dream

The stories Menno expresses through his designs are about more than flowers. They are about life, about the things people deal with every day. He dreams of connecting people, sharing his own sense of wonder. Menno: “I’d love to make a set design, where the natural lifecycle of the flowers can be an integral part of the play and the story. From first bloom to farewell, a story with a beginning and an ending.”



Each flower is a tiny miracle



Peonies by My Peony Society and Floral Charm

# Prêt-à-peony

Fashion week in Paris is where the hottest looks are born and the not-so-cool are put to rest. It's also where you meet your new best friend forever: an impeccably dressed statue made of thousands of peonies. Très chic!



## Playful art

Cult artist KAWS (Brian Donnelly) created the oversized figure holding a Bobby bottle, a perfume bottle inspired by Christian Dior's dog Bobby, as the center piece of Dior's show at Paris Men's Fashion Week. Brian: "I was doing all these smooth sculptures, and I really wanted to do something with texture. It's playful and approachable!"

## Fashion icon

During fashion week BFF is quite literally hard to overlook. The 10 metres tall cartoony figure towers over runway models and guests

alike and quickly rises to fame on social media. Let's be honest, who wouldn't want a selfie with this fashion icon?

## Building BFF

It took a team of 100 craftsmen four days to construct BFF out of 70.000 flowers. Red roses for his suit and eyes, bright pink Dinner Plate peonies for his hands, feet and head. The latter, naturally, all supplied by My Peony Society. And as it turns out, haute couture heritage mixes well with artistic edginess: while BFF is undeniably odd, he's also... perfectly awesome!

## Runway natural

It's easy to see why Brian went for Dinner Plate, a peony that's sure to make a lasting impression due to its size and colour. It's a runway natural! The outer petals are a deep lilac and have a fresh, satiny glow. In bloom it will turn a slightly lighter hue. Dinner Plate is only available in late season, but definitely worth the wait.



## SELFIES FOR CHARITY

# Pop

# up!



@sceneontheroad



@sanvas03



@n.a.n.d.a.n.u.n.e.s



@matea\_cc



@asyen\_k



@asyen\_k



@kosyuliia



@stylemintd



@magic\_marii



@lisettethoenen



@sunnyjansen



@malikaflower91



@fernandalealp



@thatanascim

Last year we celebrated the start of the peony season with the grand opening of our pop-up store in the center of Amsterdam. We found a beautiful location in the picturesque canal district and filled it to the brim with peonies.

### For charity

For once, My Peony Society sold directly to consumers. Instead of our usual larger volumes, we sold peonies by the piece. The price was unusual too: people could pay whatever they thought the

flower was worth. We donated all of the money to Foundation KiKa, a Dutch charity that funds research into childhood cancers.

### All over the world

The tiny shop overflowing with peonies drew a lot of attention. We welcomed Amsterdam locals and tourists from all over the world. Many decided to snap a selfie in front of our highly Insta-likeable wall of peonies. Some closed their eyes, taking in the fragrances, during a little stop-

and-smell-the-peonies moment!

### Thanks, everyone

Apart from peony fans and selfie lovers we were joined by the amazing growers, traders and florists in My Peony Society. They took a short - but deserved - break after harvesting peonies in an exceptionally warm and therefore early season. Thanks to them, we could start the season with an awesome collection of colourful, exciting peonies!



# Colpo di fulmine

Find out all about Chiffon Parfait and its availability at [mypeonysociety.com](http://mypeonysociety.com)



# The personal peony trainer



Co Knol is My Peony Society's resident peony expert. He has been growing peonies for over two decades, knows every secret and trick of the trade, and he helps our growers to raise the bar even higher. Let's get to know our new personal trainer!

## A passion for peonies

Ever since he began working as a foreman at a peony nursery in Andijk, all the way back in 1979, peonies struck a chord in Co. The wild diversity in colours, varieties and shapes stirred something inside him; a peony passion was born.

## Own vision

That passion has only grown over the past 20 years, as well as Co's expertise and craftsmanship. As of 2014 he shares it with the world through his own, independent nursery farm. "I follow my own vision, cultivating peonies to the best of my ability. I think the results speak for themselves!" His nursery is one and a half hectare in size, and home to many different varieties, from Sarah Bernhardt to Alertie. To keep the



We focus on guaranteeing the highest quality flowers, and I think the future is looking bright for us!"

## Body builders

As My Peony Society's resident peony expert Co will be assisting growers, hopefully raising the level of quality even further. Co's experience and knowledge, gained over twenty-odd years as a peony fanatic, will benefit others. 'Together with growers I'll take a look at their plants, and where we might improve. I'll make spray schedules, review and analyse the harvest, and I can give advise on soil care, climate, pest control, cutting and sorting.' Or, as we like to say, Co will be the first ever 'personal peony trainer'.

structure of the soil nice and airy Co keeps all heavy machinery off his land, instead doing everything - lovingly - by hand.

## Bright future

Co's genuine love for his flowers might be the key to the secret of his success. Co: "Peonies, with all their different colours and shapes, are such fantastic flowers. It takes unique skills to cultivate the best peonies, and I think over the next years we'll start to see the difference.



# Epic and extravagant

Throughout history peonies inspired epic deeds and extravagant tales. Journey with us from ancient Greece to imperial China, and discover the storied past of our favourite fashion-forward flowers.

## Murderous gods

According to ancient Greek mythology, divine drama inspired the name of the peony. Like so many stories, this one begins with war. Herakles, the greatest of great Greek heroes, and Pluto, the god of the underworld, find themselves on the opposing sides. During a spectacular battle Herakles manages to wound Pluto with an arrow to the shoulder. Pretty epic, even for Herakles.

### Pluto in trouble

Not being used to being wounded, the god of the underworld retires to Mount Olympus. When he can't find the god of medicine, Asklepios, he asks one of his students to help him. This happens to be the talented Paeon. He heals the disheveled deity by sheer talent and a new kind of medicine: a beautiful flower growing on Mount Olympus. Paeon's career as a doctor-to-the-divine is off to a great start! But, alas, there's one problem: his teacher Asklepios is deadly jealous...

### Named after Paeon

In an unexpected – but storywise very thrilling – twist Asklepios decides to murder his student to prevent further embarrassment. Zeus, finding the body of Paeon, decides to honour the ambitious student by transforming him into the beautiful flower that saved Pluto's life. And that's why these flowers are now called "paeoniae".

We're not sure what happened to Asklepios, but let's all agree he should probably stop practicing medicine.

## Flowers for the empress

In another part of the world, a different story about the peony and its unpredictable character is being told. This one takes place during the Tang dynasty, in ancient China.

### Tea in winter

In the imperial flower gardens of Xiyuan, empress Wu is having a ceremonial cup of tea with princess Tai Ping. On this cold winter's day there's a clear, sweet fragrance of jasmine in the air. The queen suddenly is overcome with melancholy. She looks for

signs of an early spring, but only jasmine blossoms, all other flowers are still hidden under a layer of snow.

### The Flower Goddess

Ever the practical woman, empress Wu decides to compose a poem for the Flower Goddess. In it she rhymes: "Let it be spring tomorrow, don't wait another day. Let every flower bloom tonight, as if it was already May!" While opinions differ on the literary merit of her poem, everyone agrees empress Wu often gets what she wants. So

the Flower Goddess agrees and makes every flower blossom in winter.

### Peonies take their time

The only flower that can't be rushed? Obviously, that's the extravagant peony. There's no way to get it to bloom outside the season, not even when you're an empress or a Goddess. Up until this day peonies follow their own course. Maybe, because the peony is so extremely beautiful, it just gets away with more. Who knows?



# She said yes

We just can't help falling in love every time we see the pictures of this beautiful ceremony. Peonies are the perfect guests at an over-the-top, romantic wedding. Spoiler alert: she said yes!



It's a little bit crazy, it's totally magical – in short, everything our peonies are famous for.

## Mind blowing

This mind blowing wedding featuring thousands of peonies was designed by Russian wedding planner Ksenia Afanasyev and florist Julia Shakirova.

The outdoor ceremony took place in a peony themed amphitheatre, decorated with rose pink peonies. Thousands of peonies filled the

pool inside a repurposed green house where wedding guests dine underneath living trees with crystal leaves.

## Magical peonies

We supplied the varieties Salmon Chiffon, Coral Sunset and Sarah Bernhardt. In total, over 12 000 superb quality peonies in shades

of sensual pink and passionate red perfected the design.

We're proud our peonies made a special day even more glamorous and magical. And we're sure bride Victoria and groom Vyacheslav are peony fans for life!

My Peony Society supplied the highest quality peonies in cooperation with 7Flowers and OZ Export.



# Aloha, beautiful

Find out all about Pink Hawaii Coral and its availability at  
[mypeonysociety.com](http://mypeonysociety.com)

## Get in touch

If you have any questions about our collection or want to become a reseller, don't hesitate to contact us.

Call +31 6 10 45 28 56

or send an email to  
[sales@mypeonysociety.com](mailto:sales@mypeonysociety.com)

## Colophon

Copy and design: Gusmanson  
Creative direction: Gusmanson  
and My Peony Society



## **Designed by nature, perfected by us**

The bloom of the peony is an incredible spectacle, one everyone should get to enjoy. To make this happen My Peony Society brings together expert growers, traders and florists to craft the perfect peony. We ensure the quickest route to a vase near you, complete with 'full bloom guarantee'.