



‘Sometimes, it’s good to be a little crazy’

Named Rosa, it seemed obvious that somehow she would get involved with roses. For Rosa Eskelund from Denmark, this is very true. Enthusiastic and passionate, she manages her breeding and production company that specialises in cut, pot and garden roses.

“My products are like my children. I am proud of each one of them.”

Jacco Strating



'Every rose is special to me'

Everybody who meets or talks to Rosa Eskelund will get the same feeling that she is very passionate about roses. There is not much more that can make the Danish entrepreneur happier than the flower she has dedicated her life to for so many years. Roses stole her heart even when she was a child, she says. "I have always been strongly attracted to nature. And that is why I got involved in horticulture."

But getting involved in horticulture was not so obvious for the young Rosa. Her father was a postman and her Italian mother ran the household. Rosa chose her own route. "As a teenager after school, I always went to a nursery to work. There, my interest in everything that grows and flowers got bigger and bigger. So after secondary school, I went to a horticultural college. When I finished my education there, I found a job in a nursery."

At her first job, Rosa met Harley Eskelund who became her husband. Together they wanted their dream to come true: their own nursery. Eventually, they succeeded and started Rosa ApS, a nursery specialised in small pot roses. "By accident, we saw an advertisement in the newspaper," says Rosa. "There was a small nursery for sale in the north of Denmark. We went there and knew directly we wanted to buy it." Rosa and Harley became the proud owners of their

own nursery. "It was an exciting period," says Rosa looking back. "I was young, 27 years old. And suddenly, I was running my own company. We started with a greenhouse of 3,000 square meter, but not much later, we increased the area. After two years, we had a greenhouse of 24,000 square meters. And as time went by, I learned a lot and grew in my role as entrepreneur."

Princess Mary

In the beginning, the company of Rosa in the Danish village of Lading was only involved in the production of pot roses. In all sizes and colours. But after some time, Rosa started a new thing, which was breeding. Through breeding, she could have control over the development of exciting new products. "It is great to develop new sorts," says Rosa. "Roses are fantastic products. There are ten thousands of variants, which gives possibilities for enormous variations." In the last few years, the breeding has led to many distinctive sorts. "But unfortunately, we were not able to keep all varieties. To some of them we had to say goodbye, which was hard. Every rose is special to me. For that reason, I never like to get rid of a variety. I always try to find a way to continue with certain varieties. Doing this can lead unintentionally to successful products. All roses have different qualities and features and I try to join these qualities to improve our pot roses." According to Rosa,

this is what entrepreneurship is all about. "It is important to think different, and sometimes it is good to be a little crazy too." Rosa gives an example, "Earlier this year, we sent a request to HRH Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, to name and to baptise a new rose. And guess what? She accepted our request! The rose she baptised is named 'Princess of Infinity' and is very successful at the moment. This shows that to be successful you have to show some guts and also that you have to go for it."

As an entrepreneur, Rosa believes that it is important to play on your own strengths. "I am not looking at the competitors so much," she says. "Of course, the rose market is very big and international with many breeders. But most important for me is that



'As entrepreneur you have to show guts to be successful'

the quality of our own products is very good, and that our products are different and they stand out. That is the only way to become successful." Rosa believes she has a sixth sense. "I follow my intuition and I have noticed that my intuition often proves to be right. Many of my predictions came true and exactly in the way I thought it would be. I believe in what I want to achieve and trust that it will be alright. Not by sitting and waiting, but by working hard."

Privileged person

Rosa mentioned hard work. Besides running a business with breeding, growing and marketing, she is also the face of the company, which looks like a lot of work all together. "Indeed, I am always busy, but this is not how it feels for me. My heart is in my work, which makes my work joyful and easy. I don't deny that sometimes it can be stressful too. But in the end, feelings of pride and satisfaction are prevailing. It is a privilege to work all day with roses. And to be successful with our company gives me a lot of satisfaction. Don't forget: millions of our roses are grown around the world. That gives a great feeling. Our roses are like our children. We are proud of each one of them."

But Rosa sometimes also takes her moments of rest. In those moments,

nature plays an important role. "We live close to the coast where I enjoy walking for hours on the beach. Nature makes me relaxed and gives me the energy I need to go on. I believe it is good for all entrepreneurs to give themselves fresh air from time to time. Otherwise, they will be always behind their computer. With a full schedule, it is not so easy for me to find time for relaxing. But I force myself to go out sometimes. And if I do, I switch off my telephone. Looking around, I see that people are always connected by

phone or E-mail. So if you want to free your mind, I advise you switch off your phone." Family is also important for Rosa. She works together with her husband and son. And if her daughter is free from her studies, she also joins the family business. "As a family, it is not always easy to be together in private life and during work. As a result, we always talk about roses. But it helps that we all have the same interests. It is important that we all follow our hearts."





Regrets

Through the years, the nursery in Lading has developed into a hypermodern complex of 30,000 square meters. A workforce of twenty heads is taking care of the production of over 5 million plants per year. Rosa ApS is producing a wide assortment of roses in pots from 6 to 16 cm in all colours and varieties. They are traded under the own quality label Roses Forever and produced in countries like Norway, Japan, Canada, United States and Mexico. More countries will be added to this list. "In the near future, I expect that our products will be produced in Africa and South America," predicts Rosa and knowing her sixth sense, these expectations will most likely come true. "The future looks bright and of course this makes us very happy. We continue to work on new methods of growing and new varieties, which will further improve the quality of our roses. Not only regarding a longer shelf life. In the view of thinking and doing different, we developed a new line of edible roses. The decorative and edible petals can be combined with cake, fish or salad. The plants are very strong and therefore can be produced without any pesticides, which makes them safe to eat."

Enough challenges and lots of successes for Rosa. But like every person, Rosa also might have experienced disappointments in her life because of wrong decisions.

"I cannot think of one," she says. "As an entrepreneur, it is always important to take responsibility for your decisions and to make the best of it. Sometimes, the outcome of a decision is not what I hoped for. But then I also know that it was the best we could do. So, in the end, there is no reason for regrets."



'When I want a moment of rest, I switch off my phone'

