

Locarno, 1992

For the first time since The Magnolia Society came together in formal meeting at Memphis, Tennessee, twenty-five years ago, the setting for the annual meeting in 1992 was outside the borders of the United States. Members, spouses and friends from ten nations gathered April 9-12 at the Grand Hotel in Locarno, Switzerland. True to form, they brought with them cool weather and some gray skies, but they were not disappointed in the objects that mattered—magnolias. And magnolias in such variety and such bloom!

While centered on the Switzerland gardens of Sir Peter Smithers, Otto Eisenhut, and Piet Van Veen, the group also visited the Villa Taranto, the world renown garden begun by Captain Neil McEachern, Isola Bella and the Villa Borromeo, and Isola Madre. Along the way were lectures—presented on the following pages in the order heard by those present—a demonstration of grafting techniques by Otto Eisenhut at his nursery where each fall and winter he, personally, grafts thousands of magnolias and other plants, and much food and visits with old friends and new. Hopefully the following pages will allow those who attended this “first” to refresh some memories and give those of us unlucky not to have been there the opportunity to enjoy, at least vicariously, the gardens, friends and magnolias recorded on film by those who were. ❁

For this special issue the format has been changed in several ways. Having recently joined the ranks of the bifocally corrected, I wished to increase, slightly, the type size for greater clarity and experiment with single column type instead of our customary two. The paper has been changed to a glossier type to give greater contrast to the text and, hopefully, greater clarity to the photographs. Also, due to the nature of this issue more color seemed to be called for. Enjoy as you can, the budget will not allow such prodigality very often. Please let me know how you like or dislike the changes. They are printed on paper, not engraved on stone. —Editor