

History of Mona Vale

Once ancient flood plain forest and a mahinga kai (food gathering area) for local Ngāi Tahu, this area was cultivated as part of the Deans' family farm, the first successful farm in Christchurch. Frederick Waymouth, Managing Director of the Belfast Freezing Works, and his wife Alice bought the land - building the homestead, lodge and gardens circa 1899.



Alice Waymouth in her garden. Photo courtesy of Ann Calhoun.

Wealthy heiress Annie Quayle Townend bought the grand property in 1905 naming it Mona Vale after her mother's birthplace in Tasmania. She added the Gatehouse, extended the land and developed formal gardens. After her death in 1914, Mona Vale changed hands numerous times until purchased by the Gough family in 1939.

In 1962 Mona Vale was sold to the Church of the Latter Day Saints who planned to demolish the buildings. A passionate campaign saved Mona Vale and resulted in the Christchurch City Council purchasing and restoring it for use as a restaurant, function venue and public garden. While the property sustained damage during the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010-11, repairs were completed in 2019.

Opening hours

Gate times

November to February	6.00am to 9.00pm
March	6.00am to 8.00pm
April	6.00am to 6.30pm
May to August	6.00am to 5.30pm
September	6.00am to 6.00pm
October	6.00am to 7.00pm

Homestead and Pantry

Daylight Saving	Wednesday to Sunday, 9.00am to 3.00pm
Rest of year	Saturday and Sunday, 9.00am to 3.00pm

For bookings monavale.co.nz

Weddings and functions



To book the gardens for an outdoor wedding ceremony, call the Christchurch City Council **941 8999** or visit ccc.govt.nz/mona-vale-wedding-ceremonies



For information about catered functions and marquee weddings in the Homestead and Gardens, visit monavale.nz

Mona Vale Homestead, originally named Karewa. Credit: Kirk Hargreaves



Mona Vale Gardens



Friends of the
Christchurch Botanic Gardens

Christchurch
City Council

Visiting Mona Vale

Mona Vale Gardens is a picturesque park boasting botanic collections, mature trees, sloping lawns and impressive historic buildings. Enjoy this romantic setting against the backdrop of the Ōtākaro-Avon River - come for a relaxed stroll, bring a picnic or visit the cafe for a slice of cake and coffee.

Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens


The Friends of the Botanic Gardens are active supporters of Mona Vale Gardens. If you are interested in joining this group of gardening enthusiasts, drop in at the Kiosk in the Botanic Gardens to find out more, or visit the website.

friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz



Friends' guided walks available in October - April and on request.
Details on website or email friendsofthegardens@gmail.com

For further information about Mona Vale Gardens

 941 8999

 ccc.govt.nz/mona-vale



Garden collection history

The Arts and Crafts garden

The first garden, designed by Alice Waymouth, was in the Arts and Crafts style. Taking inspiration from nature and using local materials, key features included rock walls, soft winding paths and a flax garden.

The Edwardian garden

Under Annie Townend, the grounds were extended and developed into formal Edwardian gardens. As well adding the bathhouse, conservatory and fernery, the main driveway and a network of pathways were added.

A return to the natural

A keen horticulturalist, Tracy Gough favoured a more natural looking garden. Exotic trees and shrubs were added, the paths grassed over and an ornamental pool (now the lily pond) replaced the formal rose garden.

The public garden era

When the Council purchased Mona Vale, various gardening groups within the Canterbury Horticultural Society created display beds including the Rose Society, Fuchsia Circle, Heritage Rose Group, Dahlia Society, Iris Circle and Herb Society. Variations of these display gardens are still in place today.

Credit: Pam Carmichael Photography



Rose Garden

Formal rose gardens have been a feature at Mona Vale since the early 1900s. The current rose bed was designed in 1994 to coincide with the International RoseWorld Convention hosted in Christchurch. You will find both modern hybrids and heritage roses in this attractive garden.



Lily Pond

Originally installed as an ornamental pool, the gradual addition of aquatic plants transformed the pool into the lily pond you see today. The historic Falconer Fountain sits as centrepiece.



Bath house

Added in 1905 by Annie Townend, the Bath House has variously housed the Falconer Fountain, a heated swimming pool, subtropical plants and a souvenir shop. It is currently closed for repairs.



Fernery

Annie Townend purchased the Fernery from the 1906-07 International Exhibition held in nearby Hagley Park. Though little of the original fabric remains, it is a unique experience walking among the tree ferns dappled with light from above.

Rhododendron Border

Rhododendrons have been planted along the original carriage drive since the early 1900s. Between 1991 and 1998 the plant collection was enriched by the MacLeod family, generously donating a few hundred rhododendrons and camellias in memory of their son.

Iris Garden

Iris have been a garden feature of Mona Vale since the Iris Society developed a display garden in the 1970s. In late spring, the garden is a rainbow of colour thanks to a spectacular combination of iris species and cultivars.



Artworks



Falconer Fountain,
Coalbrookdale Foundry, c.1875.

Kitset garden decorations like the Falconer Fountain were popular in the late 1800s. The Peacock Fountain in the Botanic Gardens is from the same foundry.



The Sheilah Winn Gazebo, design by David Butcher and windows by Graham Stewart, 1997.

With stained glass windows inspired by Walter Crane's *Flora's Feast*, the gazebo was donated by philanthropist Sheilah Winn.



Eros, Trevor Askin, 1994.

This bronze sculpture was gifted to the people of Christchurch by the committee of the 1994 International Roseworld Convention that was held at nearby Hagley Park.



Mona Vale Homestead interior décor, Waymouth family, 1899.

Though the Homestead has been altered over time, many Arts and Crafts motifs survive. Look for carved flowers, leaves and berries in handcrafted posts, terracotta vents, friezes and the replica fireplace.