



# Click of the bunch

A new website offers a cutting-edge way to buy old-fashioned roses

**Y**ou – as I once did – probably think that tending roses equals mud, buds, secateurs and, finally, sumptuous bowls of heavenly scented flowers. To a certain extent it does. But although I started my love affair with roses by putting my hands in the earth, now, for much of the time, I have my hands at a computer.

This year, Country Roses, the cut-rose company I started with my husband four years ago, planted 5,000 rose bushes – on top of last year's 1,500 – in a field once filled with sugar beet and corn. But as the business has grown, so the work has spread from the earth to the internet.

For three years, part of my work involved hand-writing cards designed and photographed by my son, Orion. These would be scribbled in snatched moments between picking the roses at dawn, sending them in buckets to country weddings or London florists, and replying to the growing number of requests for our roses. We finally accepted that along with the fork, secateurs and the pen, we also needed the keyboard.

On a Government-funded business course, among ex-bank managers lecturing on business plans, I found a trustworthy team of techno whizz-kids. With their help, [countryroses.co.uk](http://countryroses.co.uk) was born. I couldn't have done it without a plan, focusing on cashflows, marketing and profit and loss. We also identified our USP – unique selling point – which is that the roses we grow are fragrant and beautiful as only classic, old-fashioned country-grown roses can be. They are treated organically, tended by hand and grown only in this country. However, it is by creating our Country Rose website that we have managed to expand.

Between May and October, we will provide our fragrant fresh roses, and their petals, in all their just-picked glory. If you want a certain colour of rose, or species, you can go to your computer and place an order. You can get thousands of roses for a grand wedding, hundreds for a summer dance, 50 for a lover's bouquet, rose petals for confetti, or sachets for your lingerie drawers. All you have to do is tap out all you desire on to a keyboard. ■

