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the magazine

MY FRENCH COUNTRY HOME

AUTHENTIC FRENCH LIVING

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Chanel, Business
& Her Joie de Vivre*

*Discovering
Honfleur*

*The Home Of
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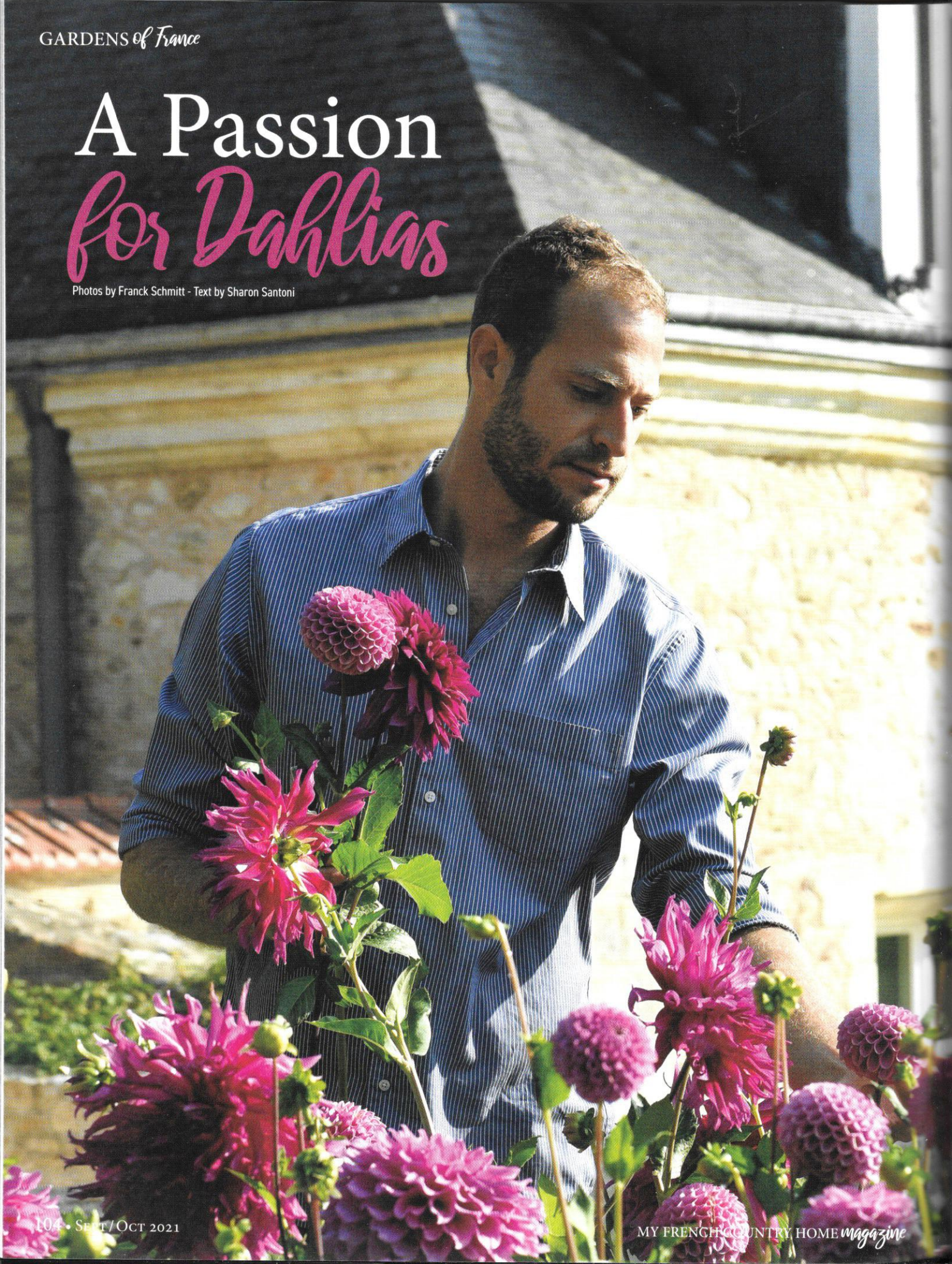
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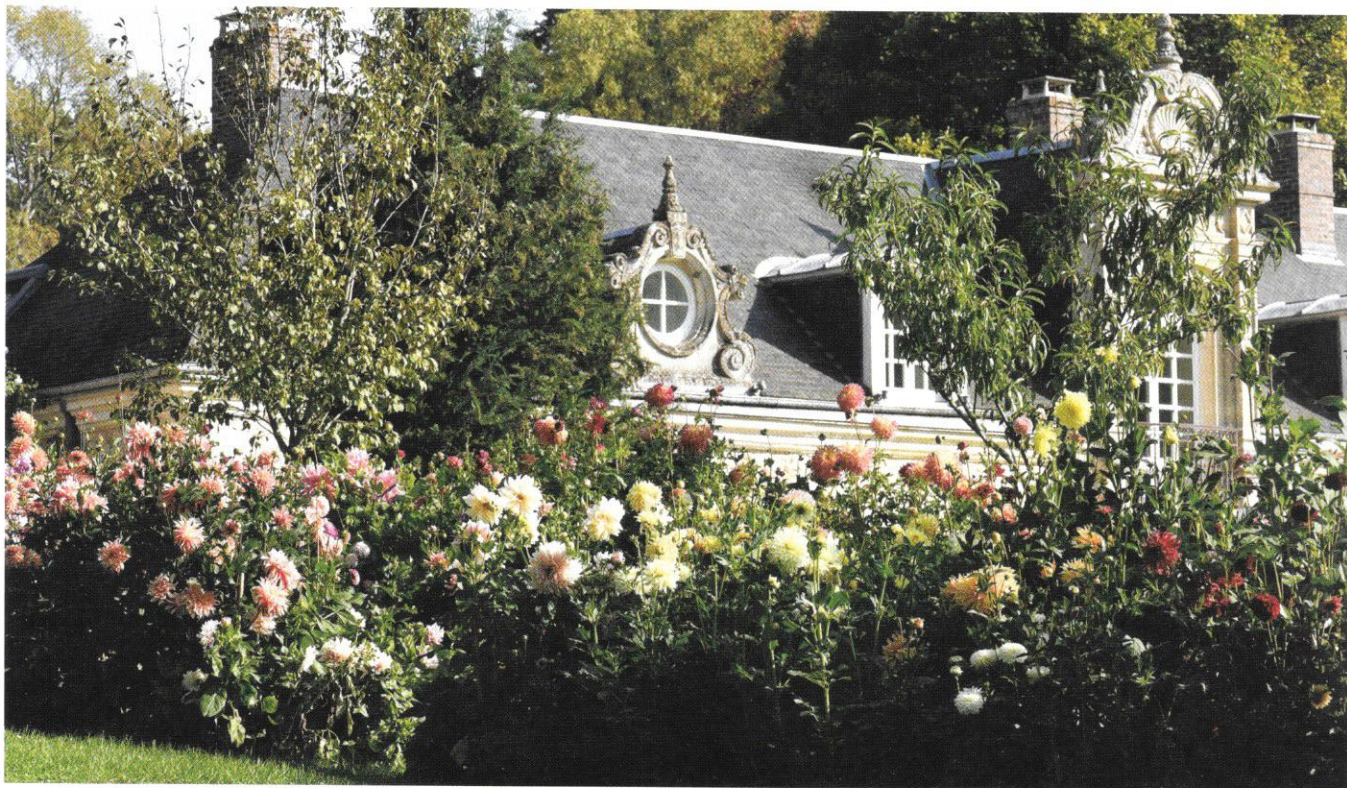


THE POTAGER SPECIAL

A Passion for Dahlias

Photos by Franck Schmitt - Text by Sharon Santoni

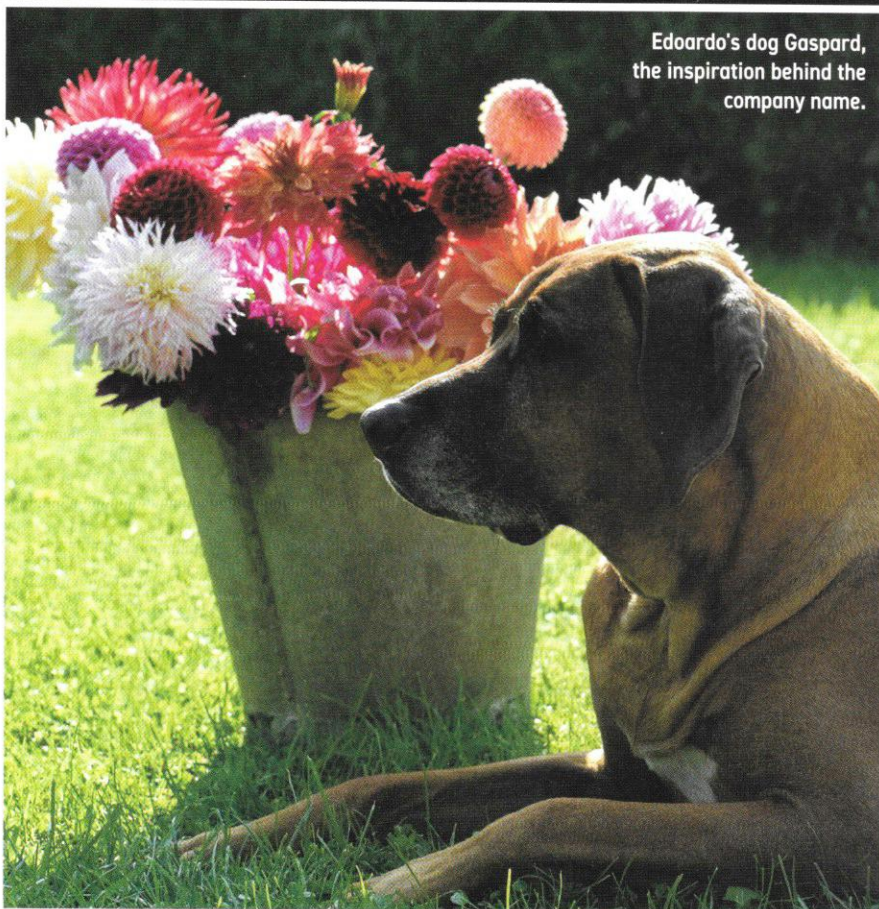




Edoardo Grassi may live in a 17th-century orangery, but his story is entirely contemporary. After discovering a love of dahlias via Instagram, he launched his company, Gaspard à Table, in the middle of the global pandemic.

Edoardo was raised in Tuscany, where his grandmother grew roses and irises in the garden of her beautiful home on the hilltops of Florence. He loved to spend his weekends learning by her side, as the pair coaxed plants to grow from the stony Florentine soil. A deep-rooted love began there, but it was not until he came to live in an orangery near Paris that he truly honed his horticulture skills.

When Edoardo and his partner first moved into the 17th-century building in 2013, it was in dire need of renovation. Previous work had been poorly executed, and the overgrown grounds



Edoardo's dog Gaspard, the inspiration behind the company name.

were abandoned. Years of neglect had left a jungle of tall grasses and leggy roses that needed to be cleared before Edoardo

could visualize his future garden, which he started working on before he even moved onto the property.

First, he planted the area that runs along the wall in front of the kitchen. Over the years, it has grown into a lavish wild-flower bed filled with roses, cosmos, zinnias scabiosa, peonies, cardoons, echinaceas, herbs and more — all varieties perfect for cutting and displaying in vases throughout his house.

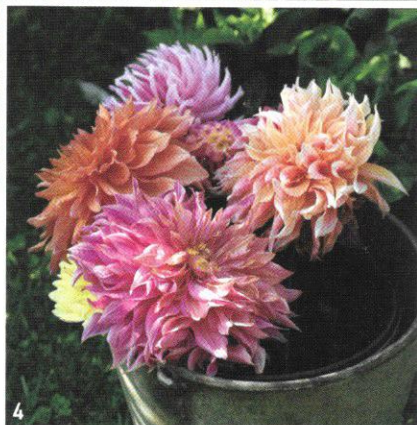
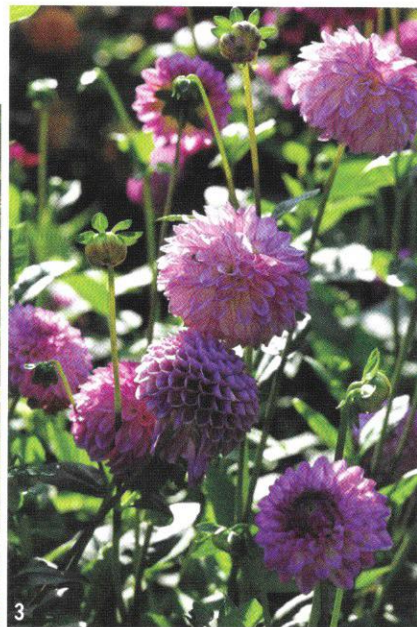
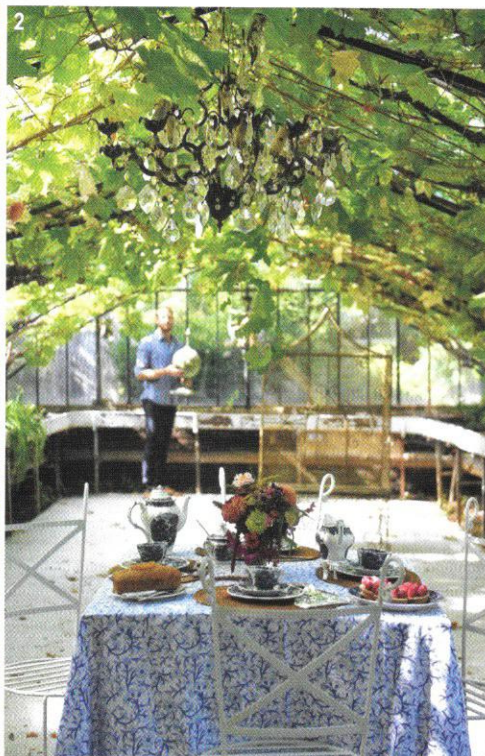
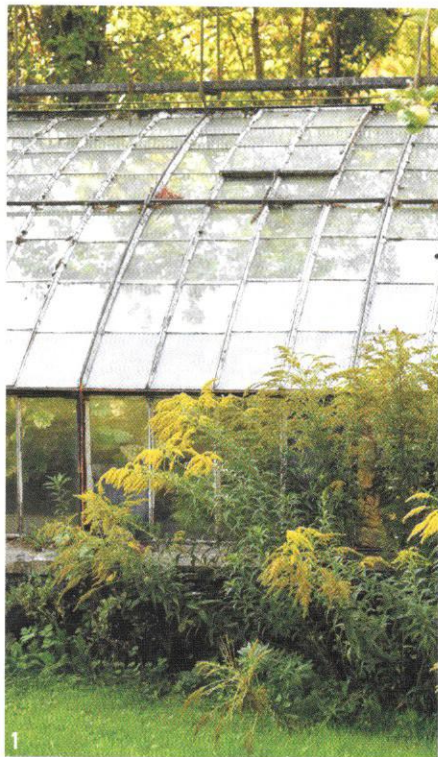
He also planted fruit trees near the stately 18th-century greenhouse, giving them a head start while improvements continued.

Turning to Instagram for inspiration, Edoardo soon discovered the versatility and generosity of the dahlia. He was amazed by its scope and set about learning how to grow it himself.

Despite his green thumb, Edoardo was at first unfamiliar with growing dahlia, his native Tuscany being uncondusive to the flower's proper development. But, in just a few years — having been impressed by techniques he saw during his visits to

British gardens — he was growing the multi-faceted plant in earnest.

In his garden, Edoardo sought to cultivate a chemical-free space, just as his grandmother did. He educated himself on how some plants can be used to heal other plants, and he relies on resident chickens for a steady supply of fertilizer.



Edoardo's tips for growing dahlias

Plant the tuber no deeper than 5-8 cm (2-3 ½ in) in the ground, water once, waiting until the stems are out before doing so again (overwatering or too much rain will make the tubers rot).

While the stems are still tender, beware of slugs and snails, as they love eating young shoots. Protect the plants with copper bands, coffee grounds or ashes.

Pinch out the stem as low as the second pair of leaves, counting from the ground (once growing well, cutting the stems increases flower production and helps the plant stay strong).

Stake the dahlias to ensure a longer blooming period.

After the first frost, cut your dahlias back to the ground (make sure they are clearly labeled), then wait a week before lifting and storing them in a cool place (5-7°C / 41-45°F) until the last frost has passed.

Plant the following spring.

TECHNICOLOR GARDEN

1 & 2. The property's 18th-century greenhouse is a theatrical setting for growing plants and taking afternoon tea.

3 & 4. Edoardo has educated himself on growing many varieties of dahlias, each as dazzlingly and colorful as the next.

OPPOSITE

Edoardo poses with Gaspard, one of his chickens and his dahlia family.



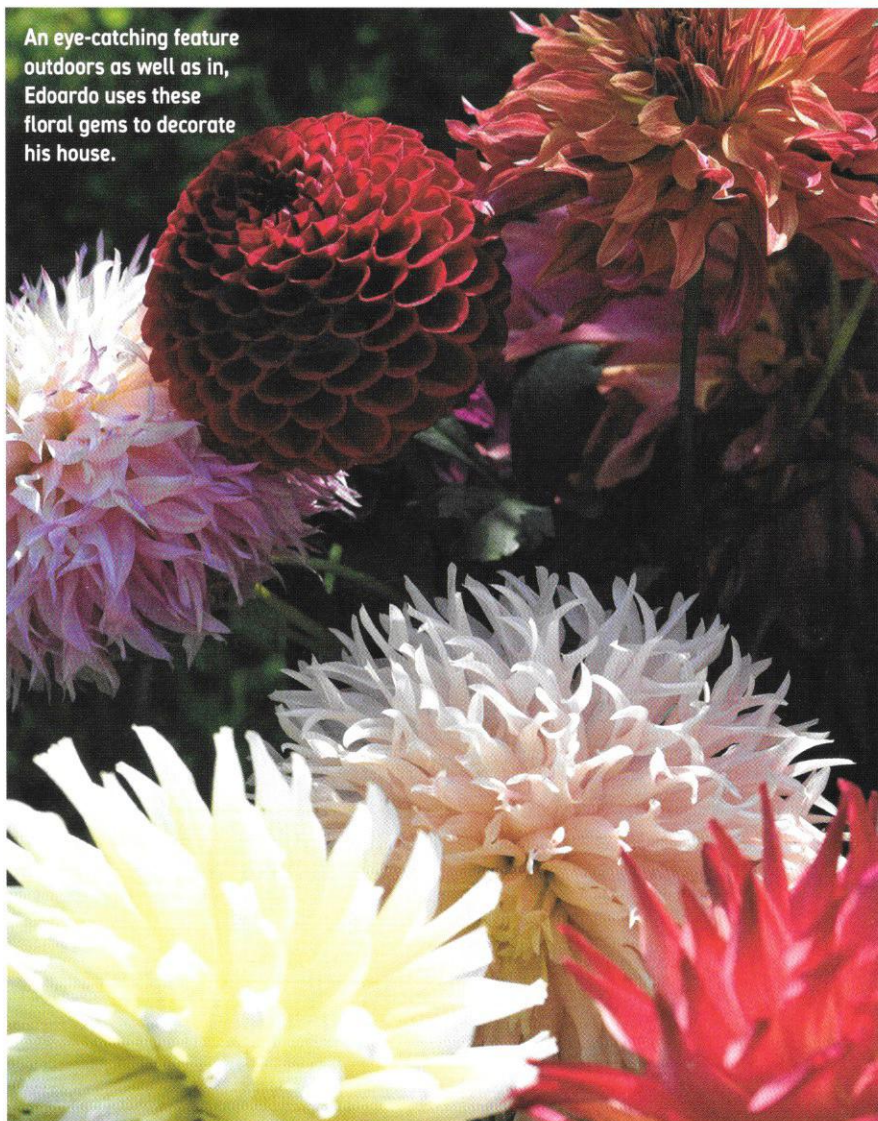
When France first went into confinement in the spring of 2020, Edoardo's job in production was put on hold, so he decided to turn his hobby into a business. By then, he had amassed a sizable collection of dahlias, and once he created his website, his existing Instagram audience became his client base.

A large part of the garden is dedicated to growing dahlias, as well as tulips and peonies. He walks the beds daily, with his dog Gaspard (the faithful companion behind the brand name) at his side; checking on general growth and the progress of new varieties obtained through his careful breeding.

When dahlia season is over in late October, Edoardo cuts back the thick stems, labeling each, then lifts the tubers, which are then carefully divided and protected during these colder months, to be listed for sale on his website the following year. 🌸

www.gaspardatable.com
[@gaspardatable](https://www.instagram.com/gaspardatable)

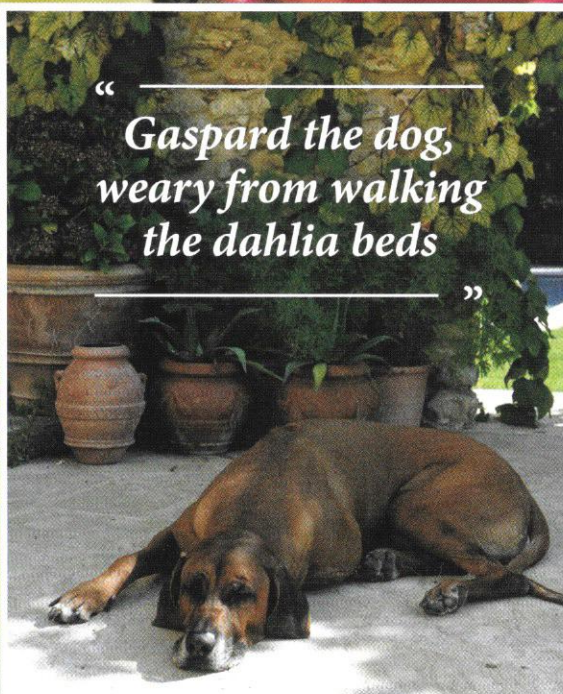
Edoardo sells within France and Europe. His spring peonies will go on sale in September 2021, and his dahlias will be available for pre-sale in February 2022.



An eye-catching feature outdoors as well as in, Edoardo uses these floral gems to decorate his house.



The large dahlia beds, that produce bulbs to be sold the following year.



“ Gaspard the dog, weary from walking the dahlia beds ”