

## Charles's £30,000 full-time flower girl

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Personal touch: Sarah Champier-Lowe shows off one of her arrangements

He famously has a personal toothpaste squeezer among the 130 staff he employs to meet his every need.

Now another of Prince Charles's little luxuries can be revealed: a full-time, personal flower arranger.

Sarah Champier-Lowe has been the Prince's florist for ten years, brightening up Clarence House, Highgrove and Birkhall with her lavish arrangements.

Although certain celebrities such as Sir Elton John are famed for their extravagant expenditure on flowers, it is thought that the Prince is unique in employing a full-time florist.

Sarah, 49, is paid from the Prince's private income. Although her salary is secret, Royal insiders said last night that it was unlikely to be less than £30,000 a year.

Sarah also accepts lucrative commissions at the Prince's newly opened Highgrove gift shop at Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

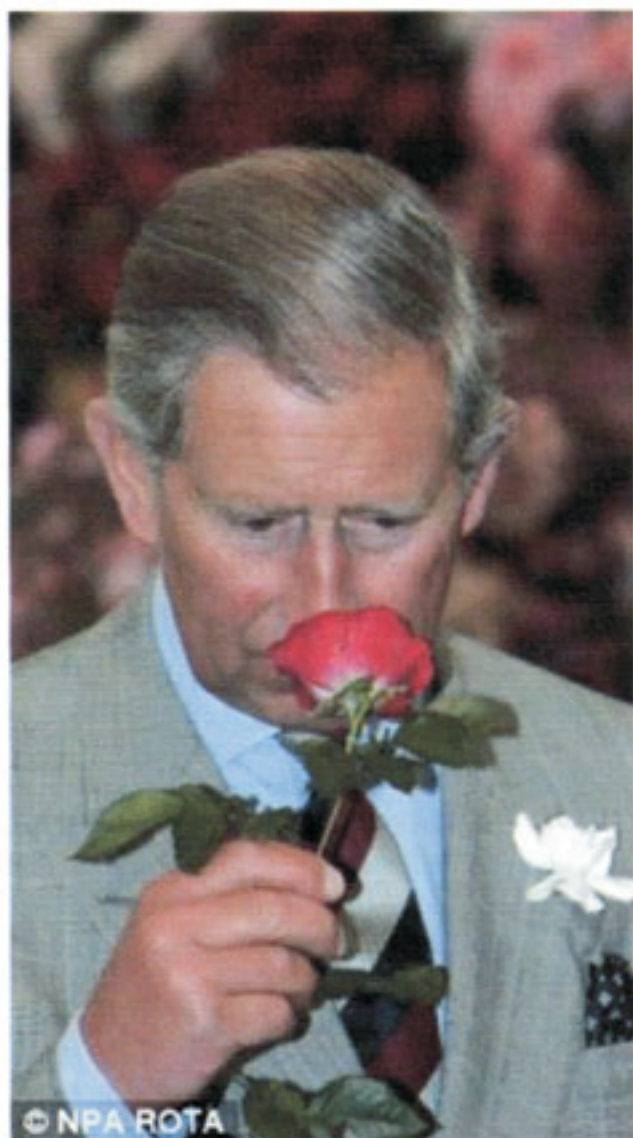
She prepares all the floral arrangements on the shop floor, and is grandly billed the shop's 'visual merchandiser'.

But when she isn't gathering roses, delphiniums and lavender in the Prince's gardens for her creations, the stylish mother of two can be found indulging in a slightly unconventional hobby – roaring around the Cotswolds on her Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

The impeccably groomed florist boasts "I'm wild at heart," and says she took her motorcycle test at 40 because she "needed a challenge".

But she says her ideal evening would be spent looking across the garden at Highgrove and sharing a glass of cider with "The Boss", her affectionate name for Prince Charles, while listening to Leonard Cohen, who is also one of the Prince's favourite musicians.

She said: "His Royal Highness is interesting and funny and he takes an interest in each and every one of us who work for him."



**'The Boss': Prince Charles is well known for his love of flowers**

Sarah, who lives in Tetbury, said she first landed the job through an organisation called WRAGS, or Women Returners to Amenity Gardening Scheme, which helps women looking to break into the horticulture business.

"They rang me one evening and said, 'We've found you a garden you'll just love'.

"I couldn't believe it when they told me it was Highgrove," she said.

She began working in the house's Orchard function room, and a few months later she was asked if she would like to work full-time, arranging the flowers at Highgrove as well as travelling to other Royal residences.

She said that her work has taken her to Buckingham Palace, Clarence House, Holyrood House and Sandringham, but that her favourite is Birkhall in the Scottish Highlands because of its "spectacular scenery".

The Prince has long used his estate at Highgrove as a model of organic farming and gardening and is reputed to have spent more than £500,000 on its 37-acre gardens.

The estate boasts several themed gardens, including the Cottage Garden, Islamic-inspired Carpet Garden, Walled Kitchen Garden, Model Fruit Garden and Southern Hemisphere Garden.

The Prince's love of gardening is well documented – and he has long been the butt of jokes since admitting he talked to his plants.

He has even written a book, *The Garden At Highgrove*, explaining how he developed the grounds.