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Flower Power

BRIGHTEN UP YOUR LIVING SPACE WITH FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS THAT PASS FOR WORKS OF ART

BY CARMEN PANG **IMAGES COURTESY OF** FIORE DORATO, FLORES BY NIC, SHIROI FLORET LIFESTYLES



FIVE TIPS FOR KEEPING CUT FLOWERS FRESH

- 1 Fill vase with room-temperature water for flowers and cold water for bulbs
- 2 Placing cut flowers in the refrigerator for six hours before arranging them will triple their lifespan.
- 3 Add a squeeze of lemon juice or a half a teaspoon of vinegar to kill bacteria in the water
- 4 Remove all leaves and foliage that are under the water
- 5 Cut stems daily and change water every few days

Flowers have always been a key element in interior decoration. Not only do blooming bouquets bring splashes of color to a home, they also scent the indoor air with a natural and inviting fragrance. But the art of dressing a home with flowers goes beyond simply placing a bunch of blooms in a vase. Nowadays, homeowners are treating flower arrangements as pieces of artwork that deserve prime focal-point placements.

According to Ash Yeo, design director of Shiroi Floret Lifestyles, many homeowners want flower arrangements that reflect their sense of aesthetic and culture. "There is a growing popularity of incorporating personal objects, artwork or cultural artifacts from their travels into the floral centerpieces as a way of personalising the arrangements. In this way, the floral displays become meaningful extension of stories they share with their guests," Yeo says. "For example, a simple but bold arrangement of lemon-yellow dendrobium orchids in a red Rajasthani milk pot tells a rich visual story of a homeowner's heritage from the area, or a recent visit there. At the same time, it can also convey well wishes to the guests as milk pots symbolise offerings of wealth and happiness in Hindu mythology."


Aside from adding character and individuality to contemporary arrangements, floral specialists also notice that executive homeowners prefer the understated appeal of simple arrangements. Elaborate explosions of colourful blooms are giving way to simpler and smaller-sized displays. "In our modern-day life, the trend is moving toward a more simple yet sophisticated style," enthuses Nicholas Don Lim, creative director of Flores By Nic. "The key is to show off one centerpiece or create patterns of repetition with several smaller pieces. Moreover, other than arranging flowers in vases, we now frequently use alternative objects such as acrylic blocks, boxes or dried palm leaves as bases for the arrangements," he adds.





Furthermore, when it comes to selecting colors, David Tan, Shiroi Floret's artistic director, stresses the importance of matching the choice with the location where the arrangement will be placed. "For example, warm reds and yellows and oranges are best for the living area, a soothing palette of vanilla whites works for reading and resting areas, and lots of greens for small spaces," he says.

"As the year-end festive months approach, big, bold and colourful blooms would be an inviting trend and they provide a more energetic and festive feel."

In addition to matching the colour choice with the room, different occasions also call for different colour arrangements. "Typically, lively pastel colours in a variety of pink hues or other subtle and soft hues with a more natural feel are common for homes," says Brenda Lee Monteiro, founder of Fiore Dorato. "But, as the year-end festive months approach, big, bold and colourful blooms would be an inviting trend and they provide a more energetic and festive feel." 



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:

The use of brightly coloured orchids are becoming increasingly popular in floral arrangements; A burst of yellow by Shiroi Floret is brightly coloured but not over-the-top

TOP TO BOTTOM: Floral specialists offer great ideas on home styling in their showrooms; Fiore Dorato stocks up its selections of fresh flowers daily

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LOOKING FOR FLORAL THEMES FOR YOUR NEXT HOUSE PARTY?

Check out these suggestions from our floral experts

MAKE IT BOLD

"Homeowners nowadays like to use flowers to create a focal point in their homes, which their guests can talk about," says Monteiro. To make such a bold and creative



statement, she suggests laying out a table runner made of red moca orchids, instead of arranging the flowers in a typical vase. "This arrangement, called 'Passionate Love,' uses the table structure to create a piece of art," she adds. **Blooms to use:** peony, calla lily, gloriosa, parrot lily

EXOTIC AND ORGANIC

Exotic and organic are the lifestyle buzz words du jour and flower arrangement designs are following the trend as well. "By using lots of green and exotic blooms, homeowners can add a natural and organic aspect to their modern and cosmopolitan lifestyles," says Lim. An example is this arrangement that uses exotic blooms such as vanda orchids and fruticosa. "The hydrangea blooms at the base bring out the softer side of the arrangement. I also incorporate beargrass to give the design a more organic feel," he says. "The bottom of this arrangement is a block of acrylic, which reflects a modern approach."



Blooms to use: anthurium, hydrangea, phalaenopsis/paphiopedilum, vanda orchid, accompanied by typha leaf, beargrass, green moss

STRUCTURAL INTEREST

One popular theme is to create unique structural elements in the arrangement by using aesthetically interesting, durable and challenging materials. In this example, Tan uses dried twigs, as well as dragon tail leaves and yellow cymbidium orchids, both long-lasting materials. "This arrangement follows the aesthetic trend of using cultural collectibles, such as a unique vase with a small mouth opening," says Yeo. "This combination of material and



vessel encourage a play on proportion and space. This trend goes very well with other sorts of containers and objects as well, as they can encourage interesting and unconventional structural arrangements."

Blooms to use: amaryllis, cymbidium orchid, star gazer, calla lily