

The Business of Design

Floral specials to build your brand and your bottom line

Anything-But-Common Carnations

“PLEASE, NO CARNATIONS!” VINCE BUTERA, AIFD, PFCI, has heard more than a few customers, seeking less “pedestrian” aesthetics, utter those words. But it doesn’t stop him from keeping a steady stock of novelty carnations in the cooler and in ready-to-sell designs at York, Pa.-based Butera the Florist (www.buteratheflorist.com).

Enlightened buyers and designers such as Butera contend that carnations — if given the royal treatment they deserve — are anything but commoners. (Just ask Prince Charles, who at the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in July, picked a carnation for Camilla.)

Although Butera still encounters the occasional “no carnation” request, he’s adamant that, with the right design prowess, customers, especially younger ones, can be lured to the cost-effective and beautiful blooms.

A relatively simple and unexpected pairing (1) — carnations with an exotic, such as protea — given an asymmetrical treatment is bound to have even the most fervent “flower snobs” looking twice. Butera takes a pair of pincushion protea and adds

bi-color carnations tufted at the base of the arrangement. He flanks it with a single rose and some green button chrysanthemums and adds “movement” with the aspidistra leaves, both on the foam and looped, along with a pair of ribbon grass angled back into the focal area.

Tapping into the ga-ga-over-green vibe (2), the shop features a trio of green carnations as a focal point in an upright vase. “But the real drama is in the added features,” including liatris, bells of Ireland, fresh green wheat, Eryngium thistle and Nigella pods. For additional movement, he adds curved aspidistra and lily grass.

Butera achieves a simple and quick, but stop-in-their-tracks, look (3) in a rose bowl (call it a “glass orb” for customers, he says, it sounds better), by placing bear grass on the inside of the vessel, followed by Eryngium thistle and, for dramatic texture, buplerum, followed by 10 carnations, which get deeply set into the design. “Quick, inexpensive, but striking,” Butera says. 🌿

— Kate F. Penn

E-mail: kpenn@safnow.org



IN GOOD COMPANY Vince Butera, AIFD, PFCI, combines so-called “common” carnations with unlikely mates, such as protea and buplerum, and in unlikely ways, to increase interest and overall perceived value of the often underappreciated bloom.

ISO: Five-Minute Favorites

Look in your cooler: Is there a shop special that’s loved by customers for its look and by designers (and owners) for its ease of assembly? Send a photo of it to Floral Management, so we can feature it in an upcoming issue. Email kpenn@safnow.org.