

by Megan Sullivan

Freshly

This spring and summer, seasonal arrangements with a garden feel will reign supreme

PICKED

Every day, floral designer Clover Chadwick and her staff at Dandelion Ranch look forward to finding what's in season at the Los Angeles Flower Market. In spring and summer, Clover enjoys designing with lilacs, peonies, dogwood, columbine, viburnum, and ranunculus. "If you focus on the local and the seasonality of the local flowers, you really get beautiful examples of things," she says.

This coming spring-summer season, Clover expects flowing arrangements to grow in popularity. "People like the more garden-y feeling, not so stiff like the old pave or the modern style," Clover explains. "It's a lot more of a Flemish look coming in—the old-fashioned kind of design." To embrace this style, designers have to loosen control over the flowers and highlight the way various varieties grow by using seasonal greens and layers. "It gives you that movement to create a really nice wild arrangement because spring is really all about blooming and rebirth and things coming in."

By using what's in season, it builds a stronger appreciation for the distinct characteristics of various floral varieties,

similar to the seasonal flavors of fruits and vegetables. "Every single ingredient has its peak of the season," Clover says. "If you enjoy them at that moment, they're just amazing."

In terms of colors, there is a movement toward dustier or antique-washed tones, Clover says, and growers are bringing back funky heirloom types of wildflowers. "I think flowers and fashion are always moving hand in hand." Spring is always fun, she adds, because you get to mix more colors like creamy yellows with pinks and violets.

Before entering the retail floral business about 11 years ago, Clover studied agriculture and gardening and managed restaurants in the middle of Napa Valley farming communities. "Learning about how things grow gives you a better understanding, so when I sit down and do an arrangement, in my brain I'm thinking, what is the overall look and shape I want it to be and what kind of garden do I want?" For example, if she's using a delphinium, she wouldn't squish it down in an arrangement with roses, she would let it stand up really tall the way it would in a garden.

That's where the idea for Dandelion Ranch's popular garden screens came from. Clover started making the screens about six years ago for window partitions in restaurants, simply with one or two ingredients and pussy willows. From there, she began to create things like mini floral meadows or a slice of a desert with cactuses and rocks. "You don't have to use the most expensive flowers—it's all about really pretty examples to highlight the way things grow, usually in threes or they grow away from each other so it creates all that negative space like ikebana but applied to a garden. You can use anything—rocks, plants, branches, or pieces of greens you get in your yard."


When designing arrangements, the Dandelion Ranch staff always asks their customers where the arrangement will be


FAST FACTS

Design Expert: Clover Chadwick **Experience:** 11 years

Exposure/Achievements: Florist every year for LA Loves Alexs Lemonade and Share Our Strength's Taste of The Nation; recently featured in media for her drought-friendly to no-water or dried designs in sync with California's drought emergency



displayed. They also inquire about the recipient's style. The answers will affect whether they choose a rustic, traditional, old-fashioned or modern container. "The container is like the shoes and the outfit," Clover says. "We can put the same arrangement in any vase and it will change completely. If it's a pedestal versus a box, a pedestal is going to make it feel like it's spilling out and a little more lush, whereas if it's in a box it's going to feel more heavy and stiff." Specific to springtime, the design studio uses a lot of water and milk pitchers, as well as handle baskets, wooden toolboxes, and pedestal bowls. For more modern succulent rock gardens, they tend to use wood or metal boxes that are a little more industrial looking. "We put a lot of thought into it," says Clover. 

 For more about Dandelion Ranch and for additional design ideas, go to www.dandelionranch.com and www.facebook.com/pages/Dandelion-Ranch/108460717837