



MADE IN THE HAMPTONS

Petal Power

Life is a bed of roses—and so much more—for floral designer Lilee Fell



Fun With Florals
Lilee Fell (at right) and her business partner, Adrian Carrello, create floral masterpieces in their Bridgehampton studio, a former potato barn. See *Resources*.

In a small studio on Butter Lane in Bridgehampton, Lilee Fell creates miracles with flowers. Just don't call her a florist.

"I prefer 'floral decorator,'" says Fell, who has been creating works of art with flowers for more than 20 years. "I'm well versed in flowers, and my job goes far beyond cut flowers in vases."

The flower business came naturally to Fell. Her mother and grandmother were members of the Garden Club of America, and she credits her technical skills—arranging and decorating—to her mother. "She taught me everything I know about flowers," says Fell, who started out working in a Southampton flower shop and now, along with her business partner, Adrian Carrello, creates floral arrangements for an average of two events each week between April and October, ranging from weddings to dinner parties to benefit galas. (For the Nature Conservancy's fund-raiser for 450 people in June, she assembled 45 different arrangements in three different styles.)

When Fell starts planning for an event, she always extracts a common theme. "A client will come in with magazine clippings, drawings, and general inspiration images to start," she says. "They might look the same, but my job is to find the one piece that unifies them, and then I just run with it."

The menu, color scheme, location, and lighting all play a role in the direction Fell takes for her

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floral arrangements, and she makes a concerted effort to stay seasonal, working with that week's best-quality flowers. "If a client has her heart set on peonies and it's the middle of November, that can be a problem," says Fell, who admits she can almost always get out-of-season flowers, but that they might not be at their best. For the most part, she'll "guide people toward big garden roses and gigantic dahlias and try to keep them in the same color category. That way, I'm still giving my clients what they want in terms of shape and size, but the quality can't be beat." —*Miranda Agee*



Business Is Blooming

Working with flowers ranging from peonies, garden roses, and delphiniums to more dramatic *Eremurus* (foxtail lilies) and bells of Ireland, Fell and Carrello often create upwards of 50 arrangements per event. Cavalier King Charles Spaniels George and Quincy (a.k.a. The Brothers Fell, MIDDLE RIGHT) are frequent studio mates. See *Resources*.

FELL'S TIPS FOR FLAWLESS FLOWERS

- ✿ Take a lit match and burn the milky-stemmed ends of flowers like poppies and euphorbia. It helps keep the nutrients locked in, prolonging the life of the flower.
- ✿ To keep flowers like amaryllis and delphiniums looking fresh, pour water into the hollow stems and stuff a small bit of cotton inside to hold the water in.
- ✿ Lay a damp paper towel on top of hydrangeas to keep the delicate petals from wilting.
- ✿ Stand in front of a mirror as you assemble a bouquet of flowers in your hand; that way, you'll know exactly what it will look like to everyone else.

