



boom boom pow

**'Fireworks' blows away judges
with its explosive color and
18 blooms per stem to win the
2012 Outstanding Varieties Competition.**

BY KATIE HENDRICK

Photos by Betsy Hansen

Hermès' roomy Birkin handbag. Cole Haan's pumps cushioned with Nike Air technology. Diane von Fürstenberg's comfortable, waist cinching wrap dresses.

It's a beautiful thing when high style marries functionality.

Those dual qualities were top of mind for judges at the 2012 SAF Outstanding Varieties Competition Sept. 19 in Palm Beach, Fla., when deciding which of the 262 entries deserved top honors. With its long laterals and astounding 18 blooms per stem, 'Fireworks', a peppermint-colored spray rose from Eufloria Flowers, was equal parts pretty and practical — "an excellent choice for Best in Show," said judge Martin Meskers of Oregon Flowers in Aurora, Ore.

"Money maker!" said Susan Wilke, AAF, PFCI, of 'Fireworks' to attendees of the "Walk through the Winner's Circle" session at SAF Palm Beach 2012. "A little goes a long way," said the sales manager from Karthaus and Sons Wholesale Florist in Germantown, Wis., who held up a stem to show how it could yield at least two corsages and a boutonniere. In her market, where teens spend between \$60 and \$80 for prom flowers, "that's a really profitable spray rose to have on hand," she said. Plus, teenagers will swoon for its showy look, said fellow Winner's Circle presenter Lisa Weddel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI. "They want something dainty for their tiny wrists, but they also want something that shows up," the Highlands Ranch, Colo., designer explained. "They'll just love how this looks like a little rose bush."

Indeed, "the perfect corsage flower" became a common refrain from judges and bystanders alike. "So many blooms — and look at those laterals!" said judge Karen Fountain, AAF. The owner of Flowers 'n' Ferns in Burke, Va., gave 'Fireworks' high marks for being "extremely user friendly." "This will make my life much easier when I'm doing wedding and prom pieces," she said. She also praised its color ("a whimsical mix of white and hot pink"), which would have year-round application. "It would fit right in for bright, cheerful arrangements in warmer months," she said. "Then, just add some red carnations, and you have a festive Christmas or Valentine's Day design."

Judge Eleanor Clevenger, director of cut flowers at David Austin Roses, agreed that 'Fireworks' would be a profitable choice for any design, but she said its real value comes from the indelible impression it leaves on consumers. "The way the buds cluster around the blooms is very striking — very European," she said. "First-time flower buyers will remember this spray rose for a long time."



Best in Show

'FIREWORKS' SPRAY ROSE
EUFLORIA FLOWERS

OUTSTANDING TRAITS

High bloom count. Long laterals. Vibrant color.
Good vase life (10 to 12 days).

APPLAUSE

"Spray roses were categorically superb this year," said judge Steve Dionne, AAF, "so that says a lot about this variety that stood out in a field of excellent entries." The director of sales at United Floral Exchange in Vista, Calif., loved how each of the blooms sat on the tip of the stem, which gave it a phenomenal presentation. The color, "like pulled taffy with stripes of hot pink," will sell year-round, he said. "You can pair it with dark flowers in winter, whites in spring, and it's bright enough to stand on its own in summer," he said. Even the foliage — "rarely a feature point with spray roses" — was remarkable, he said: "You could see a vase of this on its own."

"Dynamic," said judge Dave Gaul, AAF, of Denver Wholesale Florist, who rattled off a list of praise-worthy attributes: "Lots of long, user-friendly laterals, clean foliage, consistently open blooms."

Judge Kate Delaney, director of operations at Matlack Florist in West Chester, Pa., named versatility as her favorite characteristic of 'Fireworks'. "You could dress it up with white hydrangeas, dress it down with white or red alstroemeria or just put it all by itself in a cube," she said.

The poinsettia may have some competition, as this would make a "lovely Christmas flower," said judge Jessica Cosentino, of Cosentino's Florist in Auburn, N.Y. "Just add white carnations, red standard roses and some greens," she said.

☆ Best in Class Winners

BEST IN CLASS GERBERA



'PINK POWER'
GREEN VALLEY FLORAL

▲ OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Thick, lengthy stems. Full, compact petals.
Good vase life (12 days).

APPLAUSE

Thick, sturdy stems contributed to 'Pink Power's' high score. "Look, it doesn't wiggle," said Cosentino, as she held the gerbera horizontally. "You'd never worry that these might break." She envisioned them bunched together for a cheerful, mono-floral bouquet, embellished with an ivory or hot pink satin ribbon.

Though the market boasts a boatload of pink gerberas, "this one is refreshing with its peachy tint," Clevenger said. "Its green center gives it elegance and depth, as well."



BEST IN CLASS ROSE

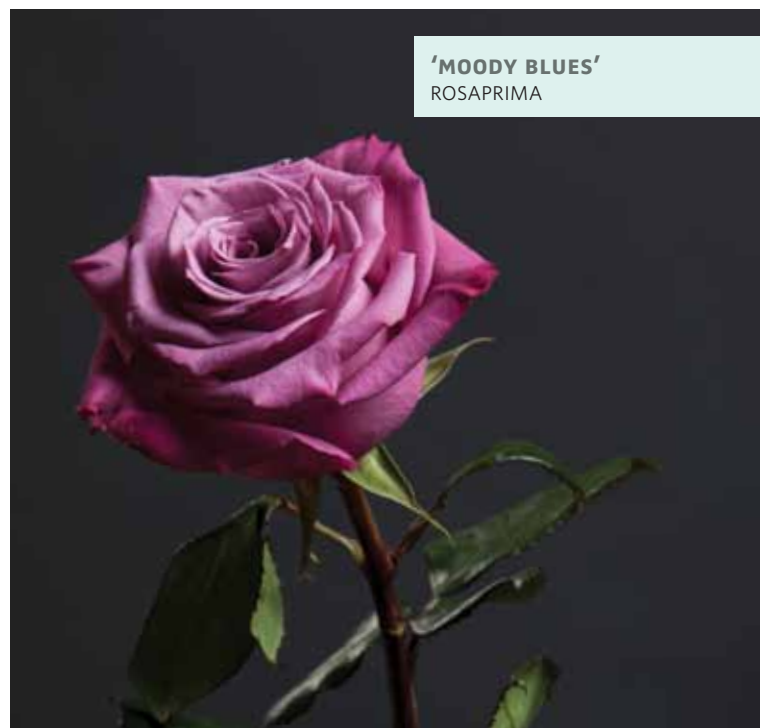
▼ OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Large blooms. High petal count. Very few thorns.
Glossy foliage. Excellent vase life (15 days).

APPLAUSE

"This is what you aspire to find as a rose supplier," said judge Peter Van Antwerpen, owner of Virgin Farms in Miami, praising the lavender rose's marketability and high petal count. Dave Gaul commended its thornless, robust stems — signs that 'Moody Blues' will travel well. "You can see, the roses don't tear each other in the boxes," he said. "There's absolutely no scarring."

The coloring caught Kate Delaney's eye. "Lavenders and purples are both huge in our shop," she said. It's also a shade that could fit in color schemes year-round. To make 'Moody Blues' fit in spring and summer arrangements, pair with pastels; add burgundy and chartreuse flowers to give it an autumn or winter feel, she said.



'MOODY BLUES'
ROSAPRIMA





'FUEGO'
MULTIFLORA

BEST IN CLASS CHRYSANTHEMUM

▲ OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Large head. Bold bronze color. Impressive vase life (15 days).

APPLAUSE

"Luscious" was Eleanor Clevenger's description of 'Fuego's' impressive head size. "A real eye catcher," said judge Nick Fronduto, chief operating officer of Jacobson Floral Supply in Boston. "It really resonates with me — it reminds me of autumn in the Northeast." A nice round shape, consistent blooms and a marketable color were among the attributes he noted.

Cosentino detected strong stems that will aid in hydration. "These will hold up well for event work," she said. Her design idea: "Carve out a white pumpkin, arrange a bunch of these chrysanthemums inside."

Weddel praised this bi-color's vibrant tone. "It would be beautiful in a pavé design next to birch," she said.



BEST IN CLASS DECORATIVE FOLIAGE

> OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Marketable variegated coloring. Excellent vase life (14 days).

APPLAUSE

"Use this to add a delicate, frilly look for wedding work," Weddel said. She praised 'Silver Queen Pit' for its variegated coloring, "which adds interest," and its many laterals that are "great for corsages."

'SILVER QUEEN PIT' PITTOSPORUM
MELLANO & COMPANY



PEOPLE'S CHOICE



'MIYUKI'
GREEN VALLEY FLORAL

This year's Outstanding Varieties Competition included a new tradition: the People's Choice Award. Convention attendees as well as non-floral industry guests at The Breakers were invited to cast their votes for their favorite variety. Of the 262 entries, 'Miyuki', a fragrant pink and white garden spray from Green Valley Floral emerged the most popular.

Sylvia Bird, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, said she adored the color, the stem length, the size and petal count. "It's an absolutely gorgeous rose that works well as a hand-tied bouquet," said the Ft. Myers, Fla., designer, who made dozens of said bouquets for speakers at SAF Palm Beach 2012. (For several years, Bird has served as a member of the design team that decorates meeting rooms, ballrooms, guest rooms and hallways at SAF conventions.) "The smaller buds are ideal for corsages and boutonnieres," she said.

Susan Wilke, AAF, PFCI, of Karthaus Wholesale Florist in Germantown, Wis., called it a "nice, nostalgic choice" for Mother's Day arrangements, and an apt substitution for peonies. Her Midwestern consumers appreciate bi-color flowers, as well as cabbage-shaped roses "that elicit those warm and fuzzy romantic feelings."

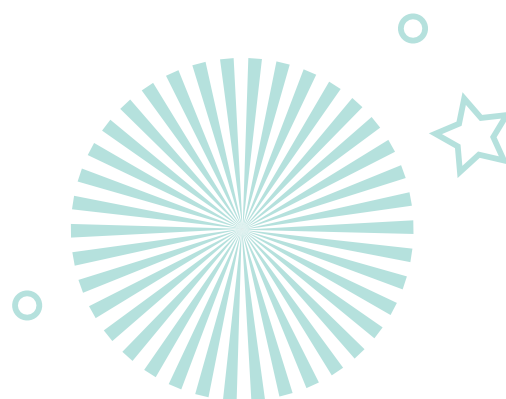
"The petal count just seems to go on and on," said Jo Buttram, AAF, owner of Shirley's Flowers Inc. in Rogers, Ark. The color, too, deserves lauding, she said. "We can blend it in monochromatic pinks, or use it for a pop of color." It's also more cost-effective than a standard garden rose, she said, "as a spray has so many heads."

☆ Best in Class Winners

BEST IN CLASS ALSTROEMERIA



'SYMPHONY BONITA'
ESMERALDA FARMS



<OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Six-plus blooms per stem. Large bloom size. Long and strong stems. Excellent vase life (14 days).

APPLAUSE

"Consumers will love how happy this looks," Clevenger said. "Florists will love how many blooms are on a stem." Fronduto, too, named abundant blooms as the alstroemeria's major selling point. Additionally, it has a lot of laterals, which "really adds value for a designer," he said.

Wilke agreed. "You can easily get two corsages out of one lateral," she said. She envisioned 'Symphony Bonita' in a topiary design. "It would be yummy," she said.

The alstroemeria's fullness and demure coloring give Cosentino matrimonial vibes. "This would be great in a wedding bouquet with pink roses," she said. "It's a sweet-looking flower with a lot of show."



BEST IN CLASS DIANTHUS

>OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Novelty color. Nicely shaped. Excellent vase life (14 days).

APPLAUSE

"It's often hard to get excited about carnations, but this one is dynamic," Dionne said. "It opens symmetrically, is a great size and has an eye-catching peppermint pattern."

"This would be the perfect flower for a father to give his young daughter for Valentine's Day," Fountain said. "Just mix it in with a few red roses."

Philadelphia designer Bill Schaffer, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, spotted this variety right away while perusing this year's entries. "This would give a holiday shopper on a budget something very unique," he said. He recommended arranging it with red spray roses, or — to play into the "high/low" trend — pairing it with something tropical, such as red leucadendron.

'POP MUSIC'
GOLDEN FLOWERS





'GOWER RAMSEY ORANGE' ONCIDIUM ORCHID
GREEN POINT NURSERIES INC.

BEST IN CLASS OTHER CUT

▲ OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Attractive orange-yellow coloring. Multiple branching blooms. Showy presentation.

APPLAUSE

"This will be a winner with a lot of customers," Fountain said. She praised its saturated, golden yellow tone and long laterals, which have a lot of movement. "I see this as a cascading bouquet for fall," she said. It's stunning enough to carry all by itself, she said, but would also blend well with orange lilies, red gerberas and 'Mango' callas.

Wilke suggested just sticking one stem in a mercury glass vase. "Minimalism is very trendy," she said. "This would look very 'Pottery Barn'."



BEST IN CLASS CUT BULB

▼ OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Sturdy stems. Consistent, rounded petals. Pure white color. Good vase life (14 days).

APPLAUSE

"The way the blossoms cluster closely together and grow upright provides florists a fabulous bang for their buck," Clevenger said. "I recommend every shop carry this on a weekly basis."

Cosentino didn't need any convincing. "We have a popular arrangement called 'lilies galore'," she said. "I know I could use 'Rialto' every single week."

Fronduto said he seldom sees a lily that's so purely white. "White lilies usually have an ivory mix to them," he said. "This one has a very clean look — not even any pollen dust."

"It's phenomenal," said Meskers, who grows more than 25 varieties of lilies at his farm in Aurora, Ore. "The best part? That variety is readily available from several growers."



'RIALTO' ORIENTAL LILY
GREEN VALLEY FLORAL



'RENATA' MINI POTTED ROSE
POULSEN ROSER A/S

BEST IN CLASS POTTED FLOWERING PLANT

< OUTSTANDING TRAITS

Abundant and plump rose buds that develop into durable flowers. Colorfast. Glossy foliage. Excellent longevity (21 to 28 days).

APPLAUSE

"Charming," said Clevenger of 'Renata'. She pointed to well-formed roses that open consistently, and very clean foliage — a definite selling point, she said, as foliage often "gets funky" on potted roses.

"This is a good, universal size, which gives florists a lot of options to upsell it with decorative containers," Fronduto said.

Wilke suggested this would be very popular with consumers, saying, "melons, corals and tangerines are all very hot and aren't going anywhere in the next few years."



★ Blue Ribbon Winners



"This would be a smart buy," Gaul said, praising 'Janeiro's' hardy stems and petals, clean foliage, vase life (12 days) and marketable color.

A slight orange tint "distinguishes it from other hot pinks," Van Antwerpen said. "It also has a slight ruffled shape that gives it a garden look, which customers love."

Delaney said she pictured it with green spider chrysanthemums and purple hydrangeas or delphinium.



"This delivers the garden look, which is very popular, as is the orange-yellow color," Gaul said. With scarce thorns, there's little chance that these roses will tear each other in packaging, he said. "It's also very firm, so you know it won't just blow open," he said.

Brown bridesmaid dresses are popular, and this would pop next to them, Delaney said. Pairing it with purples or greens would make it appropriate for spring and summer arrangements, she added.



"You can smack it and it doesn't move," Gaul said, doing just that to demonstrate 'Alba's' firmness. "Florists and customers alike will appreciate how this holds its shape."

A pink tint in the center attracted Delaney. "It's subtle, but that's a special touch," she said. She recommended pairing this cream-colored variety with pale pinks, such as hydrangeas or lisianthus. Its guard petals give it a "really full" shape, she said, which would appeal to many a bride.



"The light lavender with fuchsia edges stood out immediately," Van Antwerpen said. Bi-color roses are big sellers with his customers, "and this isn't a color combination you see too often," he said.

"It would look really dramatic en masse," said Vince Butera, AAF, AIFD, PFCI. It would also pop next to charcoal or stone gray bridesmaid dresses, said the York, Pa., florist, who admired it while visiting the competition room. Pairing it with purple trachelium would play up the lavender, he said.

"This would be a hit at our shop," Delaney said. The dark trim would blend well with reds for holiday work.



"This has such an appealing color, shape and petal count, you don't have to do much to show it off," Delaney said. "Just stick one stem in a vintage bottle." That quality makes 'Rouge Royale' a great choice for tablescape, "which remain very on trend," she said. For some Yuletide festivity, pair it with chartreuses hypericum in a low, mercury glass container, she said.

With its rich red color, garden rose shape and high petal count, "this is a rose customers will associate with luxury," Van Antwerpen said.



"This was actually my pick for 'Best in Class,'" said Van Antwerpen. Aptly named, this minty green "is so in demand," he said. Additionally, the way it lightens to a lemony color as it opens up gives it an outstanding presentation, he said.

Delaney, too, called 'Mint' a "sure seller." "My customers gravitate to green and white," she said. She suggested inserting it in white hydrangeas.

"The head is as big as my palm," Butera said. Given its impressive size, 'Mint' could be cut down to its head and placed directly on a dinner table, he said.



"A perennial favorite," said Van Antwerpen. "People like hot pink, big blooms and a high petal count."

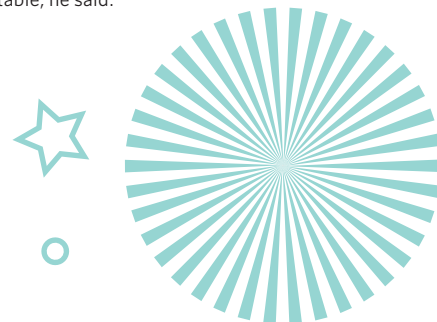
"It unfurls beautifully, and it's a nice firm rose, so you know it's going to last a long time," Butera said (14 days, according to the grower). He recommended pairing it with cool-colored flowers, such as purple thistle.



"Bright yellows are always in demand," Van Antwerpen said. Customers will like 'Bikini's' classic spiral shape and clean foliage, he said.

"Brides are really into charcoal and bright yellow right now," Butera said. "It's the new preppy palette — very J Crew." For attendants wearing charcoal, Butera would fashion 'Bikini' into a bouquet with a collar of dusty miller or seeded eucalyptus, "as a bridge between the rose and dress."

Strong, thornless stems and firm buds means 'Bikini' will pack and ship well, Gaul said.





'BLACK PEARL' ROSE
ROSAPRIMA

The classic red rose, 'Black Pearl' "will sell out every Valentine's Day," Gaul said.

Florists looking for an alternative to 'Black Magic' need look no further, Van Antwerpen said. "This has the same velvety texture and same full shape with perfect spirals," he said.

Delaney, too, called 'Black Pearl' a "smart staple." In addition to Valentine's Day, she envisions this being a big seller for Christmas (paired with evergreens) and weddings.



'TIFFANY' STANDARD ROSE
RIO ROSES

Gorgeous foliage first caught Delaney's eye. "There's nothing worse than seeing a pretty rose that has to be stripped because the foliage is lousy," she said.

Additionally, she noted the petals were a "perfect spiral" shape. "It begs to be used for bridal work," she said. Van Antwerpen agreed: "It's champagne with a slight blush — a color that will always be in demand for weddings," he said. Florists can accentuate the rose to appear more peach or ivory, he said.



'BRILLIANT STARS RED' SPRAY ROSE
ESMERALDA FARMS

"I wish I had known about this variety last spring, when so many girls wanted orange for prom!" Fountain said. "I'm definitely stocking up on this next year." With one stem, you have enough blooms for one corsage and one boutonniere — a valuable quality, she said, because it ensures flowers will match for couples.

Dionne praised its bloom size. "They look like baby roses, not buds," he said.



'SHINE' SPRAY ROSE
EUFLORIA FLOWERS

"I love the cabbage shape," Dionne said. "It plays into the garden-y look customers like."

"Its quality is obvious," Meskers said, pointing to long stems, nice foliage and an abundance of blooms.



'BARBADOS' SPRAY ROSE
EUFLORIA FLOWERS

"How fun is this?" said Fountain. Long laterals with lots of buds "that all open very well and hold their shape" offer designers a lot of versatility, "everything from a homey basket arrangement to wedding work," she said.

The apricot color and abundant open buds gave this spray an impressive presentation, Meskers said.

Dionne called 'Barbados' "a nice 'tweener color," which "is handy to bridge between seasons," he said. The petal count is so high, "it has a ranunculus-like look to it" without the ranunculus price, he added.



'MARISA' SPRAY ROSE
EUFLORIA FLOWERS

Long laterals mean this can be broken off for a centerpiece or basket design, Fountain said. She recommended pairing it with gerberas, carnations and lilies in pinks, oranges and whites for a spring garden feel. "But it's so full, you could just stick six stems in a vase and have a lush arrangement with a high perceived value," she said.

"The way the flowers cluster at the top of the laterals gives a great presentation," Meskers said.

'Marisa's' rich, golden color is very attractive, Dionne said. "And a plethora of secondary blooms gives even more depth to an already full spray," he said.

RIBBON ROYALTY

Of the 37 companies exhibiting at the SAF Outstanding Varieties Competition, some left with more ribbons than a gift-wrap department. Those with the biggest haul include:

Green Valley Floral, greenvalleyfloral.com
14 ribbons: 2 Best in Class, 4 Blue, 8 Red

Esmeralda Farms, esmeraldafarms.com
13 ribbons: 1 Best in Class, 4 Blue, 8 Red

Euflovia Flowers, eufloviaflowers.com
10 ribbons: 1 Best in Show, 1 Best in Class, 4 Blue, 4 Red

Rosaprima, rosaprima.com
9 ribbons: 1 Best in Class, 4 Blue, 4 Red

Fresca Farms LC, frescafarms.com
7 ribbons: 2 Blue, 5 Red

In addition, the following companies earned either blue or red ribbons:

The Elite Flower, eliteflower.com

Esprit Miami, espritmiami.com

Fides BV, fides.nl

Flores Del Este, floresdeleste.com

Flores Funza, floresfunza.com

Golden Flowers, goldenflowers.com

Green Point Nurseries Inc.,
greenpointnursery.com

Groflowers, groflowers.biz

HOSA International, hosa.com

International Rose Breeders,
eghillcompany.com

Kitayama Bros. Inc., kbflowers.com

Mellano & Company, mellano.com

Multiflora, multifloragreenhouses.com

Natural Flowers Inc., nflowers.com

Ocean View Flowers,
oceanviewflowers.com

Poulsen Roser A/S, poulsenrosen.dk

Perfect Quality Roses, pqroses.com

Pyramid Flowers Inc.,
pyramidflowers.com

Rio Roses, rioroses.com

Roseville Farms LC, rosevillefarms.com

Royal Flowers, royalfloresmiami.com

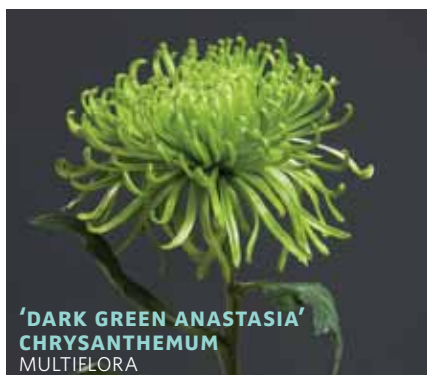
Surtir de la Sabana Ltda, barberet.com

★ Blue Ribbon Winners



"It has an illuminated quality," Butera said of this rust-colored chrysanthemum. "The dark underside projects the lighter color on top, like sun rays. Look at those three-dimensional, reflexed petals!" He recommended using it as a focal point in a fall design with grains, grasses and cattails.

Cosentino said this would be a good choice for both everyday arrangements and event work. For analogous harmony, she would arrange it with sunflowers and red and yellow cockscomb in a natural-looking container. "It would look like a fiery sunset," she said.



"Mums don't always get the respect they deserve — this one is stunning," Fronduto said of 'Dark Green Anastasia's' vibrant color that defies seasonal categorization and attractive foliage.

"This is the brightest green in the room," Cosentino said, remarking that the shade is a customer favorite. "I do a 'lime-aid bouquet' that is a big seller, which is basically 10 of these chrysanthemums in a vase."

Butera said this variety would fit perfectly in the organic look (think: greens, mosses, twigs) that a number of his customers request. "It has incredible texture and shading," he said. "That provides movement that draws your eye into the arrangement."



Weddel said this would be a hit with her brides in Colorado. "They want an alpine look," she explained. Using 'Magnet' at the base of a bouquet gives a nice, snowy effect, she said. To complete the style, she would add papyrus — "to look like pine, but not feel 'too Christmasy'."

The pure white color of this gypsophila struck Dionne: "The first quality I look for is marketability of color," he said. "This will always be in demand."

Meskers appreciated the beefed up blooms. "There are double flowers," he said.



"What a wonderful year-round jewel tone," Clevenger said.

Cosentino agreed that 'Mambo' has many applications throughout the year. "It'd look equally good with Christmas greens as it would with white peonies for a springtime bridal bouquet."

Besides its striking color, 'Mambo' has very consistent blooms that grow upright, Fronduto said.

"That's a trait that can be challenging to get in lilies," he said. "You usually see at least a tilt down."



Dionne praised the larger-than-average bloom size. "It has a fluffy, cloudlike look," he said.

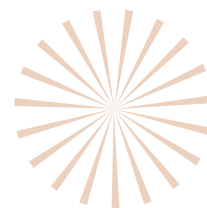
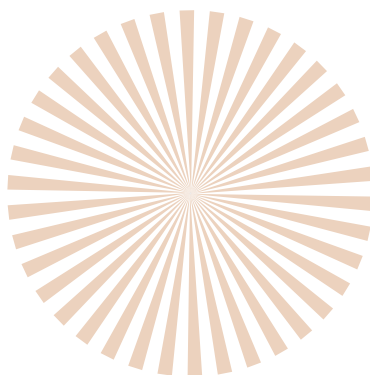
Fountain envisioned this in groomsman's bouquets, all by itself or with stephanotis.



"The salmon edging works like eyeliner — it makes the anthurium stand out more," Dionne said.

Meskers gave it high marks for its strong, straight stem, impeccable coloring, longevity and nice "plate shape."

"A lot of people think anthuriums are masculine, but this one has a softer look," Fountain said. She envisioned this in a high-style arrangement with pink ice proteas at the base.





GOLDEN
FLOWERS

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★ Blue Ribbon Winners



Dionne, who said he's selling 10 times as many hydrangeas today as he was three years ago, anticipates buying this variety in great volume. "I see year-round demand for dark purple hydrangeas," he said. "My customers will love this one's thick stems and consistently shaped sepals."

Meskers, too, called it a "sure seller." "It's full, firm and a marketable color," he said.

Fountain spied "a pretty base for a Thanksgiving centerpiece." It pairs well with harvest colors, she said, suggesting red, orange or yellow spray roses as complementary flowers. Or, play up its dark properties in a macabre-inspired arrangement (think: bat flowers, 'Schwartzwalder' callas, black cosmos) for Halloween or Friday the 13th, she said.



These "towering stems" and massive blooms demand attention, Dionne said. Meskers, too, remarked on the stem length, saying, "This height is pretty rare." It also contains a lot of good fall colors, he said.



Dionne dubbed 'Premium Plus' "the ideal wedding centerpiece hydrangea" due to its pure white color, globe shape and size ("large but not enormous," he said).

Fountain pictured it in a mono-floral design in a sleek, black container. "It's on trend with the resurgence in black and white style," she said. "Plus, the black will make the hydrangea pop."

Firm sepals indicate this hydrangea will hold its shape well, Meskers said.



Meskers praised this variety's coloring, calling it an "elegant" pink — soft, but "not exactly baby pink."

"This looks so natural next to green," Dionne said. "It's the perfect hydrangea to achieve a Victorian look, which is in high demand with consumers."

Fountain identified 'Pink' as a great base for a bouquet of white roses, Queen Anne's lace and green hypericum.



"This a refreshing break from the blinding yellow you often see," Fronduto said of 'Dimension's' commercial appeal.

Cosentino also remarked on the color, calling it "warm and comforting. This is a great 'get well soon' flower," she said.



"In every measurement of a green hydrangea — size, color, stem length, foliage, bloom structure — this is the ideal specimen," Dionne said.

Fountain lifted a stem of 'Madame Emile Mojito' and said, "There's a bridal bouquet. It's so big and beautiful, you don't need to do anything to it." And given the hydrangea's astounding vase life (20 days), "you can get this in your shop for earlier prep time, without worrying that it will dry out," she said.

During the "Walk through the Winner's Circle" presentation, both Wilke and Weddel proclaimed it "absolutely flawless." Grabbing stems from nearby entries, the duo demonstrated how seamlessly white anemones blended with the hydrangea, and how nicely cherry-pink spray roses popped next to the pale green.





'ORANGE QUEEN' ALSTROEMERIA
NATURAL FLOWERS INC.

"It has a nice transition in colors—from pumpkin to tangerine to bright orange," Fronduto said. He also commended its substantial stem and clean foliage.

"I'd like to see this paired with turquoise," said Cosentino, who suggested using it in a bouquet with hydrangeas tinted with DESIGN MASTER color tool's new turquoise spray. Cover the stems with turquoise ribbon, she said.



'SYMPHONY BLANQUITA' ALSTROEMERIA
ESMERALDA FARMS

'Symphony Blaquita' signaled wedding bells for Cosentino. "Its apple green tint is very pretty," she said, "This would give a budget bride something special." Her recommended pairings: white hydrangeas and dusty miller.

"This has a smaller head size than other alstroemerias, but I like it — it has a delicate look," Clevenger said. Although diminutive, the blooms are abundant, and would look smashing in a low cube design, she said. "That's a style a lot of customers like," she said. "So let's not forget the value of small flowers."

Katie Hendrick is senior editor of Floral Management.
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