

# Expert Advice Floral Design



**NATALIE MACK, Floral Designer**

**N**ATALIE MACK of Mack Floral Design has two contrasting passions: helping troubled youth and creating beautiful floral environments. As a correctional counselor by trade, flowers are Natalie's creative outlet and respite. After years of designing flowers for friends' weddings and events and throwing elaborate dinner parties, opening her own floral design studio is the culmination of a dream. Mack Floral specializes in providing full-service floral design for weddings throughout greater Sonoma County.



## What's the best advice about florals for a couple just starting to plan their wedding?

Pick your venue before deciding on floral design. Some venues require more design elements than others, and some have stricter regulations when it comes to installing and staging floral décor. There is nothing more disappointing than getting your heart set on a hanging floral chandelier or romantic candlelit tablescape, only to find that the venue doesn't allow anything to hang from the ceiling and that open flame is a no-go! Once you know the do's and don'ts of the venue, you can then have fun getting inspired by the surroundings and planning floral designs that will enhance your big day!

## What are the key things to consider when beginning your floral design preparation?

Be true to yourself. Clichéd as that may sound, flowers can say more about you and your personal sense of style than any other element of your wedding. Trends come and go quickly. The greenery garlands, brass, and blushes that are so popular now may be out next month. Therefore, incorporate who you are stylistically at this special time of your life – this is what creates great memories. Also, consider reserving the majority of your floral budget for pieces that will be most photographed (for example, the ceremony backdrop, bouquets, and reception centerpieces).



## What are the most common challenges a couple faces when it comes to floral design choices?

They may be your favorite, but Cafe Au Lait Dahlias don't like it hot! Weather, time of year, and the availability of seasonal flowers are very real factors to consider in choosing your floral design. Also, flowers cost much more than most people realize, so concentrate on what you really love and are drawn to (not necessarily what has the most "Likes").

## How can a professional floral designer help?

Floral designers should be able to take all your inspirations (from a picture of your favorite bouquet to your cherished heirloom vase or piece of lace) and help you hone in on your floral style. Interview two to three floral designers. If they don't get your vision, move on. Keep looking until you find one who really does. Then,

trust the person you've chosen. If your favorite flowers are unavailable or out of your price range, a good designer will be able to give you a comparable substitute that won't sacrifice quality or style.

## How would you describe the quintessential Sonoma approach to florals?

We're lucky to live in such a beautiful place, filled with passionate local flower farmers and artistic floral designers. Sonoma florals are garden-inspired, textured, organic, eclectic, and ever-evolving. There is a touch of wild and whimsy in local designs that I just adore and try to incorporate into my designs.

## Mix, Don't Match

Be creative! Use fruit as bud vases and combine vintage with modern pieces. Mix metal and wood with crystal and color. Floral design should be fun!

## Get to Know Sonoma's Slow Growers

Did you know there is a thriving community of flower farmers and florists who are dedicated to championing the Slow Flowers movement right here in Sonoma County? This movement involves a conscious choice to use in-season blooms in floral designs and to source from local (Sonoma County) and stateside (California, elsewhere in the US) growers. The North Bay Flower Collective is a group of strong women and men who work, live, and breathe local seasonal flowers and sustainable practices, and they have a fabulous time doing it. Check out the collective at [nbflowercollective.com](http://nbflowercollective.com).



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