

# FASHION- FORWARD FLORALS

Like fashion designers, the best florists have styles all their own. Meet nine of them here. We asked these New York-based florists to dream up a bouquet or an arrangement and share some of their secrets—and the haute-couture results are worthy of any runway.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NGOC MINH NGO  
TEXT BY LEIGH CRANDALL

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## BOLD AND BRIGHT

**WHO:** Ariella Chezar of Ariella Chezar Design, [ariellaflowers.com](http://ariellaflowers.com). **THE ARRANGEMENT:** Inspired by this exotic-bloom-patterned Christian Lacroix fabric, Chezar created a colorful centerpiece that includes several varieties of tulips, ranunculus, anthuriums, carnations, muscari, and gerbera daisies. Chevron-patterned dishes that echo the candy stripes of the fabric complete the look, making for a whimsical yet sophisticated vibe. **HOW SHE GOT HER START:** While studying classical voice, Chezar visited a family friend who was preparing flowers for a wedding. "In that moment, I realized that working with flowers was exactly what I wanted to do," she says. **FAVORITE MUSIC TO DESIGN TO:** "Anything by Bach, Schumann, Brahms. . ." **WHEN SHE'S NOT DESIGNING, YOU CAN FIND HER:** On her sustainable farm in upstate New York. "Growing your own flowers is the ultimate treat, particularly for someone with an insatiable flower appetite."

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## A TASTE FOR THE DRAMATIC

**WHO:** Lewis Miller of Lewis Miller Design, [lewismillerdesign.com](http://lewismillerdesign.com). **THE ARRANGEMENT:** Miller was drawn to the luxurious, contemporary pairing of black and gold. “Velvety chocolate cosmos, viburnum steel berries, and inky fritillaria create shadows, while tulips from my garden add pops of light,” he says. Mimic the look for a chic, but not overly feminine, table.

**SIGNATURE STYLE:** “I use contrasting elements that keep the eye moving and engaged. If I’m working with big, floppy flowers, like roses and peonies, I’ll introduce a masculine element, like a fruiting branch.” **BREAKTHROUGH PROJECT:** “My first arrangement under my own name, an all-green arrangement—no flowers. It was lush, spiky, fuzzy, and herbal, and was my way of blazing my own path.” **INSPIRED BY:** “Travel. I recently visited Casa Luis Barragán in Mexico City. His use of color and light took my breath away.”

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## LOVE STORY

**WHO:** Nicolette Owen of Nicolette Camille Floral Design, [nicolettecamille.com](http://nicolettecamille.com). **THE BOUQUET:** Owen wanted to capture the exuberant spirit of a garden. “Nothing too forced or fussy, but a little wild and opulent,” she says. Here, the first flush of California garden roses is paired with lilacs, ranunculus, hellebores, peonies, and fritillaria. We find the result wildly romantic.

**HOW SHE GOT HER START:** “I grew up in the Hudson Valley, spending days in my mother’s garden and cutting my grandmother’s lilacs. My first flower job was at a tiny bucket shop in California, where I worked and learned for two years, and then I moved back to New York and opened my studio in 2006.” **WHEN SHE’S NOT DESIGNING, YOU CAN**

**FIND HER:** “Teaching! I run a flower school ([littleflowerschoolbrooklyn.com](http://littleflowerschoolbrooklyn.com)), and I love it because I often learn things from the novices in class. They come up with combinations I wouldn’t necessarily have thought to try.”

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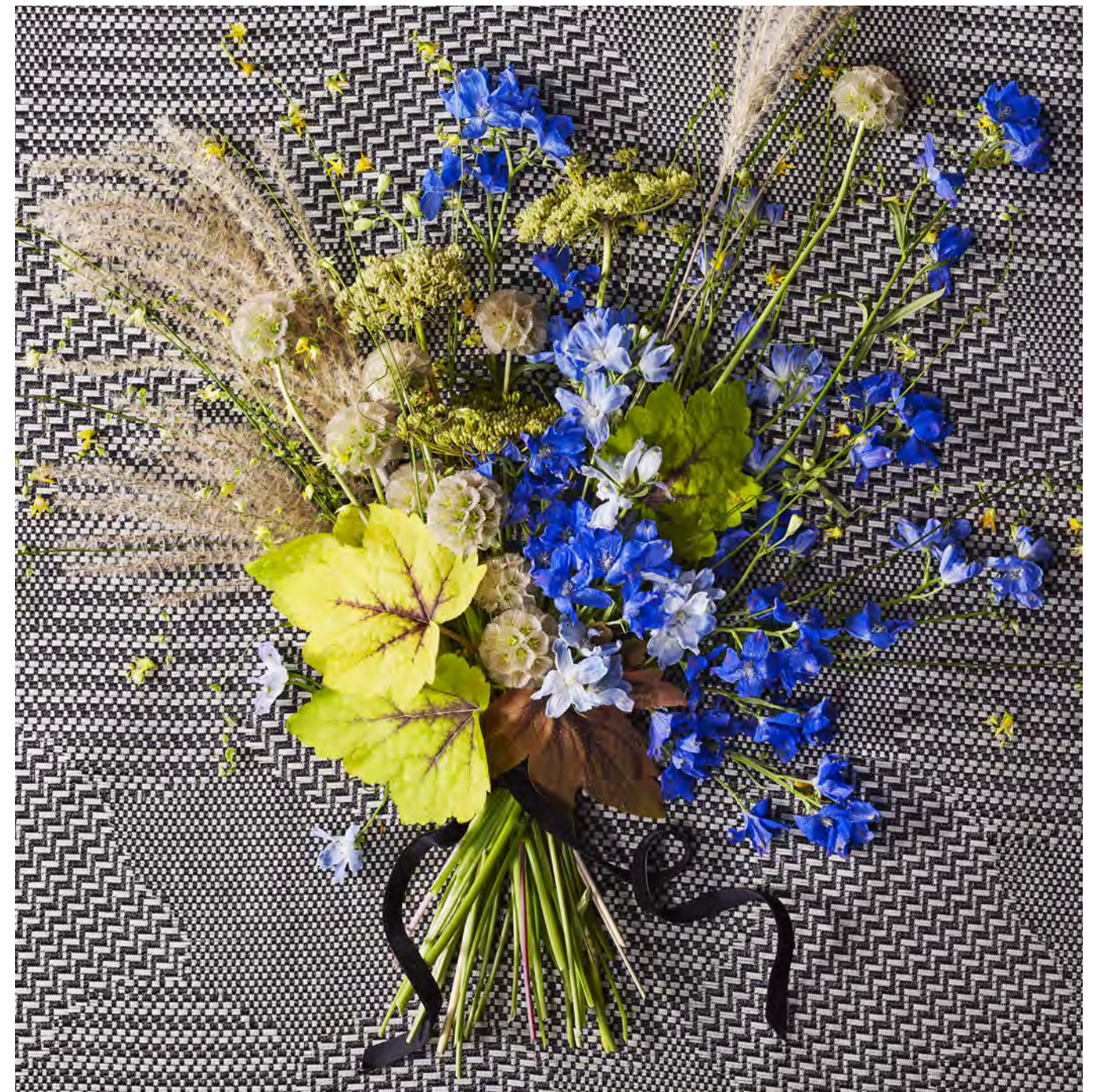


## RETRO GLAM

**WHO:** Marisa Competello of Metaflora, [metafloranyc.com](http://metafloranyc.com). **THE ARRANGEMENT:** Competello combined Bismarck leaves painted gold with anthuriums and king protea in a large vase, while phalaenopsis orchids spill out from a smaller vessel. An ostrich-feather pen sits at the ready atop a guest book and, against the high contrast of black-and-white stripes, the whole tableau is easy to imagine at the entrance to a formal-but-not-stuffy black-tie wedding. **INSPIRED BY:** The '80s. "I love the decadence and bold colors of that period," says Competello, who also collects vintage vessels. **FIRST FLORAL GIG:** "I had a flower stand instead of a lemonade stand growing up. I would sell neighborhood-foraged daffodils and tulips, wrapped up in tissue paper." **BLOOMS FREQUENTLY FEATURED IN HER INSTAGRAM FEED:** Heliconia, anthuriums, and calla lilies. "Basically the weird ones. The weirder the better."

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## WILD CHILD

**WHO:** Taylor Patterson of Fox Fodder Farm, [foxfodderfarm.com](http://foxfodderfarm.com). **THE BOUQUET:** "I like to mix high and low," says Patterson, borrowing a phrase often used for fashion. "So there's Queen Anne's lace and dried grasses, but also some fancy tiny Japanese orchids." Patterson also included scabiosa seedpods, yellow heuchera leaves, and pops of blue in the form of delphiniums, all tied together with a black-velvet ribbon—for the bride who wants to walk that line of civilized rusticity. **FIRST FLORAL GIG:** Selling potted plants in Mason jars at the Brooklyn Flea. **DREAM CLIENT:** Dries van Noten. "I love his aesthetic. His clothes manage to feel both timeless and avant-garde." **SIGNATURE STYLE:** "There's a simplicity to things I'm drawn to. I tend to make things that are more airy than dense." **SECRET FARM FANTASY:** "Moving to the south of France to grow lavender. There would probably be some goats, too."

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## UNTAMED BEAUTY

**WHO:** Emily Thompson of Emily Thompson Flowers, [emilythompsonflowers.com](http://emilythompsonflowers.com). **THE ARRANGEMENT:** Thompson found inspiration in British designer Vivienne Westwood, who used traditional fabrics like tartan to create surprising takes on punk fashions. "I wanted the vase to be aggressive and the flowers to feel a little subversive," says Thompson. Feast your eyes on this design, which includes fly-eating cobra lilies, *Fritillaria imperialis*, clematis, and oncidiums. **HOW SHE GOT HER START:** After graduating with an MFA in sculpture, "I started doing floral design for some friends' weddings. I came to realize that I had a powerful relationship with, and strong opinions about, flowers." **CLIENTS INCLUDE:** Chanel, Proenza Schouler, and the Modern at MoMA. **WILDEST PROJECT:** Guest designer for Holidays at the White House in 2011: Her team installed sculptural garlands and intimate gardens.

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## LUSH LIFE

**WHO:** Ariel Dearie of Ariel Dearie Flowers, [arieldearieflowers.com](http://arieldearieflowers.com). **THE ARRANGEMENT:** "I like to buy whatever's most beautiful and fresh at the market, and then design to emphasize the flowers," she explains. Fitting, then, that she cites a gold dress by Erdem, a brand known for eye-popping feminine florals, as her jumping-off point for this hanging arrangement, which includes palmetto leaves, anemones, ranunculus, hellebores, and sweet peas. **HOW SHE GOT HER START:** "I was managing a restaurant because I wanted to open my own bakery. When the owner was out, she'd let me arrange the restaurant's flowers. Then I started doing florals for friends' weddings, and it took off. The bakery never came to be." **CLIENTS INCLUDE:** Dior, Prada, and Bulgari. **WILDEST PROJECT:** "A photo shoot with Isabella Rossellini wearing a nude bodysuit. I had to 'strategically' arrange vines and flowers on her."

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## SUPER NATURAL

**WHO:** Sarah Ryhanen of Saipua, *saipua.com*. **THE BOUQUET:** This bundle captures the beauty of a life lived in nature, ideal for an outdoor celebration. It includes blueberry flowers, as well as hellebores, narcissus, and fritillaria grown on Ryhanen's farm in upstate New York. "The experience of farming 107 acres has put me more in touch with the flow of the seasons and the immense power that flowers and nature have on our psyches." **HOW SHE GOT HER START:** The former art curator received a gorgeous bunch of dahlias for her birthday in 2005. "I was hooked from that moment on."

**ABOUT THE NAME:** "My dad is Finnish, and we grew up with a strong sauna tradition. In the sauna there was always a birch-scented *saunasaippua*. *Saipua* is the Finnish word for 'soap,' minus one *p*."

**INSPIRED BY:** "Walks in the woods with my dogs, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

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## IN LIVING COLOR

**WHO:** Brittany Asch of BRRCH, *brrch.com*. **THE ARRANGEMENT:** When Asch first saw Alessandro Michele's Gucci campaigns, "I thought, *He thinks about color the same way I do*. Color is hugely important to me, and his work is beautiful, youthful, and decadent." Asch captured the vivid, sophisticated fun with bunched arrangements of phalaenopsis orchids, epidendrums, lady's slippers, anthuriums, begonias, roses, clematis, hydrangeas, and alliums. **HOW SHE GOT HER START:**

"I was working at a restaurant, and at the same time I was freelancing for NYC florists and events. I decided this was what I wanted to do. I worked for years until the advent of Instagram meant I could really show what I wanted to create, and it took off from there." **ABOUT THE NAME:** "It's derivative of my first and last name, and I had a birch tree I loved outside my house growing up."

See The Guide for table-setting sources

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