

2007 AWARD OF MERIT WINNER

Modern Arrangements - Love Them!

By Julie Matlin

I love creating and building modern rose arrangements! When I know a rose show is planned, I can't wait until my show schedule arrives just to see what the modern arrangements are!

As an arranger, this design style represents the perfect marriage between roses, art, and design at its floral best. It allows the arranger full expression and interpretation of the show theme, 'Shakespeare in Bloom' planned for the Butte Rose Society this fall. The designer can show, through the arrangement, sound artistic skills built on an understanding of the "principles and elements" of design as delineated in the '06 ARS *Guidelines for Judging Rose Arrangements*. This is a "where to start", must have guide for all arrangers of every skill level. It is available from the ARS, and from the BRS lending library.

The guidelines and rules set forth in this handbook cover everything the arranger needs to know to work through the creative process beginning to end. It covers traditional, modern, oriental style arrangements, and more. It is comprehensive and detailed.

The show schedule will specify the type of modern arrangement required for the class. The arranger may also choose from a number of modern designs when the show schedule reads, "designer's choice." Some of these are really challenging and fun. All forms are explained in the handbook: modern line; free form; hanging; parallel; synergistic; under-water; stretch; and transparency are some examples.

When building modern arrangements, or any other arrangement for that matter, there are six design principles and seven design elements to be considered. Some of these are used consciously, some intuitively. The six principles are: balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, and scale. These are the design concepts that the arranger should learn, understand, and practice, as these are the concepts on which judges choose show winners.

Dominance: One unifying element used within the arrangement, such as color, form, or texture.

Contrast: The use of different design components - shapes, lines, colors, or textures that can visually differ from each other, but work together through their design placement to create a cohesive and artistic arrangement.

Rhythm: The flow of line, color, texture, and space that moves throughout the design. Rhythm draws the eye through the design.

Proportion: The measurement of one part of the design compared to another, as well as the overall dimensions of the arrangement area. Specifically, the proper size ratio of areas and parts. For instance, proportion generally determines the height and width of an arrangement in relation to the container and space - how tall or short the arrangement materials must be.

Scale: A matter of size in the sense of how big or small a rose, leaf, or accessory should be in relation to the size of the container, the given arrangement theme, or the base on which the arrangement sits.

Within these design principles, the seven design elements work as the building blocks by which an arranger can let his/her imagination and inspiration soar: space, line, form, texture, color, and pattern - all used to create "the whole."

Principles and elements are found and used in every form of art from ancient to modern

times, including flower arranging whether we are aware of using them or not. In making modern arrangements, these rules get manipulated and shoved around, but that's the ultimate fun of the creative process, perhaps creating something really outrageous but doing it within the given boundaries. Most arrangement judges who appreciate modern designs like to see these original entries come to 'show'.

Armed with an awareness of the design principles and elements, and a show schedule, the arranger can then begin to conceptualize about a possible arrangement, developing a "blueprint" that will become the completed entry. Ideas spring from many sources, sometimes I grab my art and design books, sometimes I see something in nature, or perhaps a suggestion from a friend. Just remember to pay attention to what modern class you plan to enter, and what that class asks from your arrangement. Consider all the design components: vases, other containers, or none; plant materials, especially the roses; the mechanics needed (how is the plant material secured and kept fresh); design backgrounds or bases; and all the accessories to be used. Check out craft, hobby, and hardware stores for ideas and supplies. I like to play the "What if I try..." game with myself. I always visualize and write out my designs and ideas. Playing with ideas is important, so is experimenting and practicing. More often than not, an arranger will discover a new way to use or reuse materials, or find a unique way to position roses. I have spent a lot of time checking out the "unusual" to find the unusual for a design. Materials can be simple or complex. It's 'designer's choice' how he/she wants to tell the design story. Empty cupboards and start playing with what you have on hand. You might be surprised at what you can create with "stuff" that's just lying around. Experiment and practice! Be a kid!

A final creative step for me is how I use color in my arrangement as it applies to the roses I use. The roses are the stars, the reason for the show. They are the most important component of any design, the "dynamic expression" of the arrangement. The colors used throughout the arrangement must always enhance the roses. The roses are the 'light' of the arrangement and literally move the viewers eye through the arrangement. How the roses are used, how they work within the design, is what the judges are judging. Always emphasize the roses and make sure the colors are compatible!

Always cut the best roses for arrangements. The standards are no different from horticultural exhibition. No matter how original, sculptural, or well-designed an arrangement, if the roses are not at their best, well formed, and properly groomed, judges will deduct points.

To enter an arrangement is a rewarding experience, but to share with others is the best experience. Creating and building modern arrangements is challenging and rewarding, it's being the architect of your own little world. Let your ideas take shape, make a blueprint, unleash the artist, and enter an arrangement for 'Shakespeare in Bloom.' You could walk away with 'Best in Class' and 'Best in Show.'

Just remember: Be familiar with the *Guidelines...*

Use your inspiration and imagination
Make a blueprint
Experiment and practice
Have fun!