



TIPS FROM A PRO »

## FAB FLORALS

Tips on locating a creative event florist in any city. *By Susan Dunkelman*

FINDING THE RIGHT FLORIST can be a challenge no matter what city you are in and what type of event you are holding. The key to locating a creative yet reliable floral designer can be accomplished with relative ease if you set up a methodical approach that covers all of the standards you are seeking.

**T**he first step is to put together a clear understanding of what you are trying to accomplish, what your event logistics entail (specific location, set-up and break-down times, etc.), your budget and any other important stipulations. This will ensure that when you obtain proposals, there will not be any miscommunication with the deliverables. It will also allow you to get competitive bids that all cover the same scope of work.

One of the best resources for locating a reputable florist is to contact the concierges at high-end hotels in the area. Find out not only who they recommend, but also what florist the hotel itself uses for their internal décor. Once you have those names, you can visit their Instagram and other social media channels to view their work. Don't be misled if after clicking on their websites you first see floral delivery information and not examples of their design work. Many florists have partnered with larger floral services for across-the-country delivery, so the first link may just provide delivery information. You may need to look further for the link to the actual website where you can see their work. You can also complete an online search to see which florists are mentioned as "top" florists in the

area. That can be somewhat tricky as lists of florists are often grouped by the reviews they receive and the type of work they do, which can sometimes be misleading as they may not appear to align with your needs (e.g. personal florals versus corporate events). Another great source of information is The Knot, which lists florists by region and usually highlights any rating/rankings or awards they have received.

When you have your final list in place, it's time to actually reach out to the floral designers that you have identified as prospective good fits. Provide them with your needs as you have determined in step one above: your vision, event logistics, budget and other key details. Discuss any hidden costs; determine if you will keep the vessels/flowers after the event and any other unique features of your job. Always ask for at least three references and when checking them, ask specific questions

regarding delivery and pick-up information as that can sometimes be an issue no matter how lovely the actual floral arrangements are.

Once you have selected your floral designer, the creative process can begin. The more input you can provide about your event, your vision and your client, the more productive and faster the process will go. Be sure to ask for photos of any proposed floral so there are no surprises the actual day of your event. It's also crucial to discuss the size of the arrangements with relation to the space they will occupy. It's helpful to provide photos of the event space, furniture being used, and details of any other factors (including color scheme) that could influence the type of floral that will be used.

Once your event is complete and you are satisfied with the results, an online review is a nice thing to do and will help others looking for a reputable and creative florist in the future.



AS MANAGING PARTNER OF THE CHARLES GROUP, INC. **SUSAN DUNKELMAN** CREATIVELY CONCEPTUALIZES MEETINGS AND EVENTS AND PLANS AND EXECUTES THEM TO PERFECTION; DELIVERING MEMORABLE EVENTS BOTH WITHIN THE US AND GLOBALLY. PRIOR TO FORMING THE CHARLES GROUP, INC. IN 1987, SUSAN SERVED AS DIRECTOR OF CONFERENCES FOR THE RISK AND INSURANCE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY (RIMS).