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Always in Bloom

by MATT COSENTINO

photos by JODY ROBINSON

With the freshest flowers, inspiring designs, and a personalized approach, **Accents by Michele** provides memorable arrangements for the most precious moments of people's lives.

Accents by Michele, a full-service florist for everything from major events like weddings and funerals to everyday special moments, has a particular customer who comes in every two to three weeks to buy flowers for his wife. Owner Michele Fabik, who has been in the industry for 45 years, knows that he could easily save himself time and money by stopping by his local grocery store instead. That's why she always puts her heart and soul into every arrangement he leaves with, showing off the commitment to the fresh, premium blooms and exceptional creativity for which she has long been known.

"His wife is always amazed that that flowers last for three weeks, but they should," Fabik says. "You don't want to go to the grocery store, buy a bunch of flowers, and have them die the next day. If you're going to buy something, you want to buy something that is going to last, and that's what we try to do here. We try to sell you the best product, the best quality, and the best design."

Fabik, a Broomall native who comes from an artistic family, fell in love with flowers while working at a flower shop during high school. She went on to learn from florists she considers to be the best and brightest in the area. Since opening Accents by Michele 21 years ago, she has built a stellar reputation on her personalized approach and attention to detail.

She realizes that most people don't understand what goes on behind the scenes in producing stunning flower displays. Most flowers come into the United States from other countries, for example, so dealing with a perishable item adds another layer of complexity. She buys only the highest grade of flowers, and she and her staff take the time to process the flowers correctly, with an emphasis on changing the water daily and cleaning the containers to preserve the flowers' beauty for as long as possible.

Fabik constantly researches her art through the internet, publications, and movies to discover the latest trends and color palettes. She loves to share that expertise with one client group in particular: brides-to-be.

"I really get excited to do weddings because it's all new for each bride, and every bride is different," she says. "There's no standard package—every wedding is custom because they come in with different color palettes, different ideas, and different selections, and then I take what they bring me and create their vision. Actually, people often say, 'You created beyond what I even imagined this could be.' That makes me tear up, because it means I've made an impact in their lives."

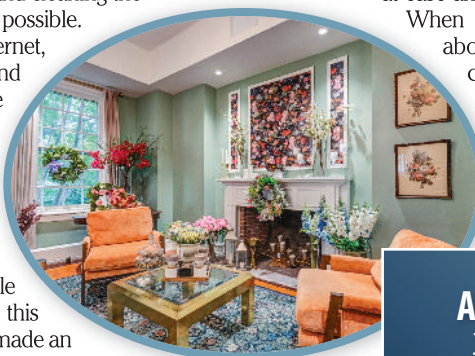
Fabik has longstanding relationships with all of the area's premier wedding vendors. She also knows the churches and venues intimately, so she understands how the flowers will fit within each space. She prefers to meet brides-to-be in person so she can fully understand their personality and deliver a flower arrangement they will never forget.

"I can't believe there are all these florists giving prices over the phone," she says. "To me, that's a waste of time. I don't want somebody to pick me because I gave them the best price; I want them to pick me because of merit, because they like me, and because they trust me."

She puts in similar effort no matter the occasion, from birthdays and anniversaries, to showers and bat mitzvahs, to proms and other rites of passage. Also, she will make sure every arrangement lives up to her own high standards, especially for significant events.

"It's as if it's my own daughter's wedding—those flowers should be perfect," she says. "I make sure the flowers are perfect for any event, including funerals. A lot of florists will use flowers that aren't so fresh for funerals, but not me. The way I feel about funerals is that it's my last chance to make the family feel at ease and feel happy during a difficult time."

When families tell me that people raved about the flowers, I thank them for choosing me. I get to be a part of that person's life for a few minutes, and for all of the people who were suffering, I helped bring joy to their hearts at such a sad time. ■



Accents by Michele

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