

ISSUE No. 20

# Slow Flowers JOURNAL

By Debra Prinzing

# FLOWERS & COMMUNITY

Artistic, educational or promotional, floral collaborations reflect a new model in the marketplace.

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In the imaginations of many floral designers, the medium of flowers is so much more than a “product.” Rather flowers are a vehicle to bring people together – for exhibition, instruction and to illustrate a greater good.

This month, the “Slow Flowers Journal” focuses on three inclusive, community-minded projects. Yes, they are beautiful, but they also have changed perceptions and deepened connections in the floral marketplace.

In Maine, a design workshop allows all participants

to teach and learn with visually enticing florals. In Pennsylvania, flower farming and floral design come together to embellish an urban cultural district and engage the public to see art in a new way. In Minnesota, a florist gives back to flower farmers by teaching them valuable design skills to benefit their growing practices for future seasons.

Each event is a reflection of time, place, people and flowers. We hope each will ignite your imagination to use flowers to build a community in your backyard.





# Tour de Fleurs

Philadelphia-area florists and flower farmers team up to produce Fishtown Floral Crawl during arts and design celebration.

Photography © **Janine Feeney, Vow2Vow**

**I**nspired by Lewis Miller's "Flower Flash" installations that pop up around New York City and by Flower House Detroit, Lisa Waud's magnificent 2015 project, a group of Philadelphia-area flower farmers and florists are bringing similarly spontaneous florals to their hometown. Called **Fishtown Floral Crawl**, the project highlights beauty and seasonal availability of local botanicals and talents of the floral design community in the City of Brotherly Love.

Cassie Plummer of **Jig-Bee Flower Farm** and Maura Feeney of **Maura Rose Events** created the event as part of **DesignPhiladelphia**, a citywide weeklong celebration that focuses on thoughtful design,

collaborative business practices and community engagement.

The women wanted to showcase flowers and floral design as a relevant art form within the larger discussion of Philadelphia's public art, architecture, fashion and the artisan-maker movement. They recruited 11 volunteer florists to participate and paired them with the prolific end-of-summer bounty harvested from nine area flower farms. Jig-Bee Flower Farm and Maura Rose Events partially fund the Floral Crawl, offsetting costs of photography, a website and promotion through \$10 ticket sales to the public.



Initiated in October 2017, the Floral Crawl continued for a second time last October in the hip Philadelphia neighborhood of Fishtown. Florists transformed façades and interiors of a wide array of businesses, including restaurants, clothing stores and an indoor playground, with beautiful and seasonal installations to showcase their art and shine a light on locally grown flowers.

During the opening night tour, each guest was encouraged to “make a bouquet,” giving him or her a newfound appreciation for floral design and local flowers.

The project got its start when Plummer, who grows flowers on once-vacant lots in the heart of Philadelphia, learned about DesignPhiladelphia. She saw the arts-oriented campaign as an ideal vehicle for promoting local flowers and design and reached out to Feeney, a floral customer of Jig-Bee Flower Farm.

“I knew together we were a perfect team to head this up,” Plummer says. “We want to increase the visibility of locally grown flowers, promote the entire floral design community to a wider audience and give florists and our flowers an opportunity to shine as part of the larger design and arts community.”

For Feeney, who says she strives to “source flowers as locally as possible,” the collaboration achieves a number of objectives. “This lit a spark for us to try and get the movement to gain momentum in our area. The farmers and floral designers who are coming together through this event are super supportive and encouraging of one another.”

Fishtown Floral Crawl’s website invites participating florists to register for \$75, which partially compensates farms providing buckets of just-picked flowers. Each designer selected about 40 bunches of flowers and foliage with which to create a three-dimensional installation. The installations and opening tours took place over the Columbus Day holiday to allow the public to witness the design process. Plummer and Feeney scheduled the Floral Crawl for three days, although DesignPhiladelphia runs for a longer period.

Measuring the Floral Crawl’s success isn’t always obvious, Feeney says. “As far as increasing bookings for future weddings, I wouldn’t say this event has had a direct impact on my business,



1) Page 47: The public gathered around the first stop of Fishtown Floral Crawl along Philadelphia’s Frankford Avenue, taking advantage of an Instagram-worthy moment.

2) Jennifer Designs Events decorated Suraya Restaurant as a whimsical tea party, much to the delight of children and their parents.

3) Fishtown Floral Crawl creators, Maura Feeney, of Maura Rose Floral and Event Design, and Cassie Plummer, of Jig-Bee Flower Farm.

4) Ashley Powell from Ashn Earth, tidying up her design space at VESTIGE Fishtown.





5) The engaging tea party vignette by Jennifer Designs Events, on display at Suraya Restaurant.

6) Lana Tang from Junebug Flowers and Designs installs her floral art at La Colombe Coffee Roasters headquarters.

7) Erika Davis, putting the finishing touches on her design at Good Spoon Soupery.

8) Fete Urbane styling their design at Lululemon in Fishtown.



but I didn't really expect that," she explains. "However, my past wedding clients are now attending Floral Crawl, and they're excited to discuss the event with friends, which is really great."

Floral Crawl meets a personal objective for Plummer. "One of the biggest goals of this event is to help florists experience the variety of what we are able to grow, as well as have the creative freedom to design with it, based on whatever's available that season. I think that creative process sometimes can get lost in the demands of running a business, so everyone was appreciative of the opportunity." ■

#### DETAILS

**Fishtown Floral Crawl:** [fishtownfloralcrawl.com](http://fishtownfloralcrawl.com), @fishtownfloralcrawl

**Jig-Bee Flower Farm:** [jig-bee.com](http://jig-bee.com), @jig\_bee

**Maura Rose Events:** [mauraroseevents.com](http://mauraroseevents.com), @mauraroseevents

**Participating designers:** Maura Rose Events; Jig-Bee Flower Farm; Erika Davis; Levone Floral; Junebug Flowers; Vault + Vine; Ash and Earth; Jennifer Designs Events; Shannon Toal, AIFD; Botaniq Blooms; and Fete Urbane

**Participating farmers:** Jig-Bee Flower Farm, The Farm at Oxford, Seven Stems, Cultivating Joy Flowers, Marsh Gibbon Gardens, Laughing Lady Flower Farm, Tooth of the Lion and The Bloom Farm.