

Bouquets in bloom

METHOW'S NATURAL BEAUTY, GROWING SEASON INSPIRE FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

By MARCY STAMPER

From alstroemeria to zinnias, through dahlias and echinacea, lupine and larkspur, and peonies and sunflowers, flowers are the consummate symbol of growth and new beginnings when a couple celebrates their life together.

Fortuitously, the popular wedding season coincides with the Methow growing season, providing numerous options to adorn a wedding with locally grown flowers.

Methow Valley-based floral designers Katie Hover, of Twisted Willow Floral Studio, and Autumn Jateff, of Northern Farms, use local flowers as much as possible, although they also source blooms from other florists in the colder months or to fill special requests.

Couples typically start with a color scheme for their entire wedding, Hover said. She builds on that concept to create a cohesive look for the bouquets, boutonnieres and table arrangements.

"Lots of people are intimidated by the process and don't know the names of flowers," said Hover, who's been creating floral designs for weddings and special events for 15 years. "I'm the expert here to guide them."

For a huge selection of local blossoms, Jateff steps outside her house, where she grows 40 varieties of vibrant flowers in seven long rows on half an acre, plus more in a greenhouse. She asks couples for an inspirational photo that shows the shape of the bridal bouquet or a table setting, and then designs to suit their vision with the flowers in bloom.

"My style has more of a wildflower feel," Jateff said. "Lots of people will say, 'I want it to look like I just frolicked through a field and picked a bunch of flowers.' They're looking for something that's looser and that



Photo by Svetlana Sauer

Katie Hover designed this floral arrangement for a wedding at the Washington Pass Overlook.



Photo courtesy Northern Farms

Modern brides look for a variety of floral styles.

doesn't look too perfect.”

With many people wanting a more natural look, Jateff will also gather wildflowers and greenery like cedar boughs, pines and grasses. She'll forage for ornamental wheat and fluffy bunny tails, or pick larkspur and lupine in season, she said.

Hover creates a wildflower look using cultivated blossoms, since wildflowers often don't hold up long enough for an arrangement, she said.

The growing season can help guide the color scheme. In May and June,

with lots of blues, pinks and creams in bloom, pastel colors tend to be popular. Fall weddings are more likely to feature sunflowers and dahlias in deeper colors like orange, burgundy and yellow, Jateff said.

Jateff can usually supply weddings all season long from her garden, since flowers bloom again quickly at the height of summer. “The more you cut, the more they grow,” she said.

The handheld bouquets carried by the bride are typically white or cream, sometimes with a splash of burgundy, Jateff said. Some brides



Photo by Logan Smith

Katie Hover designed these floral arrangements for a winter wedding at Sun Mountain Lodge.

want small, tight handhelds, while others want overflowing, drooping bouquets.

Today, many people choose ample greenery and cascading, overflowing arrangements, particularly for arches and floor pieces, Hover said. But others seek a different aesthetic. It could be a single-stemmed vase with a couple of flowers and a spray of grasses. Or the couple may want 50 stems in a funky quart-size mason jar, or table runners with scattered loose flowers and greenery, Jateff said.

As couples look for ways to

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personalize their weddings and highlight their passions, Jateff has found herself incorporating unusual elements in arrangements, including feathers and antlers. Sometimes people want the flowers to reflect their personal interests, like a colorful flyfishing lure integrated into the boutonniere.

Other new trends include a “boho” theme that incorporates grasses and dried pods. Eucalyptus and pampas grass are also popular, Hover said.

Flowers can add a beguiling touch to personal adornment. Brides may have blossoms woven into their hair. Jateff has created her share of floral collars for the best dog.

Jateff has also decorated the bubble guns that flower girls use to blow bubbles, so that it looks like the bubbles are erupting from a handful of blooms.

Requests for small bouquets for modest weddings are becoming more common, Hover said. Elope-ments in the North Cascades – at an overlook or on a hiking trail – are popular, where Hover creates understated floral arrangements to complement the forest and mountains.

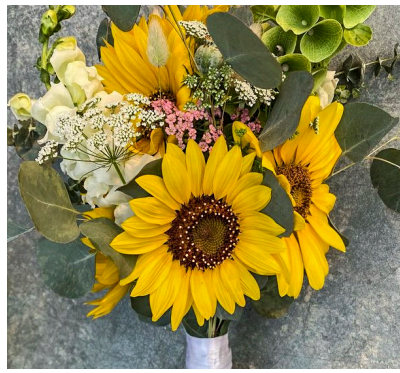


Photo courtesy Northern Farms

Some couples like to buy bulk flowers and create their own arrangements, often with friends and family on the day before the wedding. “It becomes a bonding experience,” Jateff said.

Couples are growing increasingly aware of sustainability and want floral arrangements that are better for the environment, Hover said. Today she uses netting and other materials to secure arrangements, rather than foam bases.

Whatever the style, fresh flowers enhance and personalize the celebration. “They’re flowers. They make everyone happy,” Jateff said.

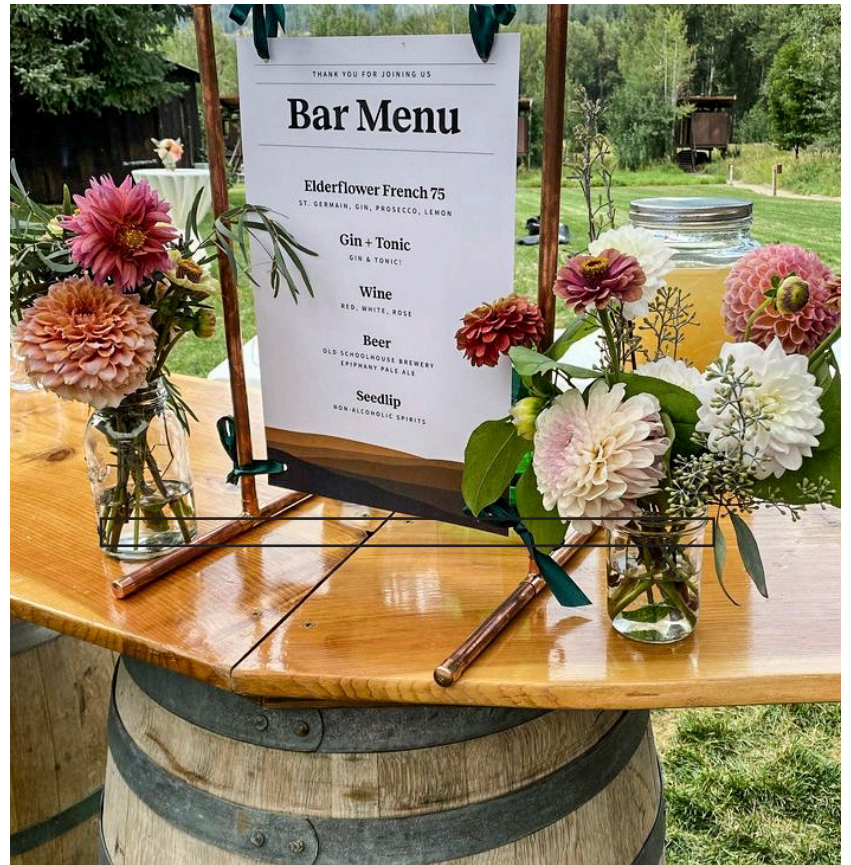


Photo courtesy Northern Farms

Local florists work with couples to determine floral styles for a wedding.



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