

Home & Garden

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Photos by Lea Suzuki / The Chronicle

Alethea Haramopolis (top left) and Jill Rizzo of Studio Choo have a field day at the S.F. Flower Mart. Peonies (above left); their instructional book; red anemones.

Add flower and water

Cookbook-style recipes put fanciful floral arrangements at your fingertips

By Chantal Lamers

When Alethea Haramopolis and Jill Rizzo opened their San Francisco flower design firm, Studio Choo, in 2009, their wild and whimsical creations were a playful contrast to traditional (read: round, tight, clean) arrangements. While their carefree, unruly aesthetic has won a devoted following, the technique for mixing the likes of honeysuckle, wild plum branches and geranium stems is not as simple as it appears.

Their new book, "The Flower Recipe Book" (Artisan, \$24.95)

A simple recipe for a sophisticated arrangement. Page M5

takes the uncertainty out of flower arranging. The beautifully photographed, refreshingly approachable step-by-step guide to making seasonal arrangements at home is presented in easy-to-follow cookbook format.

In other words, if you can bake banana bread, you've got this, too.

Readers are introduced to an ingredient, say a dahlia, and get a few different "recipes" for using that particular flower. The recipes are incredibly detailed, with instructions on the

Floral continues on M5



Drew Kelly

DESIGN

Showcasing big ideas for small spaces

By Anh-Minh Le

While the mansions that play host to the San Francisco Decorator Showcase often feature grand spaces that once served as ballrooms or dining halls expansive enough to entertain a couple dozen dignitaries and socialites, they also come with their share of square-foot-challenged rooms. This year's property is no exception. But the designers exceeded with transforming these rooms seemed to relish the challenge of doing more in less.

Antonio Martins (www.antoniomartins.com) likens a small space to a Mini Cooper: "Only

S.F. Decorator Showcase

The showcase continues through May 27, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday and Saturday, until 7 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday and Memorial Day (closed other Mondays). 2800 Pacific Ave. (at Divisadero). Tickets at the door: \$30; \$25 seniors 60 and older. Proceeds benefit San Francisco University High School's financial aid program. (415) 447-5830. www.decoratorshowcase.org.

Designed Antonio Martins used burlap on the walls and industrial steel on the floor of "the Atelier."

when you have one do you realize how big it is and how much fun you can have with it!" He reimagined a 170-square-foot space that, rumor has it, was formerly a repository for children's books.

Martins describes his fictitious homeowner as "a modern version of Indiana Jones (who) wants a room that has history and character, but at the same time is chic, tailored and modern."

To that end, "The Atelier" is a study in contrasts: the desk is comprised of rough wood and lacquered surfaces; inexpensive collections (plumb bobs) coexist

Showcase continues on M4

GARDEN



Lea Suzuki / The Chronicle

Studio Choo's Alethea Haramopolis shops at the S.F. Flower Mart. Her book, written with partner Jill Rizzo, gives simple step-by-step directions for floral arrangements with a twist.

Add flower, season with vines or berries

Floral from page M1

varieties and quantity of blooms and greenery to incorporate. Most recipes include photos of each step allowing readers to easily identify where to place just about every branch and stem as well as which type of vessel will suit the arrangement.

"We really like to use vases that aren't traditional vases: pitchers, creamers and sugar bowls and things like that," says Haramopolis. "We wanted to show people that they can do the same. I think a lot of people have really beautiful pieces at home that they can use that they just don't even think about."

Simple formula

Every Studio Choo recipe follows a simple formula: Start with a base of flowers and greenery, add focal flowers and finish and fill with bits (their word for finishing touches that add movement and air to the composition).

The pair's distinct style is reflected in the ingredients chart, which includes flowers, foliage and additional textural elements (spires, berries, vines, pods and wisps).

"We sort of try to use the flowers the way that they naturally grow," says Rizzo. "So if something has a cool arc or angle or bend to the stem we'll try and make that part of the arrangement rather than trying to force it into a straight composition or perfectly round bouquet. We like to let the flowers be a little more loose and natural."

A table of contents is arranged (and photographed) alphabetically by flower. The manual includes a primer on tools, flower care, vessels and techniques ranging from leaf removal to wiring flowers and

Meet the authors

Alethea Haramopolis and Jill Rizzo will discuss their book and sign copies from 7-8 p.m. Tuesday at Anthropologie, 999 Alma St., Palo Alto; (650) 322-0435.

taping a bouquet. The book also includes wreath, garland and boutonniere recipes.

In an effort to make arrangements more accessible, the authors included flowers that are commonly found at supermarkets and farmers' markets. And, while flowers are certainly the most notable ingredient, they encourage readers to visit the produce aisle and forage their yards for vines, branches or herbs that, to them, are equally worthy.

"We sort of approach buying and looking for flowers in multiple ways," says Rizzo. "You could go to your florists and get a couple of really nice stems of something that are more specialty and go to the grocery store and grab a bunch of whatever looks best there. Cut a few stems from your garden or go to Home Depot and get a plant you can cut from and plant it."

Haramopolis, 39, and Rizzo, 32, who live down the street from each other in Pacifica, both grew up around flowers. Rizzo, who grew up in Rhode Island, comes from a family of florists. Haramopolis' mother was an avid gardener. The budding floral artisans met while working at Radish and Rose, a San Francisco floral studio.

"Tiny gardens in a vase"

When they opened Studio Choo (www.studiochoo.com) — named after Rizzo's sneeze — they began experimenting in an effort to develop their style. Haramopolis was heavily influ-

enced by a stint as an estate gardener in Seattle where she noted how things grew naturally and wild. "I think I wanted to make our arrangements look like little tiny gardens in a vase," she said.

Soon into their new venture, they started writing a weekly column called "We Like it Wild" for the blog Design Sponge. Their unexpected palettes and layering of unusual foliage from lily of the valley to honeysuckle, fritillaria, daphne and flowering crabapple branches have scored them fans, many in the floral community.

They recently relocated from a storefront on Divisadero Street in San Francisco to South San Francisco. That location, opening in June, will allow them to work and sell from a single place. But they'll still pop up in the city, where they shop for flowers at the San Francisco Wholesale Flower Mart and the Ferry Building Farmers Market. Garden Valley Ranch in Petaluma and Cypress Flower Farm in Moss Beach are also favorite stops.

Shopping tips

Their shopping tips? "Use what you like, use colors that you like and take the basic information we've given at the beginning, there's a whole section about substituting," says Rizzo.

"If you don't have a snapdragon with a spire shape there are tons of other flowers that have that similar shape. This is an inspirational start. Then you kind of have to use what you've got and that's what's going to make your arrangements really shine."

Chantal Lamers is a San Francisco freelance writer. E-mail: home@sfgchronicle.com

Chrysanthemum recipe

From "The Flower Recipe Book" (Artisan; \$24.95) by Alethea Haramopolis and Jill Rizzo of Studio Choo (www.studiochoo.com).

Flowers

5 branches of snowberry
3 stems of stock
3 stems of viburnum berries

2 sprays of chrysanthemum

4 stems of scabiosa

Vessel

Colored drinking glass

Instructions

1. Choose a glass in the same color palette as the sprays of chrysanthemum that is also tall enough to support the height of the snowberry branches.



2. Trim the branches of snowberry so that the berries are at various heights. Add the branches to the glass so that the lowest leaves sit at the rim, placing the longer branches on the left.



3. Trim and add one stem of stock to the center of the glass, and one stem of viburnum berries low in front.



4. Trim the sprays of chrysanthemum and add them to the front of the arrangement, clustering the blooms together. Trim and add the remaining stock stems and the scabiosa stems on the right side, trimming the scabiosa to balance the longest snowberry branch on the left. Finish by trimming the remaining stems of viburnum berries and placing them on opposite sides of the arrangement.



Photos by Paige Green / Artisan Books

From page M4

take advantage of the vertical space available in an otherwise small garden," he says.

"We felt that there was too much brick and the neighbor's residence loomed over the courtyard. Vertical living walls were an obvious solution. We wanted to create something new and different from the succulent walls we executed at last year's Decorator Showcase."

The previously drab outdoor area included "very few struggling and boring small plants in the narrow beds," recalls Dalbok. "It had the feeling of being abandoned by the owner." Dalbok stained the old, gray concrete underfoot, which is now reminiscent of Tuscan stone.

But the biggest challenge for Dalbok had nothing to do with hard-scape or plantings: He needed to figure out a way to display a series

"Vertical living walls were an obvious solution."

Davis Dalbok

of Japanese paintings that depict birds of prey.

Outdoor art

"This is an original world-class framed art, which is rarely utilized in a garden setting," notes Dalbok. The work — which gives the space

its name (Birds of Prey Garden Courtyard) — is hermetically sealed in powder-coated bronze frames.

Nearby, a round table with an elegant stone mosaic top is surrounded by iconic Michael Taylor nickel garden seats. For the "plant palette," Dalbok was guided by the habitat of birds of prey — bringing in dwarf conifers, Japanese maples, grasses, ferns and a minimal selection of flowering

elements.

Roughly 1,100 plants were required to turn the concrete and brick patio into a lush alfresco scene. The end result is an enviable setting in which to enjoy a leisurely breakfast and coffee, gather for cocktails in the evening, or host an intimate dinner with a few friends.

Anh-Minh Le is a freelance writer in Portola Valley. E-mail: bome@sfgchronicle.com

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Free How-To Clinics

Limited availability, reservations are required, register online at www.lyngsogarden.com

Landscape and Garden Photography Saturday 5/25/2013 10 am - 11:30 am

South African born Rich Radford learned the craft of landscape and macro photography traveling into wilderness areas throughout the world, including South Africa, South America, Asia, and the Middle East. He founded the Garden Route Co., a landscape and design/build firm in 2000, and has used photography to educate and communicate ideas and concepts to his clients for over a decade.

This workshop will provide a foundation for those who are interested in garden photography, or for professionals within the landscape industry, wanting to make the most out of digital/online portfolio presentation. It will focus basic technique such as composition, exposure, using light, ISO setting and macro vs. wide angle lens use.

Build a Pondless Water Feature...

An All Day Event!

Saturday 6/1/2013 9 am - 4 pm

We all enjoy the soothing sounds and the beauty that a water feature adds to the garden, however not everyone has the space for a pond or the time to maintain it properly. Child safety is also a real concern with a pond. The good news is that you can still have all the aesthetic benefits of a water feature without a pond. Join Earl Boyd LEED - AP of Lyngso Garden Materials, Lisa Sweet of Aquascapes, and Mauricio Casillas of Paradise Water Gardens for this hands-on workshop, and learn how you can easily build either a pond less water feature. As an extra bonus, attend this clinic and receive a 10% discount off the purchase of a pond less water feature kit!

LYNGSØ GARDEN MATERIALS, INC.

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