



## REMOTE LEARNING

> When Rachel Gang saw her corporate, event and walk-in business evaporate overnight in mid-March, the owner of Helen Olivia Flowers in Alexandria, Virginia, made a quick pivot, focusing on another of her successful revenue streams: design workshops. Although social distancing protocols forbid continuing these in-person, she realized she could create floral kits customers could purchase and arrange at home following online instruction via Instagram TV. “As a small business, we’re trying to figure things out and shift gears to different ways of operating,” Gang said. Each session includes materials (flowers plus a container with a taped grid) delivered to the customer’s doorstep or available for curbside pickup. Adult classes are priced at \$100, while kids’ classes (a godsend for parents desperate to entertain their stir-crazy offspring) cost \$75. “It’s definitely not replacing the business we lost, but it is keeping the lights on,” she said. The series also helps Helen Olivia stay top-of-mind with customers and remind them of the people behind her business. The shop hosts its quarantine workshops once or twice a week, averaging 80 students per class — a combination of regulars and new faces. “I’d say our demographic is solidly professional women who are used to being out and social within our community,” Gang said. “We’ve noticed a trend of several girlfriends signing up together to take class, so even though they’re doing it from their own homes, it’s still a shared experience.”

Here is a design from one of her most popular workshops. 🌸

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**LITTLE LUXURY** Gang and her daughter, Evie, show amateur designers how to replicate Helen Olivia’s signature look (lush, feminine, European style) at home. Including hydrangeas, roses, ranunculus and scabiosa, this arrangement is chock full of compelling textures (adding visual interest and perceived value) and high-end flowers the shop’s clientele prizes. Design time: 15 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$27. Workshop fee: \$100.

PHOTOS BY ERIN TETTERTON PHOTOGRAPHY



  
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