

EXOTIC APPEAL

> Thanksgiving through Valentine’s Day follows a predictable rotation of styles: burgundy and orange flowers (chrysanthemums, namely) partnered with gourds for Thanksgiving, followed by a peppermint palette accented with glitter and greens for the winter holidays, concluded with a simple (but stately) dozen red roses at Valentine’s Day. One way to capture customers’ attention, differentiate your brand from competitors, and command a higher price point? Reach for fresh product that’s more unusual and unexpected, like proteas.

Proteas play a big role in Mountain High Flowers’ signature look. “We use all kinds of varieties, all year long and for all occasions,” says Martha Aaron, AIFD, TMF, owner of the Sedona, Arizona shop. She uses a lot of orange, red and yellow pincushion proteas throughout the fall, then segues to mink varieties (which include some lovely shades of pink and green) for the winter. “They add some flair for holiday designs and are fantastic to pair with red roses for Valentine’s Day,” she says. Wedding clients, meanwhile, often request king and queen varieties — large, show-stopping specimens coveted for boho-inspired nuptials. “Proteas are so hardy and long lasting that they’ve become a staple in our shop,” Aaron says. “They even have a unique look when dried, so we’ve started drying all our proteas that may turn before we can sell fresh, and we use them in designs. Clients who want something unique are very attracted to these beautiful blooms. And we can definitely charge a premium price for them.”



PROTEA REPENS ('SUGARBUSH')
Resendiz Brothers



BANKSIA MENZIESII ('RASPBERRY FROST')
Resendiz Brothers



"PARTY #1 PINS" BOUQUET
Splendor Proteas



"PINWHEEL 3-STEM PINCUSHION" BOUQUET
Splendor Proteas



"KITCHEN SINK" BOUQUET
Splendor Proteas



BANKSIA CANDLES
Resendiz Brothers

Loral Thompson, CFD, greenhouse manager for Vons Grocery and a professor of floral design at College of the Sequoias in Visalia, California, shares Aaron's affection for proteas. "They provide amazing texture," she says, adding that she likes to pair them with other intriguing accents, including artichokes and green pomegranates.

Here are a few varieties and protea-filled bouquets to inspire you. 🌿

Katie Vincent is the senior contributing writer and editor of Floral Management.



"PRINCE ALBERT" BOUQUET
Splendor Proteas



"NEWCASTLE" BOUQUET
Splendor Proteas



PROTEA PINATA
Resendiz Brothers



PROTEA CERES
Resendiz Brothers



PROTEA 'LADY DI'
Resendiz Brothers