

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth Daly
703-838-5235
edaly@safnow.org

'Amistad' Wins Best in Show at SAF's Outstanding Varieties Competition

ALEXANDRIA, VA, – Sept. 13, 2023 – 'Amistad', a light pink double Oriental lily presented by Sun Valley Floral Farms, won over judges with its soft coloring, elegance, and grandeur to win the Society of American Florists' Outstanding Varieties Competition, held in conjunction with the organization's 138th annual convention in Phoenix.

The Best in Show win stunned Sun Valley's president and CEO, Lane DeVries, who hadn't entered the competition in several years and had put a considerable amount of time and effort behind another entry — a variety of ilex he bred.

"We are very happy with our best in show," he said of the lily, which Sun Valley has grown for two years. "These just came out of regular production in the greenhouse. We didn't plan for it, we just picked it out the greenhouse and went for it."



Judges were impressed with the strong, tall stems bearing four to six lightly fragrant and pollenless blooms. One judge described the lily as "elegant and classic," a flower that could be used for everyday arrangements as well as wedding and funeral work.

'Amistad', was among 249 entries from 28 companies entered in the 2023 Outstanding Varieties Competition.

Judges scored each entry based on color and commercial appeal, stem and foliage, bloom form and size, and overall presentation. The judging panel, which included three retailers, three growers and three wholesalers, evaluated specific categories of flowers, and the highest scored entry of each won "Best in Class." From this elite group, judges chose their Best in Show winner.

Below is a roundup of the Best in Class recipients:

- Other Cut Flower: PINK VICTORY® VERONICA, Floral Chain Direct
- Cut Dianthus: Novia, AYURA SAS
- Cut Alstroemeria: Florentia, Royal Van Zanten
- Cut Garden Rose: Victorian Red, Dream Farms
- Cut Bulb Flower: Amistad, Sun Valley Floral Farms
- Cut Spray Rose: Bridal Veil, Euforia Flowers
- Decorative (Cut) Foliage & Berries: Winter Spirit, Sun Valley Floral Farms
- Cut Rose: Aloha, Dream Farms
- Cut Chrysanthemum: Bonita Orange, Spray Royal Van Zanten

'Aloha' from Dream Farms won the People's Choice pick for the growers category, and 'BluOcean Sapphire' from Suntory Flowers won this year's People's Choice pick in the [new breeder's category](#).

The following SAF members served as judges:

Retail:

- Jodi McShan, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, McShan Florist
- Lori Wheat, AAF, Lafayette Florist, Gift Shop & Garden Center
- Carrie Moore, AAF, Jenny's Floral

Wholesale:

- Lani Callister, AAF, Ensign Wholesale Flower Market
- Red Kennicott, AAF, Kennicott Brothers
- Ryan Alders, Alders Wholesale

Grower:

- Erik Hagstrom, Albin Hagstrom & Sons
- Ben Dobbe, Holland America Flowers, LLC
- Leo Roozen, AAF, Washington Bulb Co., Inc.

Event photos will be available here: [SAF Photos's albums | Flickr](#)

The Society of American Florists is the association that connects and cultivates a thriving floral community through training, education, marketing resources and advocacy. Our vision: The power of flowers in every life. For more information, visit www.SAFNow.org.