

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Maribel Herrera



Lead Design Wedding and Event Specialist, Allen's Flowers
San Diego, California

➤ Maribel Herrera is inspired by color. "Color is movement and flow and life," she says. "If you put one color next to another, it becomes a different color and tone — that's flow. I'm constantly looking at color palettes everywhere, from grocery produce displays to how people express themselves in fashion. There's art in all of it."

It was the artful, European style of Allen's Flowers' downtown location that caught Maribel's eye 10 years ago and inspired her to apply for a job. "Working at that location was my young adult dream come true, and now I make clients' floral dreams come true," she says.

My favorite part of the job:

"The act of creating — bringing a vision to life — brings me joy. I thoroughly enjoy it and can't live without it. With weddings, I get to be a part of what people feel is one of the most special days of their lives. The flowers in their wedding

photos are what hangs on their walls and sits on their mantels. Those photos are passed from generation to generation. Getting to be a part of someone's story — to know I created some kind of joy through floral — it's beyond words."

The top challenge I'm facing:

"Dealing with the influx of work. Sometimes we're double and triple booking our days and teams so we can execute all the events. In the past we averaged one or two weddings or events weekly. This year, we've had three to nine. I'm learning how to time manage and organize a little bit better. I set alarms for everything, including consultations, and I rely on Honeybook, a small business customer relationship management (CRM) app, to do all of my proposals, communications, timelines and payments."

What's hot in wedding design:

"Natural tones remain big — beige, taupe, caramel-colored palettes — in

designs that are loose, airy and asymmetrical. Pampas grass is popular. Everybody is also enjoying greenery — garlands on arches and tables. I wonder if people have the conception that greenery is more cost effective than floral? If you use enough greenery, it's as much as floral."

Best advice I received:

"Early in my floral career, someone advised me, 'Say "yes" until you absolutely have to say no.' I took those words and ran with them. I said yes to every opportunity, even if it meant coming in earlier to clean flowers, cleaning buckets or getting coffee for designers just to gain knowledge by being around them. I did that so I could learn and grow in my career. Today I would add: Ask yourself constantly what success looks like for you on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. Find what works for you and honor that." 🌿

Julie Martens Forney is a contributing writer for Floral Management.