

SENSATIONAL CENTRE PIECES

By Elise Saffy – Wild @ Heart

Elise Saffy and her partner (and sister), Anna Blain, started doing flowers for friends and family 10 years ago and it slowly escalated into a full-time business. They are passionate about flowers and weddings and enjoy nothing more than making each wedding tailor-made and beautiful. When asked about their business, they enthuse: “Suffice to say that we love what we do!”

A fabulous centrepiece is more than just a flower arrangement on a table. It is a conversation piece for guests, a living work of art and self contained unit of décor which sets your wedding apart from those that have gone before you. It sets the tone and creates the ambience for the entire wedding. Use it to make a statement, anything from romantic and dramatic to fun and playful!

Don't allow your creativity to be stifled when imagining your dream centrepiece – flowers are just one of the many elements that you can use. Fruit, berries, feathers, stones, glass, candles, beads, twigs and just about anything else can be used in the centrepiece creation – the sky is the limit! Incorporating other elements is also a good way to help reduce costs.

Besides the many materials that can be used in the design, you also need to consider other important factors:

- Where would you like to use candles? In the reception venue only or in the Chapel as well? Are there dark pathways leading between the two that you would like to subtly light up? Are there candelabras at the venue that you would like to make use of?
- The shape and size of the table will play an important role in deciding on the container you would like to have your centrepiece in, as well as the style of the arrangement.
- Arrangements that are obstructive can be annoying to your guests; it is ideal to either keep the arrangement fairly low or to elevate it with either a vase, candelabra or stand.
- The time of day should be taken into account when choosing a theme – a morning wedding is very different to an evening wedding and your arrangement and accessories (such as candles) need to be appropriate to the time.
- When selecting flowers, it is advisable to use the flowers that are in season, as they tend to be more reasonably priced, readily available (so you won't be disappointed) and weather appropriate.

Choose a florist who you will feel comfortable working with. A good florist will be able to expand on your theme and give you practical advice in terms of budget and flower availability. If you want to be sure of the exact flowers available on your wedding day, get your florist to take you to the market a few weeks before the wedding. That way you can point out your preferences and dislikes. Your florist can

also do a mock up table for your prior to the wedding so that you can be sure that what you have in mind will have the desired effect.

In order to keep costs down, work with a florist who has lots of glassware, containers, candle holders, tablecloths and runners, vases and other containers so that you don't have to hire these separately. It also saves you the aggravation of having to arrange for hire goods to be returned after the wedding day.

Also, give your florist a set budget so that he or she can brainstorm with you on how to use your money more cost effectively – the more you trust your florist, the more they will be able to assist you with alternatives and ideas you might not have considered.