

Q & A

How I Do It: Q&A with Kelli Galloway

Flowers in New York's Hudson Valley

Who: Kelli Galloway, owner and designer

What: Hops Petunia Floral

Where: Kingston, New York

Social Media: hopspetunia.com @hopspetunia

About: As a teenager, Kelli Galloway worked in floral shops as an after-school gig, picking up tips and subtly falling in love with the floral world. Long after college, while working in a career as a graphic designer and art director, she found herself being drawn back to that world. After taking a few classes with some of the incredible designers she admired at the time, she decided to quit her life in the fashion world and give floral design a try. Reconnecting with the earth and making things with her hands, she again fell deeply in love with the craft. A few years later, she was presented with an opportunity that couldn't be passed up to rent a storefront, and Hops Petunia Floral became a part of the historic waterfront along the Hudson River in Kingston, N.Y., about 100 miles north of Manhattan.

Recently, Hops Petunia expanded into a new space located behind the original Broadway location, which now houses plants, home decor and the floral shop.

Square Footage: The original space measured just 370 square feet; the new expansion and floral production space has grown to 1,000 square feet.

Services/Specialties: Small events, private dinner parties, wedding and daily floral deliveries. We absolutely will travel!

Sourcing Practices: During the summer and fall, I buy weekly from a few local farms in the Hudson Valley, including **Tiny Hearts Farm**, **Treadlight Farm**, **Stars of the Meadow** and **Meadow Wilds**. They all have great product. Being able to buy *eucalyptus* grown less than one hour away is just a delight. It's so fresh and soft and so much more gestural and pretty. I also order roses from California when we have larger events. I like to do a lot of my own buying in person, to see the freshest flowers. I think color is VERY important and flowers vary so much from bunch to bunch and stem to stem that I like to find exactly the right color and shape in person. When I'm buying at the New York Flower District, I do my best to ask for American-grown items, especially in the right season. At **28th Street Wholesale Flowers**, they do a great job of providing greens and blooms from local areas almost all year.

Off-season Sourcing: This is when I hit the New York Flower District more often, checking in with **Dutch Flower Line**, **JRose**, **G. Page** and **28th Street Wholesale Flowers**. For a quick down and dirty order of flowers, supplies and farm florals, **Alders Wholesale** is great too.



Floral designer Kelli Galloway

Best Off-season Flowers: I'm really into grevillea right now, such nuanced colors and the best foliage. For sure, sweet peas. Another favorite for me is Majolika or garden snow spray roses. I like a mix of fluff and spike.

Advice for Others: Sticking to the root (get it!?) of your passion. I easily get pulled off into another realm or find inspiration from other designers and wonder if what I'm doing is right. My husband is really good about asking me what it is that Hops Petunia means to me or we'll have conversations that bring that back into focus. I've always enjoyed creating environments that feel warm and inviting, that smell welcoming and sort of hug you.

Even when I was a teenager working at various flower shops, I learned merchandising and storytelling through visuals, which seems to have followed me through all of my careers. So when I am able to do that with my store, it helps solidify what my brand looked like. I'm constantly trying to see my designs through other people's eyes; how is it greeted and taken in? What does it feel like? So from designing a table centerpiece to an entire store environment I ask "What is the mood of the event?" "How should it feel -- Romantic? Cozy? Warm? Intimate?"

I love finding that feeling that my customers want (even if they don't know what they want), and helping them tell that story in their own events. Whether a dinner party or a wedding, there's always a feeling or mood to be set, and that is what I love to do.



Hops Petunia's storefront (above) and interior (below) evoke Kelli Galloway's passion for setting a cozy and inviting scene.



How we Market: Word of mouth has been very powerful for us. Also having the storefront allows me to make the shop an experience. I pride myself on making our store cozy and welcoming, warm and refreshing -- something to take your mind off your day and an experience for the senses. We've been very fortunate to work with some incredible companies, writers, designers, and event planners as well. ■



Seasonal florals for weddings and events (above and below) are sourced from area flower farms in New York's Hudson Valley and through well-developed relationships in New York City's flower district. All photos courtesy of Hops Petunia Floral.

