



# Floral Debut

Taking a page from fashion to make a floral statement with seasonal collections.

Photos by **Macey Sierka**

In this year's "Slow Flowers' Floral Insights and Industry Forecast," which I released in *Florists' Review's* January 2020 issue, I named "Collections as a Marketing Tool" our theme Number 6. This design concept is so compelling that I want to expand on it here, with an interview featuring the seasonal floral collections of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based **Morgan Anderson, Ph.D.**, owner of **The Flori.Culture**.

Seeing the 2015 documentary *Dior and I* inspired Anderson to borrow from couture fashion and the "big reveal" of seasonal runway shows to introduce and market a specific label.

Since 2016, Anderson has adopted floral collections as a way to communicate and promote her brand, her design services and educational packages for clients, primarily destination management companies (DMCs). She produces three or four floral collections annually, consistently photographing the pieces for her website and sharing thematic story lines with a featured "muse" or inspiration.

She named her first collection, designed for fall 2016, "Modern Harvest," and within it featured nine floral

arrangements, also each named. "I needed to create something to sell to corporations for their events because that's who was interested in my work," she explains. "You can see the development of my collections over time because I went a lot more corporate with the first couple of years – ideas that were more general and 'easy' for clients to interpret. Now, I'm getting more abstract and avant-garde, and as I develop as an artist personally, I am marketing what designs I want to create in the world."

Like fashion, some of Anderson's concepts are edgy or wacky, like the series for Spring 2019, with the 1990s as her muse. The first arrangement of orange and yellow blooms explodes from a crushed Cheetos bag. "That was the one most posted on Instagram, which was so funny," she recalls. "And it was good to show corporations that I could easily put their branding on a vessel and build a theme around it."

Other pieces in that collection were inspired by films of the '90s, such as the movie *Clueless* or the '90s music sensations Spice Girls and Britney Spears. One of the most popular

Clockwise from top left:

Summer 2019: Desert Cubism, Mojave Desert; Fall 2016: Modern Harvest, Quartz; Spring 2017, Destination: Buenos Aires; Spring 2017, Destination: The Arizona; and Spring 2017, Copenhagen

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**This page** Clockwise from top left: Spring 2019: The 90s, Britney Spears; Spring 2019: The 90s: Spice Girls; Spring 2017, Destination: Tropic Escape; and Summer 2019: Desert Cubism: Painted Desert

**Opposite page** From left: Spring 2019: The 90s, Architectural Digest; and Spring 2019: The 90s, Cheetos Kid





groupings, called “Architectural Digest,” was inspired by every single-variety floral arrangement Anderson saw in her mother’s *AD* magazines while growing up.

As The Flori.Culture’s studio has expanded beyond wedding florals to add educational-focused programming for college curriculum at Arizona State University and for corporate clients, Anderson now views the seasonal collections as a way to innovate as a floral artist. “I design collections as my artistic outlet to keep me fresh,” she explains. “I want to use unique hard goods, such as Lucite blocks, acrylic sheets, electrical wire, vintage cans and candlesticks. Or vegetables and fruits mixed with flowers, inspired by a trip to the grocery store.”

There isn’t always a direct link between selling the collection to her clients and the time and resources Anderson invests to design the concepts, source the vessels and flowers, set up her home studio and hire a photographer. But that’s not the point, the floral innovator explains. “I don’t measure it, and I really design this way to nurture my personal connection to flowers. But I’d have to say that my clients now expect to see my collection every season.”

The collections are basically a way to start a conversation with a client. “The designs aren’t so rigid that we can’t adjust them, make them larger or smaller, or use a different color palette,” she says. “I don’t always know what the DMCs are pitching to their clients, but the concepts many come back to are from my collections.” One of her best-sellers, called “Tropic Escape,” is from the Spring 2017 “Destination” collection. It features a grouping of tropical foliage stems in a tall, slender glass cylinder. “Past collections build on each other. We’ve sold that idea so many times for events,” Anderson notes.

Like a true artist who can be creative despite constraints, Anderson intentionally limits her floral budget when producing samples for photography, spending around \$300. She partners with a young photographer who is also building a portfolio and willing to work with Anderson’s budget by booking four photoshoots each year at a favorable rate. To keep the look of

each shoot consistent, Anderson has invested in studio lighting. She uses existing backdrops, such as her cement block dining table or pedestals or a white butcher-paper surface.

Anderson had an even tighter budget of \$200 for her Summer 2019 collection, called “Desert Cubism.” “I was trying to save money to pay off my floral van, so I thought, What can I forage? What do I have on hand that is intriguing to me? I think those constraints actually require more creativity,” she says. As a result, her desert-inspired collection featured lots of earthy elements – sand, rocks, sun-bleached branches and dried grasses – all readily available in her area. She incorporated cacti and *Aloe* plants in glass vessels and foraged for cuts from her garden and neighbors’ yards, sourcing blooms that are abundant in Scottsdale landscapes: *Bougainvillea*, *Lantana*, *Aloe* and orange trumpet bush (*Tecoma alata*). “This was a popular collection, and the restraint really helped my creativity,” she says.

Borrowing from Dior has been a great model for The Flori.Culture, Anderson says. “The whole trajectory of Dior’s collections is so inspiring. Why wouldn’t I look at fashion as inspiration and create my collections? People are loving flowers right now, and I think every florist should be designing collections.” ■

## DETAILS

The Flori.Culture, [thefloriculture.com](http://thefloriculture.com), @ theflori.culture



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