

HUSHED *Beauty*

Thirty years ago, floral designs were defined by bright, bold direction, with primary colors and vivid jewel tones. But over time, a handful of pioneering designers paved a new path.

TEXT ERIN BENZAKEIN



Each era has its own flavor. By the time I started arranging flowers in earnest, several talented floral designers—most notably Ariella Chezar, Amy Merrick, Nicolette Owen, Sarah Ryhanen, and Sarah Winward—were highlighting seasonal blooms and working with subdued, antique color combinations. Their designs inspired me to think about color in a whole new way and seek out ingredients that had these qualities. I started filling my garden with plants with eerie metallic tones; flowers in muted, muddy colors like chocolate, plum, and soft rose; leaves with mottled coloring and deep veining; plus as many textural, airy ingredients as possible. Thankfully, this style has taken hold all over the globe, and thousands of floral designers and flower enthusiasts are embracing this softer, more romantic approach.

From late summer into autumn, the garden overflows with plants that possess this unusual coloring, and I used some of the most compelling for the posy shown opposite. One of my all-time favorite flowers to work with this time of year is Rudbeckia ‘Sahara,’ because it includes velvety blossoms in mixed shades of dusty rose, milk chocolate, copper, rich merlot, and pale lemon. Its hues combine beautifully with PeeGee hydrangeas, pokeweed, coppery Heuchera leaves, and ‘Queen Red Lime’ zinnia, which blooms in haunting shades of mossy green, blush, muted coral, and dusty plum.

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS BENZAKEIN

See *A Year in Flowers* by Erin Benzakein for more information.



- AS SEEN IN -
VICTORIA MAGAZINE
© HOFFMAN MEDIA 2020