



## New Fairfield floral designer makes weddings special

By Heather Barr

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Using ostrich and peacock feathers, assorted sized pearls, and classic green and white flowers, floral designer Mary DeLuise is in the process of making centerpieces to create the illusion of a vintage Hollywood glamour wedding from the 1920s-1930s.

An couple from Bethel want the unique theme for their September wedding at the Lounsbury House in Ridgefield.

DeLuise, owner of Bunch of Blooms Floral Design in New Fairfield, likes to take the time to get to know what a couple wants.

"I keep in mind the style, taste and location of the venue," said DeLuise, who has been in the floral industry for about eight years.

To her it is wonderful "to be part of a special day that will be remembered for a life-time."

She realizes the importance of understanding the needs of a couple and their wedding vision.

Working out of her New Fairfield home and being the sole designer, she said, "I don't have other distractions like at a retail shops so I can spend more time with each customer to get to know them, their likes and dislikes and can stay within their budget."

She does floral arrangements for weddings, wedding showers, bar mitzvahs, funerals and other events. In addition she decorates homes during the holidays and will teach floral design classes upon request.

DeLuise has worked with brides all over Connecticut, in the U.S. and with brides living overseas who plan to have a wedding in America.

DeLuise helped Kathy Dallaire, 40, who grew up in Danbury and has family here, plan her July 2004 wedding at the Ethan Allen Inn in Danbury.

At the time, Dallaire was living in Italy. She and DeLuise communicated by email and telephone, and came to the U.S. three times. She remembers that DeLuise had her bring in fabric swatches and ribbons to coordinate the floral arrangements with them.

"She really gets to know exactly what you need," Dallaire of the unique flowers and other floral design work DeLuise did.

DeLuise was able to find purple sterling silver roses for her bouquet and for her husband's boutonniere.

When she was growing up, Dallaire's parents would give her those flowers after her dance recitals, so the flowers really were sentimental to her.

"She did a lot of extras," said Dallaire.

DeLuise also arranged flowers on a wrought-iron gate, then assembled Roman columns nearby holding ivy and plants to create a romantic feel.

DeLuise took this arrangement from the ceremony and then reset it at the reception.

The Ethan Allen Inn took pictures of the wedding for ideas for future brides, said Dallaire.

When Dallaire and her husband got back to their hotel room they discovered DeLuise had placed flowers on their bed with a nice note.

"Everything had a personal touch to it," said Dallaire.

In May 2005, Stacey Spiegler McNamare married Danbury native Robert McNamare.

As the rain fell outside at the gazebo at the Ethan Allen Inn where they were supposed to be married, she thought things might be ruined.

DeLuise came to the rescue. She decorated the huppa, a canopy traditionally used in Jewish weddings, with colorful pink and purple flowers and made it the main backdrop for a ceremony inside.

"It was just as beautiful," said McNamare of her wedding. "The flowers had a lot to do with it. It smelled nice. It added to the ambiance of it."

DeLuise designed the maid of honor's bouquet in a teardrop shape with fuchsia-colored stargazer lilies, red spray roses, attache full-headed pink roses, purple status, lilly grass, alstroemeria, caspia and pink lax flower.

A picture of the bouquet was featured in the March 2006 Florist Review Magazine's picture perfect wedding contest among 150 photographs from florists all over the nation.

DeLuise has incorporated all types of things into bouquets from buttons, wires to other items of personal significance to people.

In addition she likes to create interesting center pieces and table designs for weddings and wedding showers.

For an August Cinderella ball-themed wedding in New Rochelle, N.Y., she is using pumpkins and ivy outdoors. In the ballroom she will decorate with tulle, sparkle and lights and white flowers including callalillies, roses and orchids.

However grand that sounds, DeLuise can also decorate for smaller, more intimate affairs. For another August event, she will be decorating a backyard wedding in Bethel.

She plans on using flowers and candles on mirrored glass for the wedding's table centerpieces. The bouquets will have snapdragon flowers, mini carnations and freesia.

"It's simple and elegant," she said.

She also likes to use fun and pretty holders for weddings. She has made floral arrangements in a martini-glass shaped vase. The stem of the vase is filled with water, and at the bottom, a battery-operated light illuminates the vase and the lower stems of the flowers.

"At night it's pretty," she said.

DeLuise grew up with flowers. Her father, John Barnick of Bethel, had gardens and multiple flower beds surrounding the family's backyard pool. She liked to pick the flowers and put them in baskets.

Around 1998, after DeLuise had spent years as an executive secretary, her company was restructured and she was left looking for a job.

She told herself life was short and decided to do something she loved. DeLuise worked at a few floral shops and greenhouses before starting her business.

In 2001, DeLuise studied with noted designer Ned Davis at the Vermont Academy of Floral Design. The school teaches basic and new theories of design.

To keep on top of trends, DeLuise continues to attend trade shows all over where she learns techniques like how to manipulate greenery or flowers into loops, rolls and other forms.

DeLuise is also always on the look out for new flower types and floral design ideas when traveling, whether it be in the U.S. or to Australia.

Call Mary DeLuise at (203) 241-8006 or visit <http://www.bunchofblooms.com>.

URL: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13860045/>