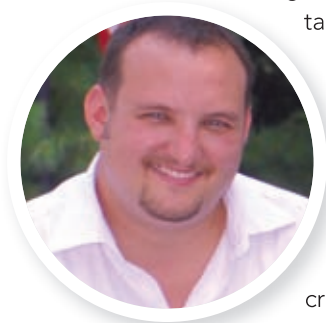


by Fred Russell

CORSAGE Connection

Cory Brown, AIFD, says prom corsages are about understanding young customers



Cory Brown AIFD, is a savvy, accomplished designer who has been in the industry for numerous years. He has been actively designing and participating in Michigan state shows, and has been a guest judge, presenter, and commentator at many public venues. His many accomplishments include receiving his AIFD certification in 2003, the Midwest Designer of the Year award in 1999, as well as many local and regional design awards. Cory recently brought his talent to Fitz Design where he is the lead designer for the company. He also teaches other florists about prom and special event designing, as well as how to market to teenagers.

When it comes to the prom, Cory believes it comes together under three main rules.

"We make decisions on all our designs for the prom and special event market based on the criteria of current trends, the girl, and the value," says Cory. He says this can also lead to future floral purchases, because as that teenage girl grows up, she can remember her good experience with the shop.

Designer:
Cory Brown, AIFD

Experience:
18 years

Exposure:
Design Consultant
Taught hands-on classes

Guest Designer
Chicago Floral and
Garden Show

AIFD National
Symposium Assistant
Stage Manager

Spoke at BloomNet's
National Owners
Meeting

CURRENT TRENDS

"This year our designs have fit into two extremes: casual and formal. This means showing everything from gum drops and alpine meadow on the casual to the floral necklace on the formal," says Cory.

"Don't let the general economy fool you, there are people out there that want to spend money! I noticed that dresses are getting brighter, blingier, and more outrageous," states Cory. On the other hand, he also understands it is a very personal decision based on the girl's style and possibly most important, her

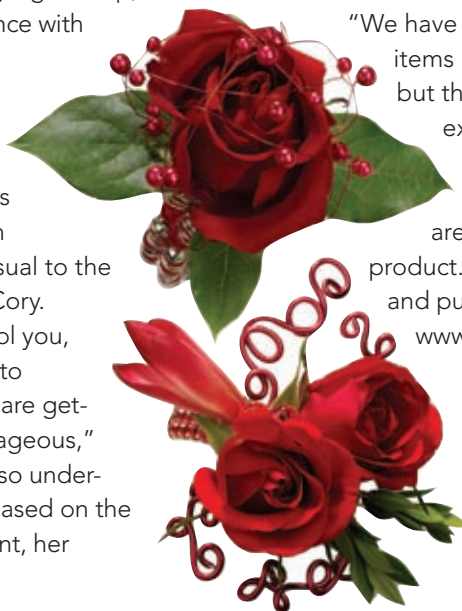
budget. Nonetheless, attention and great care must go into all designs regardless of the amount of money able to be spent on the corsage. "We still want to provide them with nice alternatives." Cory also thinks designers should get out and see what is going on in the market too. "I would suggest to everyone, get out of your four walls when you can and look at what is going on."

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH THE GIRL

"We want every design to connect with the girl emotionally," says Cory. "This is the number one thing a florist can do to brand themselves and make a new customer. We know that the girl is the one who puts value in the day. She begins thinking about her prom her first day of high school, possibly sooner if she has an older sister. She is the one that goes out several months before the prom looking for her dress."

VALUE IN THE MARKET

"We have paid special attention that our items not only are pretty and current, but that their price point is right," explains Cory. "We look to the accessories available to the customers and make sure we are able to deliver a superior product." To view Cory's prom designs, and purchase Fitz products, visit www.bloomnet.net.



- * **FRESH** Roses, salal leaves beaded wire
- * **HARD GOODS** Fitz's gum drop bracelet



- * **FRESH** Phalaenopsis orchids, pink: spray roses, kalanchoe, and cennisis
- * **HARD GOODS** Fitz's cotton candy empress bracelet, Milton Adler butterfly and silver laser leaves
(Left)

- * **FRESH** Gladiola, leucadendrom, hypericum, equisetum
- * **HARD GOODS** Fitz's boutonniere holder and bucklezzs.
(Below)



- * **FRESH** Blue delphinium, pink heather, silver laser leaves,
- * **HARD GOODS** Fitz Design's rectangle dazzle bucklezz, magic magnetzz, and floral barrette.
(Right)

