ForeWord Reviews

HOUSE & HOME

Flower Sense: The Art of Decorating with Flowers
Elspeth Thompson
Tricia Guild
James Merrell, photographer
Rizzoli
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Tricia Guild started UK-based Designers Guild in 1970. Since then, it has grown into a multimillion-dollar international home and lifestyle company. Taking inspiration from her world travels and her garden, Guild mixes large- and small-scale designs to create larger patterns of contrasting textures and hues. Often using a white background, she avoids the saturated feeling of an overstuffed room. Her colors and patterns focus the attention, making her rooms seem large and filled with light.

Guild's sense of joyful restraint translates effortlessly to her choice and arrangement of flowers. Camellia and allium; roses, parrot tulips, and lady's mantle; iris and wisteria. The stalks float and the colors cluster. Peonies show off, two or three to a vase, overlooked by curving branches of solomon's seal in silvery bottles. The arrangements, again, direct the attention to the flowers as individuals and in relationships rather than the more common practice of awing by abundance.

Flower Sense is divided into sections according to occasion and place—City, Country, Modern, Vintage. Refreshingly, most of her arrangements consist of flowers that come into season at the same time, while grocery store posies like gladiolas and carnations make occasionally original appearances. Text accompanies most of the pages, providing tips on how to display, care for, compliment the room, or even appreciate the blossoms: "Some stems have been left long, as a nod to the high ceilings and elegant proportions of the room, but a mix of short and tall stems in one vase is a quirky touch that gives the space a modern feel."

Guild is the author of more than twelve books, and has won numerous awards, including the International Elle Decoration Award for fabric design and the US Elle Décor award for the best in wall covering. Photographer James Merrell has contributed his sumptuous photography to several of these beautiful and inspiring books.

Heather Shaw