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Blooms By You Flower Arrangement School Gets Ready for the Holidays

By Sophie Braccini



Chris Stoneberg in her Orinda home-studio Photo Yoni Mayeri

Holiday homes would not be the same without a wreath adorning the front door. Making your own unique creation is easy thanks to Chris Stoneberg and Blooms By You, a flower arrangement school she opened in her Orinda home-studio. Wreaths are not the only decorative pieces Stoneberg teaches how to make; an educated flower arranger and gilding artist, she also offers rose arrangement, egg and pumpkin gilding, succulent classes and more.

An Orinda resident for 18 years, Stoneberg says she always loved flowers and had them continuously around the house. A few years ago, she decided to become more proficient at designing flower arrangements for her home, but couldn't find a solid week-long class locally that produced the look she wanted. She discovered the New York Flower School, and after taking many classes, she decided to pass along what she was learning. The flower arrangement classes she offers in her Orinda home-studio teach everything from selecting the flowers, creating a color palette, conditioning the flowers for longevity, to building a floral design.

"I took 'pave' (round compact bouquet), wreath, rose arranging and succulent classes with Chris," says Sheryl

Tyne who is one of Stoneberg's ardent fans. "She is a fabulous teacher, from choosing and caring for the flowers, to color and texture coordination, how to go to the market and pick them out, wreath and wire wrapping, and design." She adds that the studio space in Stoneberg's garage created for the classes is meticulously arranged.

"I would live in her garage," adds Nadean Lindberg who also loves the classes. "Chris is so inviting. For the morning classes she prepares scones and coffee and in the afternoon offers a glass of wine and treats. She creates a very relaxing and supportive atmosphere."

Lindberg has known Stoneberg for years through her charitable work in Orinda and she's noticed how the former elementary school teacher in Stoneberg comes out when she teaches her classes. "She is patient, encouraging and very articulate," says Lindberg, who has taken a gilded eggs and arrangement class, pumpkin gilding class and pave arrangements.

"I learned gilding some years ago, you can do a lot of fun things with metal, pumpkins, gourds and other festive decorative items," says Stoneberg, who is currently part of the flower committee at the deYoung Museum in San Francisco.

Stoneberg also facilitated a private birthday party celebration for Lindberg. "Her classes are perfect for a multi-generational gathering, a girls' party, or to be offered as a gift," says Lindberg.

Both students note that taking the classes has changed the way they now use flowers in their homes. "Not only do you go home with a beautiful flower arrangement, but you start to create your own at home," says Lindberg. "It has made me more confident in making arrangements when friends come over, taking the time to plan and prepare."

"I'm trying to do one (flower arrangement) a week," says Tyne. "I can do things that look very expensive from flowers I buy locally." Tyne adds that making bouquets is her way to get in the moment. "It is so relaxing and meditative," she says.

Stoneberg will be teaching a holiday wreath class at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 8. Classes change seasonally and are listed on her website, www.bloomsbyyou.com.

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