

# Grower Tour Garner's Applause

Floral industry members gathered for the festive Fun 'N Sun convention hosted by CalFlowers, and the flower farm tours took the spotlight.

BY E. SHAUNN ALDERMAN

The paradise-like community of Santa Barbara, located nearly two hours north of Los Angeles, is home to a wide range of celebrities from the stage, screen and sports world. Fine dining and dockside eateries are popular elements of the restaurant scene that features fresh seafood and farm-to-table offerings of local cheese and produce. In this atmosphere of extreme elegance, beach-goers energetically enjoy rinsing off Fido and Fifi at convenient dog-washing stations after surfside strolls.

During July 24-27, the seaside town welcomed floral industry members for Fun 'N Sun, hosted by the California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers. Based in Capitola, the organization has hosted the event every other year since 2010, but Fun 'N Sun started in 1989 and was originally held as an annual event.

Long-time attendees always recommend the grower tours for wholesalers, retailers and everyone interested in California flowers and plants. Four tour buses were needed to transport attendees to the flower farms, where guides shared inside information and guests were delighted with colorful photo opportunities.

## THE SUN VALLEY GROUP, OXNARD, CA



The Sun Valley Group Floral Farm in Oxnard, CA, featured a tour led by Lane deVries, president and chief executive of Sun Valley Floral Farms, headquartered in Arcata, CA. He explained the challenges and triumphs of the operation that grows many flowers for the company's extensive bouquet program, which includes Lisianthus, Matsumoto Asters and several varieties of lilies (as shown above). Tour attendees were fascinated seeing the demonstration of dedicated workers seated and methodically planting White Daisy Matricaria.

## JOSEPH & SONS INC., SANTA PAULA, CA



Starting in the cooler, tour attendees learned about cold chain management and saw fresh cut flowers cooling to 39 degrees. The variety of flowers seen throughout the tour was dazzling — everything from Bells of Ireland, Green Trick Dianthus, Snapdragon and blue Delphinium. The fragrance of Stock was enchanting. Before enjoying the made-on-site taco lunch, guests wandered around the sunflower field, where they also saw Queen Anne's Lace blowing in the summer breeze.

## WESTERLAY ORCHIDS LP, CARPINTERIA, CA

Visiting Westerlay Orchids first was akin to starting the tour with fireworks. Phone cameras were clicking wildly in the greenhouses as guests digitally captured orchids — double-spiked, cascading and miniature. The retail area for local residents and designers to purchase exquisite orchids, arrangements, tillandsia and potted plants, was well stocked and thoughtfully merchandised. Retailers could consider trying this splendid approach for the next big orchid push — a white bathtub filled with white Phalaenopsis orchids.





## FLOWER FAIR

The Flower Fair has always been the hallmark of this convention, and attendees this year enjoyed seeing products and learning of services from 24 booth exhibitors and 22 tabletop exhibits.



Look closely, there might be a quiz. Ocean Breeze Farms of Carpinteria, CA, provided variety names within this brilliant Gerbera display.



David Marabella of Floral Supply Syndicate in Camarillo, CA, shows the newly designed Day of the Dead flower skull.




Thursday night's Flower Power extravaganza, complete with wearable flowers for all, was especially enjoyed by Crystal Hedgpeth of Safeway, Norcal Division in Pleasanton, and Heather Butts of B-Fresh Floral in Carpinteria.



Sometimes you amusingly find the unexpected in an exhibitor's booth. California Flower Shippers Inc. of San Jose, displayed an interesting assortment of natural products, cut greens, ornamental pomegranates and dried botanicals. But the fragrant cut gardenias for corsages offered in boxes of three or as singles, complete with the pin, were a hit with wholesalers specializing in weddings.




Seen in the booth (at left) were these vines of blooming stephanotis that were tubed to maintain freshness. Brides often order stephanotis for the sweet fragrance and pure white color, and California Flower Shippers Inc. of San Jose offers the blossoms in bulk or in leis. Owner LeRoy Franzioia says he was tired of seeing so many vines thrown away, so on his drive home from work one day, he came up with the idea of selling a water-tubed stephanotis vine. His floral team thought the idea to be far-fetched, but when the sales began happening they realized he was onto something.





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