

Edible Arrangements

When the occasion calls for something a bit more inventive than candy and decidedly more delicious than daisies, Edible Arrangements provides the perfect, healthy, gift idea: A bouquet, not of flowers but of fruit – specifically slices of sweet pineapple, cut cantaloupe, fresh strawberries, grapes and an entire array of other succulent, pretty produce artfully arranged into an edible floral-inspired design.

“At Edible Arrangements we specialize in creating fresh cut arrangements of the ripest, sweetest fruit available,” says Nancy Caruso, who co-owns the operation with her husband, Tom. Tom’s brother, Tim Glaudini, serves as the store manager. “Because we are able to get the ripest fruit from anywhere in the world, all of your favorite fruit is literally available all year round.”

Caruso adds that because the products are so perishable (and the company prides itself on using no preservatives), each franchise location can provide only local service. For this reason, the Caruso’s store services Huntington Beach, Fountain Valley, Seal Beach, Garden Grove, Los Alamitos, Westminster, Stanton and Midway City.

Since the couple opened the store last September, the concept has caught on with professionals and residents alike as a popular gift for the holidays (such as birthdays, Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas), but according to Caruso, “anytime traditional floral arrangements would be given.”

These encompass not only special occasions, such as weddings and as recovery gifts, but as a healthy alternative for everyday events like morning office meetings (in lieu of doughnuts) or instead of a bottle of wine when visiting as a dinner guest at a friend or colleague’s home.

“Edible arrangements are great at Easter, for Passover meals, barbecues and pairs well with wine at wine tastings and wine and cheese dinners,” says Caruso. “If you have one of those chocolate fountains that so many people like having at their parties, having an arrangement can make things easier in terms of not having to cut all the fruit and finding a way to display it yourself.”

Different by design

Among the best-selling bouquets include the “Delicious Fruit Design,” which incorporates an abundance of pineapple,

cantaloupe, honeydew melon, strawberries and grapes. Customers can add oranges or apples dipped in semi-sweet gourmet chocolate to the mix.

“The prices for the arrangements range anywhere from \$32 to \$250, depending upon the number of people the bouquet is to serve,” says Caruso. “Boxes of chocolate-dipped strawberries start as low as \$25 and you can order arrangements the same day you’d like it delivered by refrigerated cargo van up until noon.”

The fruit, which arrives beautifully wrapped in cellophane and ribbons, typically stays fresh in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours, but can last up to five days when leftover fruit is stored in a Tupperware container.

“The day we cut it is the day you get it,” says Caruso. “Because fruit is highly perishable, we don’t recommend that you leave it out for more than three hours. For that reason, we’ll generally plan to deliver (and set up) the bouquets for big events a half an hour or so before the event begins.”

Such was the case when the Caruso’s coordinated the creation and delivery of 45 arrangements to serve as centerpieces for a wedding.

Each day at 7 a.m., fresh fruit is delivered to the 1,200-square-foot facility in the Target/Pavilion’s Shopping Center on Beach Boulevard where the staff creates the arrangements ordered for delivery that day, as well as a selection of additional baskets prepared for immediate pick-up by walk-in customers.

“I attribute the success we’ve experienced to date to hard work, a great staff and management and timing,” says Caruso. “We opened at a really good time, just far enough out from the holidays to allow us to learn the ropes. When we first opened, we were doing 10 to 15 arrangements a day, but it got really busy during the holidays and we designed 150 arrangements on Christmas Eve.”

As an added incentive to introduce area residents to the idea, Caruso offers anyone who comes into the store a complimentary ‘chocolate-dipped something’ or fresh-cut fruit to sample. She also credits community involvement with the company’s continued success.

“We’ve tried to work closely with local non-profits and charitable organizations in Huntington Beach,” she says. “The various organizations have been wonderful about welcoming and embracing the concept.”



Nancy Caruso, Tom Caruso and Tim Glaudini.

