



Rose Parade Media Update

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The Rose Parade Float Builder of Choice

Oct. 2010

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Creating Floats for the Rose Parade Is a Really Colorful Business – Part I

“Roses are red, violets are blue,” is the romantic thought put forward in 1590 by English poet laureate Sir Edmund Spenser.

In the 2011 Rose Parade, roses may be red – or yellow, orange, pink and several other colors. And the blue hue on a Jan. 1 float is seldom created with violets, but more often with dried statice or iris.

How do the thousands of eager decorators who flock to the Phoenix Decorating Co. float barns in the days prior to “America’s New Year Celebration” know what flower or other organic material is needed to create the colorful effect that was the float designer’s desire?

That’s the job of the art department. Under the guidance of Art Director Cynthia McMinimy, a team of specialized painters color-codes each float.

“I work directly from the designer’s rendering in picking the colors that are painted onto a float,” she says. When her crew is finished coloring a float, “it should look exactly like the designer’s concept.” She admits, though, that occasionally there needs “to be a small adjustment” to accommodate a special decorating material that Floral Director Lyn Lofthouse has in mind for a unique look.

A single paint color can signify different flowers on different floats – or even on separate areas of the same float.

That being the case, how is the color-code deciphered? With a code book, of course. Or as it’s called in a float barn, the “deco book” – a lengthy and detailed decorating guide Lyn

creates for each float. Often running to nearly 40 pages, it provides guidance on placement of the appropriate flower, seed, grain, herb, spice or piece of bark. Also how each is to be applied, and which of the various types of glue available is needed to make the job stick.

While roses are red, red may not mean roses on a float. Frequently used options for creating red are carnations, chrysanthemums or strawflower, each selected to achieve a specific texture or effect.

Yellow might be roses, or just as likely a fine cut dry flower; orange could be roses – or maybe lentils.

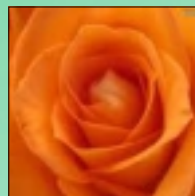
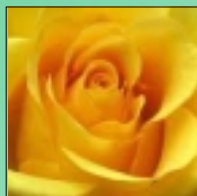
In addition to the large blocks of color needed to guide float decoration, there’s often a call for the art department crew to venture into the area of portraiture – limning human and animal visages. Well developed skills are needed to paint these images, and similar

skills are required to decorate them with organic material on a float.

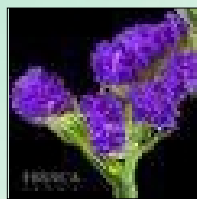
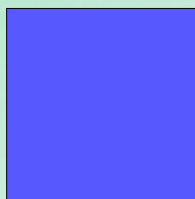
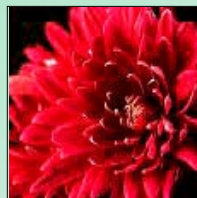
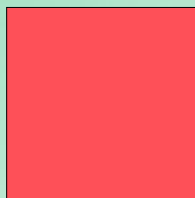
Cynthia leads a “detail crew” that uses herbs, spices, and even ground coffee to create these faces of the world that populate Rose Parade floats. Creatures are decorated by an “animal team” that is guided by Lyn to use such materials as uva grass, pampas grass, combed palm fiber and curly seaweed to evoke manes, tails and fur.

While red paint on a Rose Parade float may mean carnations and blue paint is almost definitely not violets, the color purple is simple to create with tiny statice flowers. No one, however, has yet succeeded in developing a true blue rose.

Maybe in the 2012 Tournament of Roses.



Not all roses in the Rose Parade are red – they represent a bouquet of many colors. Areas on a float color-coded red by the Phoenix art department may well feature carnations, or chrysanthemums, as shown below; violets aren’t the blue coded areas, but likely irises or fine cut statice.



FLOAT TEST PHOTO OPS

Saturdays Oct. 23 & Nov. 13

7 to 8 a.m.
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Pasadena, CA

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626-799-5985

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