Fresh Choices  TREND-SETTING TIPS FOR BUYING FRESH CUT FLOWERS AND GREENS

SWAN STYLE

In Hollywood, all eyes are on Natalie Portman, whose haunting portrayal of Nina Sayers, an ambitious ballerina who explores her dark side in Darren Aronofsky’s “Black Swan,” has landed her as a frontrunner for “best leading actress” at this year’s Oscars. In the fashion world, it’s Portman’s dreamy, Degas-inspired costumes commanding the attention. While her designer worked with satin, chiffon, feathers and tulle, you can conjure that same “ballerina chic” style with fresh cut product, from carnations (tutus) to callas (toe shoes), said Carol Caggiano, AIFD, PFCI. Here are eight ways to dance with the “Black Swan” trend.

*Comtessa*

“The ‘Comtessa’ rose resembles the tulle in a ballerina’s skirt, which is coming back into fashion with the movie,” said Marie Ackerman, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, who heads up education at Teleflora. Like Nina’s descent into a dream world, ‘Comtessa’ “blurs the line between fantasy and reality with its rippling cream and sherbet peach shades,” she said. Let this rose’s radiance shine by keeping accoutrements minimal. Ackerman’s suggestion: a bouquet of 12 to 20 stems, supported by some simple foliage, such as salal or pittosporum, or some rolled aspidistra leaves as a collar.

*Bat Flower*

Dial up the drama with the beguiling bat flower (Tacca Chantrieri). Karen Fountain, AAF, recommended styling it with ‘Black Bacarra’ roses in a tall, sleek black cylindrical vase. “It would make an awesome piece for the entry way,” said the owner of Flowers ‘n’ Ferns in Burke, Va.

*White Anemone*

Style ‘White Anemone’ in a black vase to bring out the flower’s contrast, Caggiano said. “It’d look spectacular all on its own,” she said, but would also work beautifully with ranunculus and carnations, “in any colors.”
Fresh Choices

‘GIOELE CREMA’
For the bride seeking some Swan Queen style, try ‘Gioele Crema’, a carnation with a peony-like feel, in a hand-tied bouquet. Walter Fedysyn, AIFD, PFCI, recommended highlighting these gorgeous, snowy blossoms with some black or brown fiddlehead fern curls, or with a collar of rolled dark mahogany ti leaves. “Finish the handle with white satin ribbon or fabric from the wedding gown,” said the creative design manager at Philip’s Flowers in Chicago.

‘BLACK PARROT’
Accentuate those popular black bridesmaid dresses with a hand-tied bouquet of ‘Black Parrot’ tulips, Fedysyn said. “Contrast the rich dark petals with a collar of stark white ostrich feathers,” he said. Complete the look by wrapping the tulips’ stems in black satin ribbon to match the dresses and trim with white pearl pins for added details.

‘ALABASTER’ + ‘BLACK BEAUTY’
For an easy but intriguing arrangement, start with a low, rectangular glass container and place a layer of black river rock along the bottom. Fill with water and float the heads of ‘Alabaster’ garden roses and ‘Black Beauty’ cosmos on top. “Arrange the flowers in a checkerboard fashion to really play up the juxtaposition of black and white to its maximum effect,” Fedysyn said. Black floating candles can lend a sparkling glow for added interest. “It doesn’t take much to put this together, but its presentation is just as dramatic as is the movie’s tone,” he said.

‘BLACK STAR’
“You can almost see ‘Black Star’ wrapped around Natalie Portman’s head, instead of her tiara,” said Ackerman, adding that the calla’s dark stem adds an air of mystery and drama. She recommended mixing ‘Black Star’ with its white counterpart for a “playful arrangement for all those black and white weddings we’re seeing.” Let the callas dance in a tall glass vase, she said, for an effect that’s like “being examined under a microscope.” For maximum extravagance, use an acolyte base to uplight this arrangement, she said.

‘WHITE RANUNCULUS’
For a graceful arrangement sure to please any prima ballerina, cluster ‘White Ranunculus’ in a rose bowl, “as you would a small bridal clutch bouquet,” Fountain said. Add a bit of baby’s breath around the edge “to soften the design even more,” she said.

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