

Flowers real and unreal



JANE LOCKHART DESIGN CONFIDENTIAL

I was working with a photographer shooting a recently completed design project. Everything looked pristine and camera-ready.

He mentioned to me while he was shooting that he would never shoot a room without flowers in it.

Luckily, we had beautifully arranged cut flowers in the room, but I understood his thought process. The difference is noticeable if you've seen a room photographed without any flowers in it.

That uninhabited space needs something to make it breathe, to make the room come to life. I make it a rule to always have fresh cut flowers for every photo shoot, even

bathrooms.

Florals are on my mind a lot lately, first because I was sent an impressive 8 X 10-foot wall of hand-made silk peonies to use as a backdrop on a recent segment on the *Marilyn Denis Show* on CTV.

Secondly, through most of the winter I've been working with The Sunshine Bouquet Company, who supply many of the major grocery chains throughout North America with fresh cut florals.

The floral wall arrived from the Flower Wall Company (theflowerwallcompany.com) in five large boxes, each containing multiple panels already covered in carefully crafted, silk peonies.

It was easy to assemble with panels designed to click together to create a fantastic focal wall. Celebrities have led the charge in using this unique design feature in a variety of floral species and colours for décor in baby girl's rooms or as a gorgeous backdrop for weddings.

It photographed so well in our "growing up girl's bedroom" segment the prop stylist asked to reuse it on the Valentine's day show. I was a little taken aback at how great its impact was on the set, but flowers and colour have that affect, they make everything come to life.

In fact, how many times have you walked past the floral section in the grocery store, enjoyed the sight of the bright colours and spontaneously picked up a bouquet.

Flowers are instantly satisfying and appreciated. Yet how many of us will treat ourselves to flowers just because?

The floral industry sells natural beauty and pure happiness. What an amazing field to work in! (Pun intended).

It's also a billion-dollar industry that is working hard to keep up with a changing marketplace. As millennials continue to influence trends, we see less over-sized arrangements and more whimsical, hand-made bouquets.

Single-stem flowers with a wisp of greenery can make as much of a statement as an armful of flowers. As trends from Europe continue their influence, the North American market is eager to embrace not just new trends in florals, but also in the containers in which they are placed.

The floral industry is now, more than ever connected to changing colour trends that generally start in fabric and fashion and work their way to interior design and accessories.

If your home reflects a trend, like modern country or mid-century modern, there's a floral arrangement for that. In fact, it's easy and less expensive to stay on trend with florals and containers than changing your furniture and accessories.



Florals have been on Jane Lockhart's mind a lot lately, thanks also to a 8 X 10-foot wall of hand-made silk peonies used on a recent *Marilyn Denis* show.

If you love the rose gold trend but can't afford a new watch, buy a vase in this latest colour and add some soft pastel florals and greenery to capture the look for less.

Florals should never be considered a luxury, they should be part of your life, every day. They are such a versatile feature that can be changed weekly, inexpensively and easily.

It's just a short trip to the store for instant beauty and happiness. Remember that the next time you walk by the floral section at the grocery store or a floral retailer.

— Jane Lockhart is an award-winning designer and TV personality and is considered one of Canada's leading experts in the world of design. Visit www.janelockhart.com.

For the time being, it's business as usual



HOWARD BOGACH YOUR NEW HOME

As you may have read earlier this month, the Ontario government intends to make substantial changes to the regulation of the building industry.

Shortly after the government's announcement on March 28, Tarion began receiving many enquiries from new home owners and builders about how this impacts them and where they can find assistance for warranty questions and issues.

It's important to stress that for the time being, it is business as usual at Tarion.

The government's plans are complex, and they will have a significant impact on how

Tarion operates in the future. However, it will take some time before these changes come into effect.

In the meantime, Tarion remains committed to providing information, resources and answers to homeowners and builders alike on the province's new home warranty.

Tarion is more than just a warranty provider; we have proudly served to protect consumers for more than 40 years. Since Tarion's inception in 1976, we have anticipated and responded to changing markets and consumer needs.

We have increased warranty coverage limits over the years to reflect the rising costs

of homes and repairs. We brought in construction performance guidelines to ensure a consistency in construction quality, and we recently introduced new education requirements for new builders to improve qualification standards for builders entering the industry.

We were the first and only province to provide coverage for radon gas remediation and for delayed closings. The seven-year warranty also covers illegally built homes — no other warranty in Canada does that.

Along the way, our staff has won international awards for customer service and our organization has been repeatedly recognized for excellence in corporate governance.

In surveys we send out annually to new home owners and builders, Tarion consistently scores above an 80 per cent approval rating for its customer service.

Given that we help administer the warranty to more than 350,000 homes and regu-

late more than 5,000 builders, I believe that rating is a strong indication of our dedication to customer service and consumer protection.

During my time here at Tarion, I have observed a strong culture of service and innovation. We do not sit still.

We watch for emerging issues and come up with solutions before the problems get out of hand. And we respond quickly to unforeseen situations that arise in the industry.

One issue that is front and centre in today's housing marketing is deposit protection coverage for buyers of new homes and condominiums.

Tarion supports changes to deposit coverage limits to better protect consumers against builders who, for one reason or another, are unable to complete building homes. This is especially important now, as house prices continue to escalate in the current hot market.

We are therefore pleased that the government wants



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The government's plans to make substantial changes to the regulation of the home building industry are complex and it will take some time before these changes come into effect.

to work with Tarion to review deposit protection coverage limits in the coming weeks and months.

The changes the government is proposing will take considerable time to put in place. In the meantime, new home owners and builders should take comfort that it is business as usual.

Our staff remain committed to delivering their award-winning customer service.

— Howard Bogach is president and CEO of Tarion Warranty Corp., a private corporation established in 1976 to protect the rights of new home buyers and to regulate new home builders. Visit www.tarion.com.