



**Welcome To
Rittners Floral
School Online:
An Orientation**

**Rittners Floral School
Boston, Ma.**

Welcome To Rittners Floral School in Boston...



Hi, Welcome to The Rittners School of Floral Design in Boston. It's a pleasure welcoming you to our Online Video Series. We think you'll really enjoy these lessons.

I am your host, Dr Steve Rittner.

I have carefully curated this series of video lessons to provide you with a grouping of floral classes that will enable you to learn floral designing in the easiest way possible.

I will be here every step of the way, presenting the information to you, in my unique way of teaching, which is direct, down to earth and easy to follow.

I am a third generation floral designer and literally grew up in the floral field. I have four university degrees including both a Master's and Doctorate in Education.

You will benefit from my background and experience....and the fact that I love teaching floral art.



You will watch a group of video segments where I will teach you step-by-step how to make various floral designs. I've carefully chosen the specific designs so that when you complete the series, and the designing exercises you will get a good background in the styles of designing taught.

Some Ground Rules Before You Even Touch The Flowers:

- 1. Relax and Enjoy**
- 2. Our Program Is Set Up For Different Learning Styles**
- 3. What Do I Need? The Content Lists**
- 4. Where Should You Get Your Flowers**
- 5. Don't Get Overly Invested in Your "Favorite" Flowers.**
- 6. Don't Obsess About Colors**
- 7. How To Take Care of Your Flowers (A Quick Summary)**
- 8. What Containers Will You Need**
- 9. What Tools Will You Need**
- 10. How To Cut Your Flowers**
- 11. After Designing: Taking Care of Your Designs**
- 12. Three Options For Doing This Program**

Relax And Enjoy!

For many people the words “lesson,” or “school” brings back all kinds of unpleasantness from prior educational “experiences.” I can appreciate that. Like you, I’ve had both good & bad learning experiences. You are doing this to have some fun, and learn some new skills.

I want you to enjoy the experience. And I am here to help you. So don’t fuss or fume over every stem insertion. Watch the videos. Read the study guides. **Do the best that you can but don’t overly agonize or fuss about it.**

If the design doesn’t come out exactly the way you intended, remember that you can always try it again, and it will come out better.

In other words, **don’t be overly critical with yourself.**



At Rittners Floral School we believe that learning floral art should be quick, easy and fun--and I mean that!

If you relax you will have more fun and your designing results will be better.

Our Program Is Set Up To Help People With Different Learning Styles

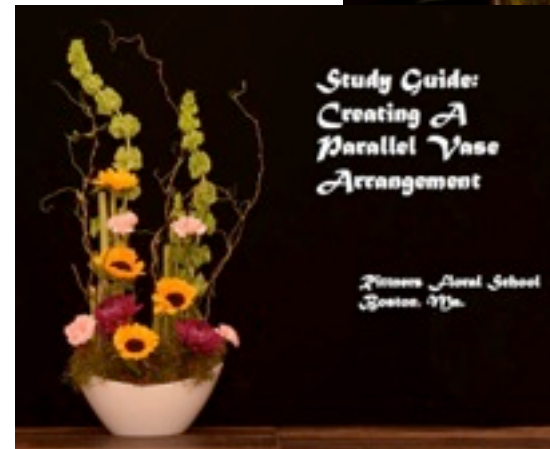
Some people learn best by watching something being done. Others like to read and look at still photos. (Some like to be able to do both.)

Both approaches are built into these online lessons. **Each lesson has video viewing and also a study guide.**

The **study guide** contains a **listing of what you will need** to make the design, **step-by-step instruction** that closely follows the videos, **some of the thinking/background related to the designing and questions based on the content.**

The study guides are intended as convenient notes. Nothing more or less. They are pdfs that are **easiest to read or use for review on your desktop, your laptop or your tablet.**

(Sorry, they may be a bit more challenging to use on a phone.)



What Do I Need? The Content Lists

Each study guide has a list of contents used in the lesson.

Rather than picking very unusual or esoteric floral contents I have tried to use materials that are relatively easy to find.

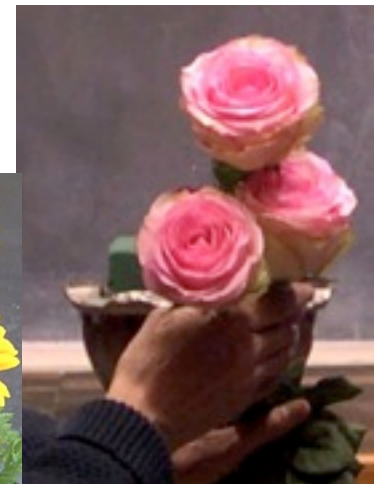
Even so, I realize that you may or may not be able to locate a specific flower, so **we stress the various shapes/forms of flowers**. If you can't get a linear flower like a glad, you may substitute another linear flower like a delphinium, or use a filler like wax flower instead of the filler statice. In other words substitutions are encouraged. **You have that kind of flexibility.**

The size and development of a flower can influence whether you need an extra flower or so, and that's OK. **I usually recommend buying extra flowers beyond the exact number that I used in a design.** So if you need five stems of something instead of the three I used, don't obsess about it. If something wilts or gets damaged on the way home, you still can function. It also gives you extra for practice.



Contents That You Will Need To Create This Arrangement:

- *Window Box Type Container
- *Gladiola (four or five stems in red)
- *Gladiola (two or three stems in white)
- *Larkspur (1/2- one bunch in blue/blueviolet)
- *Alstroemeria (two to three stems, white)
- *Roses (eight to ten red roses)
- *Bells of Ireland (five or six stems)
- *Foam
- *Plastic or Glass Liner(s)
- *Sheet Moss



Where Should You Get Your Flowers

You can buy your flowers for these online lessons from whatever sources you want.

- Florist (I always encourage people to buy locally if possible!)
- Supermarket or other mass market source.
- Local Farm
- Online supplier
- Cuttings from your own back yard.
- Permanent botanical version from craft sources



Don't Get Overly Invested In Your "Favorite" Flowers

We realize that part of the fun of learning floral designing is playing with flowers. But try to be flexible in your choices. If you feel that you must absolutely use purple hydrangea that was imported from Europe your flower costs may increase dramatically. **Be flexible while you are learning and you can better control how much you will spend on your flowers.** The idea is to learn how to design, not overly obsess about your tastes.



Don't Obsess About Colors

Color is one of the most potent of all of the various design elements. We “like” or “dislike” things because of the colors. It impacts us on a very basic, “gut” level.

Color is a very powerful tool that smart floral artists can use. But there is a problem. There are certain ways to mix colors, “color harmonies,” and other tricks for using color groupings. But just because we pronounce a certain combination a “color harmony” does not insure that everyone is going to find it harmonious or like it.

I have seen beginners fuss and fume over color groupings to the point where they are paralyzed and can't make a design.

My advice is that if you easily find a combination of colors you like, by all means go with it. **However don't overly obsess about color “rules” or groupings. It's unlikely that you will make any “mistakes.” Ultimately the tastes of the recipient of the design determines what is appropriate.**

Consider polychromatic groupings (a wide mixture of colors.) Experiment with whatever colors you can find. You may discover combinations you may never have considered.



How To Take Care Of Your Flowers Before Designing (A Quick Summary)



Of all artists, floral designers have it best because we are playing with beautiful flowers. It doesn't get any better than that.

Because we are dealing with live media we have to take care of it. Regardless of where you buy your flowers we do **suggest a series of simple steps before you start your designing.**

1. **Cut the bottom of the stems** (best at an angle) with your florist clippers/scissors. (half inch to an inch from the bottom.)
2. **Remove any foliage that could be under the water level.** (Foliage under the water level could increase bacteria in the water. That in turn can clog the xylem vessels that bring water to the head of the flower. Not a good thing.)
3. Place your flowers in water so that they can get a drink **for at least a half a day to a full day before designing.** Room temperature water is fine.
4. **Don't overly crowd** your flowers in the container. We like to use buckets to 'condition' our flowers. You can buy these from hardware stores or often find them free from restaurants, food stores or even construction sources.
5. If you really want to be fussy, **add flower preservative** to your water. Follow instructions on the package.
6. If possible keep your flowers in an **area that is cool** (but never below freezing.)



What Containers Will You Need?

Some people call them “vessels.” Doesn’t that sound fancy? I simply like to call them containers. If you like flowers, chances are you’ve already accumulated a number of them.

We use a variety of containers through this series simply for interest.

In most cases your choices are wide open as to what you can use. We may indicate that for a particular design, glassware may work better, or that a flat container may not be a great option.

In general your choice of containers allows a lot of flexibility for substitutions. In other words play with containers, but don’t be overly uptight about them.





Sometimes it is fun to see how your design will appear in different containers. We encourage you to experiment.



What Tools Will You Need?

One of the few things you will need is a pair of **florist clippers** to cut flowers with. If it has a serrated blade (meaning one with little notches that will enable the clipper to also cut wire without being damaged) so much the better. You can get these from craft centers and also online (eg. Amazon.) If your clippers does not have a serrated blade, you may also want to get a small wire cutter.

A **simple hacksaw blade** from the hardware store can be used to cut foam.



Beyond that we will advise you in each lesson if there are unique things (like floral foam, florist wire etc) that may be useful. These days you can get just about anything easily online.

How To Cut Flowers

Some floral designers cut their flowers with sharp knives, and cut towards themselves. That is not a safe way to cut flowers. Nor does it give any overwhelming benefit to the design process.



Our most important tools are our hands. I always stress safety. **Use clippers or scissors, not a knife. Always be very aware as you are cutting. Always keep your hands away from where you are cutting with your clippers/scissors. Always pay attention as you cut. Watch your hands and scissors/clippers as you cut.**

Keep your hand at least 2 to 3 inches away from where you are cutting.

Cut at the bottom intersection of the V formed by the clippers/scissors.



After Designing...Taking Care of Your Designs...

Designs in Foam. Keep the foam wet. Touch the foam every day or so and add some water as needed. If water flows over the edge of the container as you are adding, you've added enough. Tip off any excess water. Enjoy!



Flowers are a transient media. Enjoy designing with them but realize that they are not forever. Here are some suggestions to help them last longer.

Designs in Water. Change water frequently (every day or so.) Add floral preservatives to the water in your container per directions on the preservatives. If your water is kept clean your flowers should last longer.



If possible keep your arrangements in a cool area (but never below freezing) when they are not being enjoyed by you or family. It will help extend their lives.

Three Options For Doing This Program.

You are learning floral art. We want you to have fun, and learn some skills that will make you feel good and hopefully impress family and friends. In other words these lessons are intended to help you reduce stress and have fun and enjoy! You can approach this in any of three ways.

1. You can simply watch the video instruction and enjoy!
2. You can watch the instruction, get your own flowers/materials from wherever you'd like, and play with the designing, as much or as little as you'd desire.
3. You can get a Certificate of Completion. To do that you need to:
 - A. Email me to let me know you would like to follow this option. steve@floralschool.com
 - B. Watch the video instruction. Make each design taught. You may substitute other materials but the design you make has to be similar enough to be recognizable as that taught in the lesson.
 - C. Email us a photograph of each design you've made. After we look at your photo, & get back to you, you may have to modify the design, and send us photos of any correction(s) that may be needed. (If the design does not need modification, don't be sad. It means your design is fine!)
 - D. Along with the photos, send the answers to the questions at the end of each of the study guides. They are not hard questions. The answers are found both in the videos and the study guides.



I want to be able to make sure that you are getting the information we present and that we can help you develop as a floral designer in the series you are taking. So here are a few additional details that will easily help us help you.

The instruction is presented in a orderly sequence. I will remind you of that sequence when you email us that you are interested in the Certificate option.

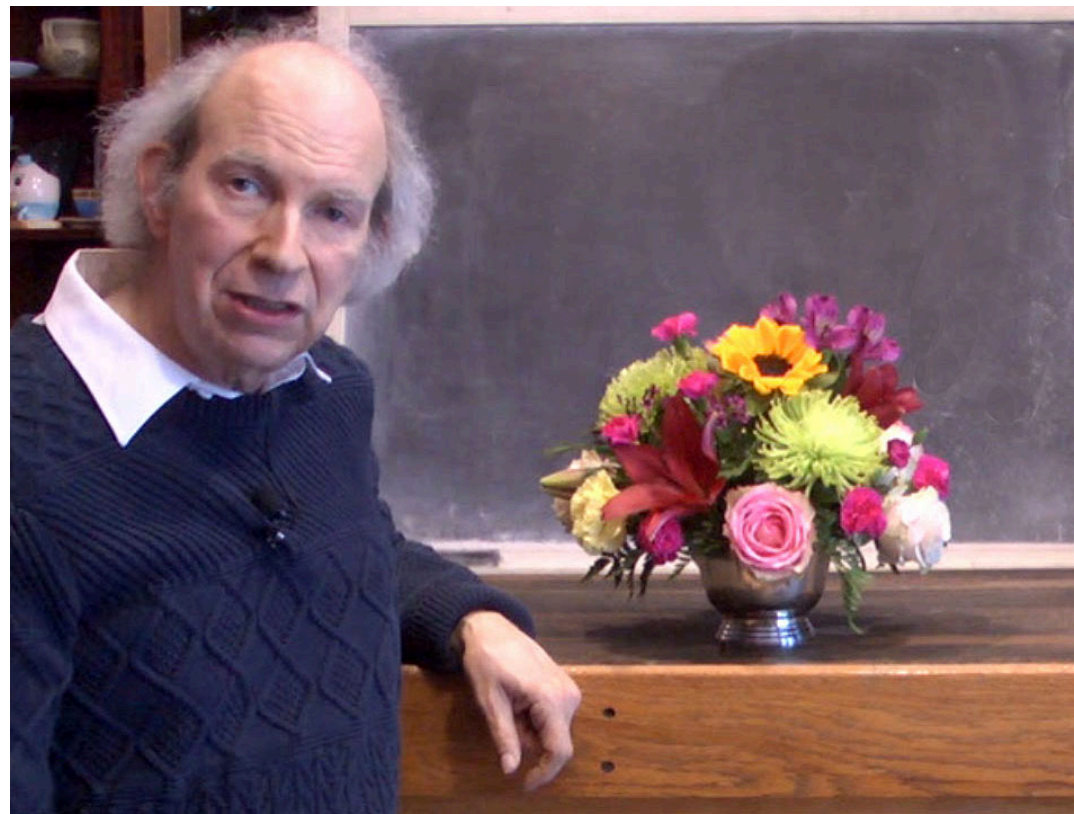
Don't send a pictures of a number of designs all at once at the same time, for evaluation. They will not be accepted.

Instead, we would appreciate it if you would **please simply follow the order of the series and send us the first design (and answered questions.)** After you complete that, and get our feedback, then you can send the second one, get our feedback, and so forth. The reason for that, is that sometimes a small correction earlier in the instruction could make your life easier in designing other designs in the series.

The Certificate of Completion is available to the one person using the course. It is available only to the person who purchases the instruction or to a person s/he is gifting it to. (If two or more people want to do it, each person must buy his/her own course and follow the procedures mentioned above, in order to get a Certificate).

You have up to three months after purchase to complete the sequence of designs and answer the questions, in order to receive the Certificate. It is pass/fail.

Again. This is a fun thing. We are here to try to support you. **I want you to enjoy this unique experience.** If you have any questions you may contact me by email or by phone during normal business hours, Mon-Fri 9-4, Eastern Standard Time.



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The ultimate compliment from our graduates:
**“Rittners Floral School is a school,
but it doesn’t feel like school..... It’s
really fun!”**

