

MONUMENTAL

Say It with *Flowers*

Sarah von Pollaro of Urban Petals brings her floral artistry home for the holidays.

BY STEPHANIE JONES

ASSEMBLED BY SARAH VON POLLARO'S skilled hands, run-of-the-mill flowers become living pieces of art, perfectly echoing a holiday, special event, or season. For Thanksgiving, the Urban Petals proprietor might use submerged gourds, rust-colored roses, orange dahlias, red hypericum berries, and gold-tinged greenery. At Christmastime the Washington, DC-based florist may incorporate fresh pine, deep red roses, and snow-white hydrangeas into her creations.

While von Pollaro is an expert at creating floral arrangements for holiday parties, she can also teach people how to do it for themselves. Clients can host floral-arranging parties in their homes and let guests fashion Thanksgiving centerpieces, festive green wreaths, or more conventional arrangements. "People love it because it's so relaxing and fun," says von Pollaro. "Most adults don't get a chance to sit in art class and be creative." While there doesn't have to be a special event to inspire the lesson, instruction has proven especially popular for bridal showers and girls' birthday parties.

Von Pollaro also has several weekly accounts, including a Ritz-Carlton Residences dweller who loves coming home on Thursdays to discover what floral wonder von Pollaro has wrought. Fresh arrangements, complementing both interior design and lifestyle, can be the ultimate decorative accessory.

Von Pollaro's private residential clients receive the same attention as her projects for events honoring architect Frank Gehry and the Chinese Embassy. When Gehry was awarded the Turner Prize at the National Building Museum in October 2007, von Pollaro created a floral cityscape with "moving roundish curving shapes flying out from regular big-box buildings." For the opening of the new Chinese Embassy last July, she found inspiration in Chinese woodprints and used bamboo, red roses, and red orchids, as the Chinese associate red with happiness and good luck. Call 202-297-4270 or visit urbanpetals.com.

