

Abu Dhabi Week sits down with florist Noel Peralta of Fanan Flowers to find out more about the beautiful arrangements he's making to spread cheer in the Capital



Working at Fanan Flowers, which literally translates as “a branch with a twist” this florist’s unique and artistic designs have long been catching the eye of the Capital’s residents. And now that the holiday season is upon us we thought it would be wise to check out how Noel R. Peralta is doing his part to help celebrate the Holy Month.

The flower business is a family tradition for Peralta. His father was a florist and watching him sparked his own interest in this art form. Originally from the Philippines, Peralta has been a florist for 15 years. So how does he spend his day?

6.30am: It’s an early start for Noel. After waking up, he rouses his nine-year-old son for school. After dropping him to the bus station, Noel returns for a quick spot of breakfast and readies himself for the busy day ahead.

8.55am: Noel only lives a couple of blocks away from the shop. The first thing he does is check on his supplies for the day. “Most of the time when I order flowers in the morning, they’ll be finished by the evening. So I have to see what flowers we have and what I’ll need to order from the suppliers for the next day.”

9.10am: Next up is a quick visit to the computer. Since Fanan Flowers also offers email orders, it is paramount to keep on top of demand. Peralta says, “Sometimes people don’t have time to come and check out our shop so they send us emails for orders and delivery. We always advise our customers who are looking for special orders that they order one day in advance, so we can make sure we have the items in stock.”

9.20am: “Typically on Saturdays we will prepare our corporate orders for our larger business clients. These will include a variety of table and reception displays that we change weekly,” says Peralta.

10am to 10.30am: A flower shipment usually arrives in the shop at this time. Once the suppliers deliver the flowers, which are all sourced from Holland, Noel and his team place them immediately in large vases of water. Once the flowers have been refreshed, they trim the bottoms and strip off excess greenery, preparing the blooms for arrangements.

10.30am: Now that all the flowers have been prepared, Noel and the two other florists at the shop begin making arrangements and bouquets that have already been ordered.

“First we prepare the floral foam, which is essentially a large green coloured piece of sponge, by soaking it in water. This helps support the flowers and because it is full of water, it helps keep the blooms fresh for much longer.”

If the customer wants the arrangement placed in a glass vase or basket, Noel starts by adding the greenery. “Every arrangement or hand bouquet is different. It depends on the budget, the customer’s specifications and style they want.

“There are different requirements for different designs. European designs offer a mixed variety of flowers, the Japanese style includes fewer flowers and more greenery, twigs and accessories

and the English style usually is one or two colours and one or two kinds of flowers. It's a bit more traditional and simple.

“If we're receiving an order from a first-time customer we like to ask a lot of questions to fully understand what they'd like. Some customers don't know what they want, that's why we need to ask. However if it is one of our regular customers, then we already know their style and what they'd prefer. With our regulars I like to come up with the design all by myself because I know their tastes.”

The florists are experts at their craft and work quickly. Each arrangement or hand bouquet takes around ten to 15 minutes to prepare. At the most, it'll take 30 minutes to complete. Noel adds, “we have to work quickly here, especially if walk-in customers need their flowers in a short period of time.”

1pm: Noel heads back home for his lunch and break for the day. “When I arrive home I prepare lunch for my family. When my wife arrives from work and my son returns from school we like to eat together. Then I like to sleep for an hour or so. This is my chance to spend time with my family and relax.”

5pm: Break over; Noel heads back to the shop for his second shift of the day. Upon his return he once again checks to see if they've received any orders via email.

Continuing with the arrangements from the morning, Noel and the other florists also find time to update the decorations and displays for the shop. “Depending on the season, we like to update the décor and flowers in the shop. The owner of the shop also brings many floral ideas and inspiration from her travels. She helps come up with inspiration for our designs of the month. We are always updating the displays, if you pass by our shop next week or next month it will look different.”

10pm: Noel closes the shop after a busy day. “We receive orders by email, phone and walk-in clients. So we're busy through the entire day. If any customers have ordered special flowers, we have to call our supplier to make sure it arrives for next day delivery.”

Pick of the bunch

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11pm: After returning home and eating dinner, Noel heads to bed for a well deserved night's sleep.

Sawaiba Khan