

https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/covid-19/sights-and-smells-of-flowers-lift-spirits/article_d4f86f31-0c7d-59ca-aaed-da3494e949d6.html

HOT

Sights and smells of flowers lift spirits

By DEBRA JENSEN-DE HART Special to the Daily News
Feb 8, 2021



Brenda Terrones, business owner of Rindfleisch Flowers, shows a visitor one of the colorfully designed floral arrangements. Photo by Debra Jensen-DeHart

There's something about the sweet fragrance inside a floral shop that draws you in like a breath of fresh air.

Shop owners in Beloit and South Beloit say even in a year when the COVID-19 virus has dampened many spirits and negatively impacted some area businesses, the flower business has remained steady.

Christie Arndt, owner of Nyrie's Floral Shop in South Beloit for 30 years, says she no longer notices the floral perfume when she works in the shop after three decades.

But customers and visitors are sure to notice.

On a recent January day, Arndt took time out to talk about the business she started with her mother, the late Delores Fitzgerald.

Nyrie's, 1320 Blackhawk Blvd., South Beloit, first was located further down the street, then in 1985, the shop moved to the present site. Arndt and her mom bought the business in 1991, she said. That happened after she had gained some experience.

"I used to work at Rindfleisch Floral in Beloit," she said.

While there: "I learned a lot," she said.

"Then this came up for sale," she said, of Nyrie's.

The shop has four employees.



Arndt said she enjoys the work because “every day is different.”

That includes designing a variety of arrangements as well as housing potted plants.

Of her products she said: “We are more of a florist than a gift shop; we just do floral.”

As for how business has gone, she said 2020 has been a good year and that she is grateful for the customers.

“During the past year we have been really busy.”

Presently, Arndt is gearing up for the biggest floral event of the year, Valentine’s Day.

“You start gearing up for it right after Christmas,” she said.

That means ordering products, supplies and containers.

Mother’s Day is the biggest holiday but Valentine’s Day is the biggest day, she said. On that February weekend, the shop also will have four vans out delivering flowers. But people also can stop in. Many are repeat customers; some stop in to see the two rescue cats in the shop, Shadow and Ghost, Arndt said.

At Beloit Floral, 1205 Cranston Road, Beloit, three generations of the same family have operated the floral and gift shop for more than a century.

“My grandfather Thomas Panos started the shop in 1916,” said Mary (Spelius) Foster. Mary’s father, the late George Spelius and her mother, Nancy Spelius ran the shop after that. Mrs. Spelius, 85, still comes in to the shop six days a week, her daughter said.

“She loves it,” Foster said.

Beloit Floral opened on State Street in downtown Beloit then moved to another location at 321 State. By 1972 business expanded and the downtown site was joined by the addition of the Cranston Road shop. Then in 1988, the stores were consolidated into the Cranston Road location. Presently, there are 10 employees.

Foster, the shop manager, began working at the family-run business in junior high school.

“After school, I’d sweep up and make change for customers.”

After graduating from college, Foster worked in corporate sales for 20 years before coming back to help out at the store.

“I love it, there’s nothing like small business and family-run business,” she said.

Flowers can help raise people’s spirits, especially when there are concerns and sad situations.

“Flowers bring joy to people, although some of the cards can be heartbreaking. We hear it all,” she said.

Despite the circumstances of the past year with the Covid 19 virus, Foster said business has been good.

“It’s been excellent, we can’t thank the community enough for their support.”

But there have been challenges, nonetheless.

“It’s been hard to get show room supplies; a lot of things were halted from China when the tariffs went into effect. We had to find other vendors,” she said.

During a recent January week, Beloit Floral was also gearing up for Valentine's Day like other florists in the area.

"You plan ahead for it," she said. "We are getting a lot of internet orders.

"We will have three vehicles delivering on Valentine's Day and maybe even on Sunday," Foster said.

Beloit Floral also offers candles and candy by Abdallah, a family-run chocolate candy company for four generations.

Foster also cautioned those ordering online to be aware of ads.

They should click onto a website, not just an ad, and check with their local florist, she said.

Another floral shop with deep roots in the area is Rindfleisch Flowers, 512 E. Grand Ave. in downtown Beloit. The shop was established in 1888 and has been located in the same building since 1912, said Brenda Terrones, business owner of seven years there.

"My mom and aunt owned it 35 years ago, I worked here then," Terrones said.

While business remains steady, it has been a challenging year, she said.

"I did have to close down in March, but I got orders online and got them delivered out there for a couple months," she said.

Then in May, the employees came back to work at the shop and the doors were opened once again to the public, Terrones said.

As a result: "These past months have been busier than any other year," she said.



One reason might be because people haven't been able to be with their loved ones, but they do send flowers.

“We really didn't know how things would go with no homecomings or proms, but we've just been steadily busy. We are really blessed by Beloit.”

The shop does do more delivery than usual but customers also can stop in and pick out arrangements.

Rindfleisch has three part-time floral designers and three delivery drivers, the owner said.

As for Valentine's Day, “We will be ready,” Terrones said.

The floral shop owners also said they work together to help each other when the need arises.

Hillary Gavan

