

Everything's Coming up Roses at Boston's Table & Tulip

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Smell is not a sense upon which the typical artist relies when crafting masterpieces. But Andrea Halliday is not your typical artist.

From fragrant flower chandeliers to canopies of aromal blossoms, floral designer Andrea Halliday knows just how to convert a clean canvas into a sweet-smelling dreamland.

Each of Halliday's living, blooming artworks is artfully arranged at 461 Shawmut Avenue in Boston, Mass. Here, nestled in Boston's historic South End neighborhood, Halliday brings a new meaning to the term 'flower power' as she quests to make her client's dreams flourish like her favorite florals.

Behind a flower-filled desk, Halliday, serene yet determined, adds the finishing touches to a large bouquet. Warm natural light and the smell of fresh eucalyptus fill the room. Reaching for the shears in front of her, she snips one bud, rotates another, then steps back to inspect her work. This is Halliday's natural habitat. This is Table & Tulip.

During her twelve-year professional career, Halliday has built an impressive resume. Beginning in the industry as the owner of a small flower stand on Newbury Street, Halliday muscled her way into the competitive market of Boston floral design by quickly earning her reputation as a self-described "floral fanatic" delivering unmatched passion and customer service.

"Becoming 'the go-to-girl' for Boston floral wasn't easy but listening to your client is. By making myself available and throwing myself into my work, I was able to build a following and expand what I thought was possible for my business," says Halliday.

Nine years ago, Halliday opened her brick-and-mortar storefront. She described this transition in location as "an evolution" in both the success of her studio and broadly her career. Halliday chose to christen her shop the only name that could convey her devotion to her work, one harkening back to a childhood in Medfield, Mass. spent cutting and arranging the spring blooms from her front yard on her kitchen table. And thus Table & Tulip was born. From these beginnings, Halliday's passion project turned profession has blossomed into a full-service floral design studio specializing in large scale events, local

deliveries to restaurants and businesses, and personal orders. Although weddings and other large events carry a price tag often in the neighborhood of five thousand dollars, a typical delivery from Table & Tulip reflects their focus on appealing to the everyday customer. The average floral order from Table & Tulip is priced anywhere from \$75 to \$200.

In the years since its opening, Table & Tulip has come to embody what first set Halliday apart from other upcoming Boston florists: an unrivaled dedication to customer service fueled by creative passion.

“No matter if we’re creating a piece for a customer down the street in the Back Bay or a shipping a bouquet a state away, I ensure that I am involved in the design process of each arrangement that leaves our store. Even though my work has become somewhat of a second nature, I still get excited about the prospect of beginning a new project and collaborating with clientele,” says Halliday.

Halliday’s mission of client-centered creativity has become Table & Tulip’s calling card in the circle of Boston-area consumers. Nathan Akhtarzad is a Boston local and restaurant manager who first became a customer of Table & Tulip four years ago. Beginning as a client seeking a floral studio specializing in custom arrangements, Akhtarzad will now be expanding his patronage of Table & Tulip to include floral orders for all professional events.

“In my four years as a client of Table & Tulip, I’ve seen the studio continually go to the extra mile to embody an environment of collaboration and translate my creative vision into a reality. With a business ethos such as this, it was an easy decision to incorporate Table & Tulip’s services into my professional sphere,” says Akhtarzad.

Through an unwavering devotion to the perspective of the customer, Table & Tulip has woven a personalized and hands-on brand identity into the fabric of their business. This model is one that has facilitated not only greater profits but a wider breadth of services and reach to clientele. Halliday believes

the secret ingredient to this success is rooted in a unique approach to understanding the artistic vantage point of the client through consultation.

“I begin my consultations by asking clients not only to describe their dreams for the piece but also questions relating to their individual style. For example, ‘what’s your favorite piece in your wardrobe?’. This insight allows their vision to become clearer and the project to be everything they imagined,” says Halliday.

This unique approach to floral design has helped Halliday to create a strong client base for Table & Tulip. Table & Tulip’s maintains a cherished place in the hearts of South End residents as the beloved, go-to local studio for any and all things floral. Kaitlin Arcario, a South End native, wedding planner, and longtime client of Table & Tulip, comments on her experience with Halliday’s shop.

“Whether I’m reaching out regarding floral arrangements for a professional event or simply stopping by on a Saturday afternoon to ask about New England gardening, Andrea and her staff have consistently brought a smile to my face through the *joie de vivre* they embody in their work. I frequently recommend Table & Tulip to colleagues and friends alike,” says Arcario.

Yet despite its strong brand identity, Table & Tulip contends against significant marketplace competition. In the city of Boston, many florists have struggled to set themselves apart and maintain consistent profits and community notoriety. Changes in season and the notorious fluctuation in New England weather also pose as external factors intimidating to any floral designer.

Table & Tulip combats these challenges by referring to their mission. From topiary to tressilled buds, Table & Tulip is founded on the principle that if the client can dream it, they can execute it. In order to achieve this goal, Table & Tulip seeks to collaborate, not compete. In entering into a partnership with other local flower shops and farmers, this South End florist broadens the floral materials at their disposal and thus, the spectrum of what the client can create at Table & Tulip.

Despite the burgeoning success of Table & Tulip in the Boston community, Andrea Halliday and her team have not ceased in their search of ways to cultivate further triumphs. In a city where floral workshops geared to the everyday customer are few and far in between, Halliday has set out to bring a new perspective. Every month, Table & Tulip hosts a themed workshop tailored to the public. For \$95, participants leave Table & Tulip with a beautiful arrangement, a belly full of hors d'oeuvres, and a new skill under their gardening belt.

The classes are structured around an hour of formal instruction from Halliday and her staff partnered with a cocktail reception. Utilizing the most sought after blooms of the season, the Table & Tulip team guides participants in crafting stunning arrangements worthy of the cover of *Boston Weddings*. Among the most popular workshops is the annual Mother's Day class. The success of and budding interest in these events have allowed Halliday to facilitate private classes as well.

“Seeing my client's faces light up when they take home an arrangement of their own design reminds me of myself when I first began as a florist. Instilling that confidence to create is so necessary. In an atmosphere like this it's easy to get my creative juices flowing to dive into my next professional project,” says Halliday.

In its nine years of operation, Table & Tulip has personified the term ‘flower power’ in its staunch commitment to transforming clients' dreams into their latest creation. Owner and lead floral designer Andrea Halliday and her team of flower fanatics hope to continue facilitating future achievements of their beloved studio. Halliday wishes to utilize Table and Tulip's popularity in the South End in order to promote change among small businesses throughout Boston.

“I want to introduce the power of collaboration versus competition to the small business scene here in Boston. This paradigm allows us to foster an environment where everyone with a passion can chase their dream as a full time job. I want Table & Tulip to set this standard for other entrepreneurs and artists,” says Halliday.

To Halliday, Table & Tulip is proof positive that the confidence to chase your childhood dream can be found anywhere, even in your latest floral centerpiece.