Step right up and be amazed at the astounding products presented during the circus-themed Premier Products Showcase at SAF Amelia Island 2015

BY KATIE HENDRICK AND JENNY SCALA

It pays to be in the know, said Marlin Hargrove, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of the Pete Garcia Company in Atlanta. “Keeping abreast of the latest and greatest puts one in a position of knowing the shortcuts on the path to success,” whether it’s using striking new vases and ribbon to increase your average order or adopting new technology or design techniques that save you time and lower your operational costs.

Hargrove, a consummate student of design trends, was among a quartet of florists (all members of SAF’s Professional Floral Communicators – International Board of Trustees) sharing creative ways to use some of the industry’s newest products and services during the popular Premier Products Showcase at SAF Amelia Island 2015, the association’s 131st annual convention in Amelia Island, Florida, in September.

The products review session, dubbed “Under the Big Top,” featured a circus theme complete with the presenters dressed as brightly colored clowns driving a faux clown car and encouraging audience members to wear clown noses, too.

Joining Hargrove as “clowns” were Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CF, of Blumz... by JRDesigns in Detroit and Ferndale, Michigan; Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Jenny’s Floral in Custer, South Dakota; Julie Poeltler, AIFD, PFCI, IMF, CAFA, of Julie’s Fountain of Flowers in Lone Tree, Iowa; and “ringleaders” D Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NAFD, NMF, of the Bill Doran Company in Omaha, Nebraska; and Lisa Weddel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of L. Weddel Design in Highlands Ranch, Colorado.

These experts delighted and amazed convention-goers with their fast-paced demos of tools, containers, accessories, ribbons, foam, gifts and more.

Here’s a review of some of the featured products that will help you as an in-the-know florist on the path to success:

Radiant Roses

“Everyone look at these beautiful blush beauties,” Behlings said of ‘Quicksand’ by Art Roses. “They came all the way from Ecuador. They’re just so gorgeous. Blush is every girl’s signature color – not Pepto-Bismol!” With a vase life of 14 days, these roses have stems measuring 50 cm to 70 cm and a full petal head with a diameter of at least 5 cm. (593) 2 236 5284 > artroses.ec

The ‘Corazon’ rose features a “lush, velvet color of red and a nice strong stem,” Poeltler said. Equiflor Corporation/Rio Roses helps florists promote the rose to consumers with a Retail Marketing Kit composed of a variety guide, care and handling card, button, hat, cooler stickers with color meanings, car magnet, pens, measuring tape and mini promotional flyer. (305) 594-4445 > rioroses.com

The Greatest SHOWCASE ON EARTH

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CLOWNING AROUND The PFCI Board of Trustees present the annual products review. Pictured from left: Julie Poeltler, AIFD, PFCI, IMF, CAFA, of Julie’s Fountain of Flowers in Lone Tree, Iowa; Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CF, of Blumz... by JRDesigns in Detroit and Ferndale, Michigan; Marlin Hargrove, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of the Pete Garcia Company in Atlanta; Lisa Weddel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of L. Weddel Design in Highlands Ranch, Colorado; D Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NAFD, NMF, of the Bill Doran Company in Omaha, Nebraska; and Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Jenny’s Floral in Custer, South Dakota.
**Cool Containers**

“With the popularity of the very trendy ‘vertical gardening,’ this hits the mark,” Yelverton said of Hanging Pipe Planters - 11104 by BloomNet/ Napco. “The ‘weathered’ whitewashed finish on the metal containers works wonderfully for both urban chic settings as well as garden spaces. Perfect for succulent gardens and foliage plantings. It comes with fitted liners and is pre-assembled.” (800) 256-6663 > bloomnet.net

“Quick, quick, quick — no time to spare? Here’s the thing for you,” Behlings said. “The Quick Décor Eastland Cylinder Set is quick and easy, and ready to go. Everything you need for the perfect centerpiece — all in one box.” The graduated vases come in sets of three or 36. Floating candles, pillar candles and three shapes of mirrors are also available. (800) 928-6175 > quickdecor.com

“Are you into luxury? Of course you are — we’re staying at the Ritz-Carlton,” Behlings said. “Don’t we love this beautiful glass vase? You can send this out to all your customers who want to be pampered.” The FTD Superior Sights Luxury Bouquet (LX151) is a new, revitalized line of arrangements. The collection features containers, like this one, which are beautifully sculpted and easier to deliver compared to the previous line. (800) 767-4000 > FTDi.com

FlowerBox offers waterproof, recyclable flower vases in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. “The Grab & Go is great for bridal parties,” Hargrove said. “Each attendant will have [her] own Grab & Go so the flowers can rehydrate in between the pictures and the ceremony.” (866) 396-1185 > flowerbox.com

“Are you clumsy? Doesn’t matter,” Behlings said. “These vases are attached to these little trays, so they’re not going anywhere.” The Accent Décor Chic Collection comes in round, square and rectangle, each with six or seven miniature vases contained by a sleek ceramic plate. Sell them as a gift item or line them up to create an event table. (800) 385-5114 > accentdecor.com

New Everyday Containers from Teleflora include the Angel of Grace Keepsake Figurine, exquisitely executed in fine porcelain with gold trim details. The Cheers to You Mug “makes you happy,” Poeltler said. It is FDA-approved to serve and store food, and comes with “Happy Birthday” and “Celebrate” picks. (800) 333-0205 > myteleflora.com

**Website Wonders**

“This guy knows marketing. He was the first florist on Twitter and the first florist to sell flowers on Facebook,” Behlings said of Brandon Kirkland with epicFlowers.com. “He will get your site noticed.” Along with developing websites, the company offers a Website Marketing service that increases your site’s online visibility and sales, protects your brand and solidifies your reputation, and keeps your brand in front of shoppers. (888) 498-5361 > epicflowers.com

OnlineFlowerSearch.com LLC provides a flower database and gallery on your website. “The database shows product availability based on the growing season and also gives substitutions for products that are not available,” Hargrove said. “There are three different commitment levels that allow the retailer to choose which plan will fit their needs best.” (404) 320-1619, ext. 122 > onlineflowersearch.com

“Strider Search Marketing is the source for Customized Ecommerce Websites for Florists,” Yelverton said. “Based on the Florist 2.0 platform, it is compatible with all common wire service software and independent POS systems. It is also ‘intuitive’ in that it will reconfigure itself to fit whatever type of device it is being viewed on, whether a cell phone, iPad, laptop or desktop.” (800) 314-8895 > striderseo.com

Through its Web Acceleration Program, a TeamFloral LLC technician logs into your website monthly to add, subtract and arrange products. The program also includes access to custom images from everyday to sympathy, a wedding gallery link so brides can fill out the consultation form, twice weekly Facebook wall posts and monthly meetings with a web coach. “If you’re lucky, you will get to speak to my friend Vonda LaFever, AIFD, PFCI,” Poeltler said. (918) 574-6297 > teamfloral.com
Design Enhancements

“Looking for an easy way to add a touch of metallic elegance to a design or display?” Yelverton asked. “Check out these Gold and Silver Wedding Fabric Rolls by FloraCraft. These fabrics are great for wrapping around vases, card boxes and even chair backs.” (800) 253-0409 > floracraft.com

“Look and see,” Poelter said. “I sprayed these bouquets with the Metallics blue. Notice the leaves — how the leaves shine and sparkle.” OASIS™ Colour Regen by Smithers-Oasis is a water-based spray. Choose from 28 Opaque, 13 Translucent and nine Metallic colors. (800) 321-8286 > oasisfloralproducts.com

“The word ‘über’ has become very popular. If you do Pinterest, you’ve seen that chalkboard paint that’s all over the place. This is it in spray form,” Yelverton said of übermatte™ by Design Master Color Tool, Inc. “It is cooler-safe, meaning it’s not going to peel off with condensation, and comes in 12 matte hues. It is wonderful for coordinating containers with hard-to-paint surfaces like metal, glass and ceramic to the wedding or event color scheme.” (800) 525-2644 > dmcolor.com

“Y’all know what Sunbrella fabric is?” Hargrove asked. “It’s durable, won’t fade in the sun, and no mold will grow on it. Feel it, touch it, love it.” Use the Sunbrella Ribbon by Berwick Offray LLC in wreaths, tablescapes, mailbox swags and other enhancements for outdoor living spaces. (800) 327-9425 > berwickoffraywholesale.com

Odds n’ Ends

“Let’s exercise our smart sides,” Hargrove said. “We don’t use cigar boxes anymore; this is your new cash register. FloristWare is a great POS system for businesses that aren’t involved in wire service programs. There is no term commitment, no time contracts.” (888) 531-3012 > floristware.com

“Believe it or not, we’re into human trafficking now,” Yelverton said, introducing Sam Bowles, the new on-site trainer at FloralStrategies LLC. “He’s smart, he’s nice, he’s easy to look at, and he’ll teach you how to talk to customers and make more sales. You’ll expand your staff’s skills and learn how to handle those more difficult customers. I can vouch for him, he’s come to my shop.” (800) 983-6184 > floralstrategies.com

GO DEEPER
- Check out all the Premier Products at safnow.org/pps.
- Get your products in the next Premier Products Showcase. Contact SAF’s Jenny Scala, jscala@safnow.org.
- Learn more about getting certified by PFCI, the floral industry’s speakers bureau. Applications are due Jan. 29, 2016, for membership induction at SAF Maui 2016. safnow.org/pfci
“Now it’s time to shine,” Hargrove said. “Just go to your friendly hotel, cut down some of their foliage, and spray. Good for the environment, good for you.” The Chrysal Leafshine by Chrysal Americas reduces water evaporation of leaves. It’s suitable for most foliage except those with fragile or hairy leaves, succulents, and ferns. Avoid spraying flower blooms and buds. (800) 295-4725 > chrysalusa.com

“It’s an MP3 stick. You can record a tune and send it off with an arrangement. It rocks,” Hargrove said of Floral Tune Ups. “It’s cooler-friendly, too. Look, listen and love!” (843) 744-3003 > floraltuneups.com

“This member benefit gives you a $500 new car discount in addition to other promotions you may already be getting,” Hargrove said of the FCA US LLC (formerly Chrysler Group LLC) Vehicle Discount through SAF. Members, their employees and family are eligible. Members and employees also get On the Job program benefits and can choose from up to $1,000 commercial upfit or equipment allowance, or up to $1,000 graphic allowance, or 2 years of no-extra-charge oil, lube, filter (eight changes), or Bosch toolkit. (800) 336-4743 > safnow.org

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-Art Conforti, Beneva Flowers (Sarasota, FL)