

Business branching out to produce sophisticated floral arrangements

BY CHARLOTTE CUSACK

STAFF WRITER

Energetic and enthusiastic on a warm afternoon in Danville, Ria Sim was perched on a chair in the shade and happily expounded on how her latest business, Twiggs, came to exist.

"It was a business before it became a business," she said.

It seemed natural to branch out and create Twiggs, a floral business, due to her love of and regularity in creating floral arrangements for large events in conjunction with her other self-run operation, eventPRO Management, an event planning company.

Twiggs became "official" only within the past few weeks, with the printing of business cards and the launch of a Web site, despite the fact that Sim has been producing stunning floral designs for nearly five years out of her own home for eventPro.

As a member of the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce and also on its Board of Directors, Sim is actively involved in the community of Danville, a town she's called home for the past 15 years. She has been a member of the Chamber for one year. She and a handful of her regular on-call eventPRO staff help coordinate, organize, set up and act as greeters for the various functions, golf tournaments, installations, and other events that occur throughout the year on behalf of the Chamber.

For those functions requiring a festive touch, Sim personally provided floral arrangements to suit the occasion, and over the years, she would be asked continually about whether she could create arrangements for individual sale. Now, with the sprouting of Twiggs, she is steadily acquiring a loyal following.

Sim's contemporary and sophisticated designs stand out amidst the traditional arrangements that many florists provide.

"I like to come out of the box," she remarked with a smile, emphasizing that her work was "different" and "unique" compared to other area florists.

She takes great pride in the fact that every single arrangement has been created from scratch by her own two hands.

"[Floral design] is like a blank canvas. [Flowers] are like the paints I work with," she said. When creating an arrangement, Sim claims she can do anything to bring to life someone's idea, no matter how complex.

She declared, "I can create a flower arrangement to capture a vision."

Creative inspiration comes fairly naturally for Sim who has displayed her artistic talents through oil painting and decorated her home with her own pieces. Sure, she observes what latest floral trends and colors, but in the end, she tries to give her arrangements a refreshing, elegant or artful twist, depending on the occasion.

"I will not release a product unless I'm one-hundred percent satisfied. I'm picky," she said. "That one piece speaks about who you are."

It's that personal element that Sim blends into her work that gives her arrangements a life of their own. She frequents the San Francisco Flower Mart in the early morning hours to pur-



KEN PERKINS/STAFF

RIA SIM RECENTLY LAUNCHED TWIGGS, which "was a business before it became a business." She says it seemed natural to branch out and create Twiggs, a floral business, due to her love of and regularity in creating floral arrangements for large events in conjunction with her other self-run operation in Danville, eventPRO Management.

Sim's designs are fashioned for every occasion, including the everyday, private parties, weddings, holidays, weekly arrangements, and corporate functions.

chase only the freshest flowers, taking the time to even sniff the stems to make sure they're not getting old.

"I like the best. I want to give quality to my clients," she said. In addition, Sim refuses to limit the number of flowers she uses just to meet a specific price. She reiterates her perfectionism and desire to please her clients as her top priorities.

Floral arranging allows Sim the freedom to

focus on a task she loves to perform, as well as provide this busy mother of two some time to relax mentally and physically since she has taken on even more upon her heaping plate. Along with Twiggs, eventPRO Management and raising a family, she is currently in the process of expanding her home. Sim is excited about the expansion which will include her own private studio within the home. This will be a welcome addition because at the moment, her work

spills into every available nook and cranny and takes over empty counter space throughout the entire house.

This growth is also extended to her two businesses, both of which she currently runs without a full-time staff. Sim has recently hired someone to help with eventPRO, and is hoping to hire on floral designers as well to take on a growing bundle of projects.

Sim's designs are fashioned for every occasion, including the everyday, private parties, weddings, holidays, weekly arrangements, and corporate functions. Twiggs offers delivery Monday through Saturday, and includes Sunday and holidays, if requested in advance.

Twiggs is located in Danville. Ria Sim can be reached at her studio, 925-389-0609, or by cell phone, 925-899-8133. Check out her Web site at www.twiggs.com.