

**Whitney Blue Fraser**

**Artistic Florist**

**Fernandina Beach, FL**

I spent my summer in the heart of Amelia Island in Fernandina Beach, Florida where I completed my Mosmiller Internship working with Artistic Florist, a chic upscale retail florist, owned and operated by Brooke Grubbs Raulerson, AIFD, FSM. I experienced every aspect of the retail florist business. I learned how to process flower shipments, order flowers from wholesalers, take orders for daily floral arrangements, daily cleaning tasks, prep and decorate green and blooming plants, route and deliver daily floral arrangements and I was introduced to basic floral designing principles. Each day was overflowing with challenges and opportunities to learn something new. I gained experience working with Latin and common names of plants, the finicky public and amazing coworkers.

Artistic Florist upholds a reputation for creating uniquely designed pieces of floral art with the freshest, most premium product available. My first few weeks working with Artistic Florist were extremely enlightening. The team of highly qualified designers created the pieces of floral art that were sent to our customers, but I learned so much from simply observing what they do and how they did it. I mostly organized different areas around the shop including the corner of plastic liners, shelves of candles and decorative rocks as well as inventory of vases. I experienced the ins and outs of a florist's daily work and it is not easy! Cleaning the cooler and reorganizing the flower buckets seemed like a daily task but were crucial to maintaining the freshest product for customers.



I worked in retail previously, but this was entirely new territory! First I began taking orders and working with the walk-in customers and then slowly began answering the phones and taking phone orders. Phone orders were definitely more intimidating, but simple. I first had to learn the RTI computer system, which could get tricky, but was not too hard to work. I was trained in customer service first and then worked my way to the back of the store. Of course, everyone wants to learn floral design, but customer communication is a number one priority at Artistic Florist. If I cannot understand what the customer is asking for, how can I design a floral arrangement for him or her? I was trained to sell flower arrangements by placement location and color. I never specified which flowers would be included, because that cannot easily be guaranteed. The general stigma with floral arrangements is the larger the arrangement, the more costly but this is not the case. Before working at Artistic Florist, I assumed this true but I quickly learned otherwise. Very compact and lush arrangements can be more expensive than a looser, tall and airy arrangement. Although some correlation between size and cost exists, when conversing with the public we first determined where the arrangement was going to sit, for example a desk, side table, coffee table or dining room table. Once the general size needed was determined, price and color scheme were suggested based on flower availability. I was taught to start the suggestion price high and then work either up or down based on the customer's feedback. I learned how to sell an idea and allowed the designers to bring that idea to life.



I was also able to experience delivery, which was the most rewarding aspect of the business. It was fascinating to see the public's reactions to the unique design pieces, the traditional pieces as well as the rose arrangements. By taking an arrangement to a person's home and watching their eyes light up when they open the door and hear them exclaim how it has made their day is the absolute best feeling! I could not imagine a more rewarding internship; it was outstanding and phenomenal and I'd repeat in a heartbeat!