

MARY ENGELBREIT'S
**HOME
COMPANION**

PICTURED L TO R: NIKKI, LAURIE, MARCY AND CASEY



SATURDAY MORNING

Two Weddings and a Few Entrepreneurs

BECAUSE LAURIE HAD ALREADY CHOSEN the designer for her wedding flowers, Nikki Lee of Botanicals, we decided to pop in to see the sorts of flowers she'll be working with. This budding bride goes weak-kneed over hydrangeas, and she and Nikki discussed a floral theme for the reception that casually says, "Yeah, I just plucked all of these flowers out of my garden." Nikki came up with all sorts of ideas for establishing an easy-going scene, like arranging the billowing flowers in rustic galvanized buckets. Between jubilant shrieks of "Ohhh!" and "We have got to do that!" we were entranced by the story of how Botanicals' owner, Casey Cooper, came to start her thriving floral-design business.

Handpainted walls are the backdrop as you sit in a gorgeous, high ceilinged showroom and page through photo albums of Botanicals' bouquets. Casey told us that she'd been an actress but harbored an interest in flowers. She learned about floral design working her way up in several different flower shops (one stocked Mary

Engelbreit vases back in Mary's earliest entrepreneurial days) before she had the courage to start her own business. It was scary at first, she explained, but customers seemed to appreciate her fresh approach to flowers, and now she and her husband run their company in a fantastic space, working alongside a staff of talented, passionate, floral designers. Casey's juicy arrangements are more in demand than ever. Can you imagine a fairy tale better than this?

I am not advocating that everyone quit her current job and pursue her true calling...but then again, why not? Like the feeling you get when you know you've met the man you're going to marry, sometimes you just have to follow your heart! (Okay, this is getting a little heavy.)

We were so empowered by the end of the day, having met such inspiring women, that we hardly planned anything wedding oriented at all. But maybe someday soon Laurie will turn her dream into a career, and she and Bob can open a tavern in Chicago where monkeys tend bar. ♣