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## Flowers for Anne Frank

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With a lush variety of European flowers donated by the Flower Council at his disposal, top US-Dutch florist and event planner Rene Hofstede created a series of stunning floral designs for the recent 'Anne Frank Tribute' in New York City.

From his humble beginnings as a hard-working new arrival to New York City, to his present lofty status as a florist who Real Simple Magazine has called the 'Premier Dutch florist in the USA', Rene Hofstede is living the American Dream. Today, his company, Mille Fiori Flowers & Event Design, is one of the USA's leading floral design and event planning companies, with a who's who list of celebrity and corporate clients. From his design studio in NYC's flower district, Rene discussed the floral designs he created for the 'Anne Frank Tribute', a charity event held last month. "The wonderfully colorful varieties of European flowers donated for this event provided the perfect ingredients for this inspirational celebration."



### Freedom

The 'Anne Frank Tribute' was held on June 12th - Anne Frank's birthday. "This is the fifth year the Tribute has been held and it's growing larger each year," Rene says. Hollywood stars like Hilary Swank and Stephen Spielberg are major supporters of the Anne Frank Center USA, which hosts this annual event and uses the money it raises through selling tables at the dinner (\$15,000 to \$25,000 each) and from its charity auction (a first edition copy of 'The Diary of Anne Frank' fetched \$10,000) for educational purposes, such as teaching US school children about Anne Frank's plight and the importance of tolerance and freedom.

### Inspiring

Designing a tribute to Anne Frank is especially challenging, given her tragic life story. Forced to hide from the Nazis for years in an Amsterdam attic, Anne eventually perished in a concentration camp. "This event is held on Anne's birthday, so, in a broader sense, it is a celebration of her life," Rene explains. "In my design, I wanted to express a beautiful, young, enchanted spirit protected from and also captivated by outside forces. I took visual clues from her diary to establish relevance. I needed to be respectful of the tragedy, yet at same time create something inspirational."

### Softer palette

Rene's design featured colorful ceramic pots placed on each of the 50 tables: "The different colored pots were of various sizes and shades, but within the same color palette, reds to pinks, greens to yellows, blues to lavender. The floral palette loosely followed this color palette, with each pot carrying arrangements of one type and one color of the same flower. By keeping the colors similar per table, the many colors were not too wild or circus-like. This way it still looked youthful, yet distinct and sophisticated." The European beautiful flower varieties donated by the Flower Council of Holland in cooperation with the European Union, included: peonies, Freesia, roses and Cymbidiums, Gerbera, daisies, Hyacinths, Calla, Lilies, Celosia and Delphiniums.

### Candy colored

With the abundance of colorful flowers creating a "fun décor", Rene then corralled the grouped pots with a twiggy, fence-like material. "The table centerpieces dropped clues to Anne Frank's experiences," Rene explains. "The fencing symbolized her captivity, and also vaguely resembled the railroad tracks that ultimately carried her to her tragic fate." To celebrate the child that was Anne," Rene adds, "the most visible clue was the candied colored flowers, a direct diary reference to the ice cream she loved so much."

[Pictures](#) (Design Ideas)

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