

# Flower Power

Tomiko achieves the American Dream thru blooms

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO  
AJPress

If you ever have the rare privilege to visit the homes of the rich and famous in Beverly Hills and other wealthy enclaves in Los Angeles, you will perhaps notice a common denominator --- the majestically fresh and awe-inspiring floral centerpieces that decorate and beautify the rooms. And the masterful hands that create them are those of Tommy de los Reyes, better known as Tomiko, multi-awarded Filipino-American floral artist.

Tomiko is often referred to as the favorite floral designer of the LA elite. He doesn't have a flower shop, nor a website, nor any advertisement or brochure to promote his services yet his schedule is filled to the brim with orders from his loyal clientele.

"I cater to the rich matrons of LA. I just work from my home, creating my floral art which I send every week to enhance the homes of my clients," said Tomiko.

Tomiko started his self-expression through flowers at an early age. "I grew up with flowers and have always loved their beauty," Tomiko admitted.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Tomiko admits that he has modest roots and humble beginnings. He attended Sum-ag Elementary School in Negros Occidental. He then worked hard to finish two baccalaureate degrees and then a Master's Degree in Science Education from the University of Baguio.

Tomiko's creativity has been channeled through many jobs and activities. He worked for many years in Australia, becoming a freelance photographer at the Sydney Opera House. He also worked in the floral department of the David Jones Department Store, and received the outstanding salesman award from that most prestigious chain of department stores of Australia.

In 1986, Tomiko immigrated to America, settling in California. He was hired as a personal valet extraordinaire by one of Hollywood's famous show business personalities. It was during his employment there that the elite of Beverly Hills recognized his floral design talents. Leaving his job as personal valet, Tomiko pursued his artistic ability in floral design under the tutelage of Emilio Robba, a top-notch French floral designer recognized the world over. He continued to broaden his creative insights through his travels here and abroad to gain global perspective of his art.

Tomiko has received numerous top awards from different local and international competitions, and gained the admiration and loyalty of his elite clientele of Beverly Hills. He has been a recipient of many awards, the most notable of which were the 1977 and 1999 People's Choice Awards at the Flower and Garden Show of

Del Mar Fair in San Diego. He was also recognized by the California State Assembly in 1998 for his contribution to the artistic world of floral design. He also had a brief stint as a resident floral designer on board the MV Horizon of Celebrity Cruises of Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines in 2000.

Tomiko has unselfishly shared his talents, elevating the image of the Filipino through his craft showcased in many affairs of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles and events of the Filipino American community. In 2001, he was recognized by the Consul General of the Republic of the Philippines at a reception showcasing Filipino Artistry in America which featured his one-of-a-kind Floral Sculptures in commemoration of the Philippine Independence Day in Beverly Hills.

"I love what I do. Nage-enjoy ako. Every week, I have to change the flower arrangements in my clients' homes. I create an average of 9 flower arrangements per home- sa living rooms, bedrooms, dining rooms," said the free-lance floral designer, who creates his masterpieces all by himself.

"I want to do my best that is why I no longer advertise. I don't want to accept jobs where I can't deliver in the best way," he added.

Asked how he was able to penetrate into the very private world of LA's wealthy families, Tomiko shared, "The key is self-confidence. Always be positive. Aim high.

Go where they are. Do what they're doing. Be seen. When I travel, I send my clients post cards from around the globe- like Germany, Switzerland, Europe. I am in their social gatherings and parties." Needless to say, Tomiko's advice works as his masterpieces are seen in the very best homes and parties in Los Angeles.

Truly, there are many ways to achieve success and wealth in America. For Tomiko, flower power paved the way to make his dreams come true. ■



Tomiko with one of his creations.  
Photo from <http://philippinecenterlosangeles.blogspot.com/>



Publisher's Note

## Petal attraction

Tomiko's floral arrangements have become a fixture in the homes of the rich and famous. He has established himself as the multi-awarded, favorite floral designer of the LA elite. A God-given talent combined with one of the most aesthetic elements of nature equals one of the most creative and artistic ventures. Indeed, Tomiko has found his niche, and his unique place among the ranks of LA's best. The Asian MDWK Magazine proudly features his success story in this week's issue. ■



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