

## Eau Claire Floral, Something Friendly.

# *Eau Claire* floral



Their tagline says it all: Eau Claire Floral is certainly is “something friendly.” The business provides the friendly gift of flowers and the owners, well, they’re as friendly and down-to-earth as you can find.

Eau Claire Floral has been in business for over 20 years, but recently came under new ownership. Glen and Allison Mills, originally from Bemidji, Minnesota, purchased Eau Claire Floral in October 2007. The new owners hope to build upon that foundation while providing the best product and service.

“We are putting our own creative spin on a business that has been a part of this community for many years,” says Allison. “Since purchasing the business, we have been working hard to remodel the store and create a new image based on our vision for the shop.”

### A DREAM REALIZED

A family farm brought the Mills’ and their four children to the Chippewa Valley. Allison, a farm girl at heart, grew up on a farm in Peoria, Illinois. After growing up and leaving the farm, she knew that one day she wanted to return to that way of life. In fact, there was a particular farm in the family that she dreamed of owning. In the spring of 2007, her dream became a reality.

Not long after purchasing the farm, the Mills’ looked into buying a business in the area. Being creative people familiar

with the wedding industry, a floral shop was a perfect fit. At Eau Claire Floral, Allison is the heart of the business as the floral artist and creative director, while Glen brings a business-savvy and marketing perspective. One of the greatest aspects of owning the business is working side-by-side, say the husband-wife pair.

The element of creativity is emphasized in everything Allison does, whether it is floral design, home decorating, or even cooking up a fabulous meal. Allison has always had a garden and has enjoyed creating fresh flower arrangements to disperse throughout their family home. Allison can make anything beautiful, says her husband Glen.

Glen has been a part of the wedding industry for the past 12 years as a wedding photographer in Bemidji. With this experience he has gained a true understanding of how important the wedding details are. He has been at weddings where the flowers were delivered late or were missing pieces. He knows how important it is for a florist to meet a couple’s expectations.

As a photographer, he was often asked to recommend other vendors and provide various tips to couples. He now uses this experience as a wedding consultant in addition to a florist.

“Because I photographed an average of 40 weddings per year, I have seen many creative details over the years. I am more than willing to share these ideas with our customers,” says Glen. “It’s just one more way we can exceed our customers’ expectations.”

### A FRESH, NEW LOOK

The Mills’ are in the midst of remodeling the shop in order to create a fun, inspiring space for their staff and cus-



tomers. The interior was fully remodeled with an open concept to create space for merchandise display, storage, and floral preparation. The remodeling and most of the furniture throughout is the handiwork of Glen.

They also cleared out old inventory in order to make space for fresh, new inventory. Improvements to the building will continue through 2008.

As in the past, Eau Claire Floral continues to provide fresh flowers for all occasions. Their focus for wedding flowers is fresh, contemporary designs, while also being affordable. In addition to flowers, they sell plants, silk flower arrangements, home décor, gift items, as well as a line of chocolates from a local chocolate shop, Obsession Chocolates.

Glen and Allison have put together a talented team of floral designers. With a combined 30 years of experience in floral design, their staff are able to create bouquets ranging from casual to extravagant. Together, their designers bring experience in high-volume production and creative design.

They also give the gift of time: “We take as much time as the couple needs to understand what they envision for their wedding. We know that this is one of the most cherished days in their lives and we want everything to be perfect,” says Allison.



The Mills’ have many ideas for how to bring flowers into people’s lives, including special flower of the month clubs. They also plan to become involved in charitable and community projects. For example, they recently provided Oakwood Hills Retirement Center with complementary poinsettias to bring the holiday spirit to the residents. They also invited a local Girl Scout troop into the shop to prepare flowers for residents of a local nursing home.

“Flowers are a beautiful thing. They bring beauty and happiness into people’s lives,” says Glen. “We want to make taking home flowers as common as taking home coffee. Why not bring something as beautiful as flowers into your home? They just have a way of making a home feel special and welcoming. We look forward to sharing our ideas for how to make flowers a part of everyday life with each of our customers.”

Now that’s “something friendly.”

## *Eau Claire floral*

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