

A Little Flower Shop Where a Big Dog Roams

What do orchids and Rottweilers have in common? Not much —unless you are JoAnne Figuered, owner of White Orchid flower shop and long-time dog breeder.

These days you can find Figuered at her shop on North Walnut and 8th Street, where her customers include wedding planners, dinner hosts, and many IU departments. You also may find Zumzum waiting to greet you at the door. The 120-pound Rottweiler is “retired now,” Figuered says.

What you won’t find are carnations, baby’s breath, and other common flowers that are now widely available at supermarkets and big-box stores. Independent flower shops were once the primary source for plants and cut flowers, but today “everyone’s getting in on it,” says Figuered.

“Fifty years ago walk-ins were the bulk of the flower business,” she says. Now much of the business is event-ori-



(above) Figuered in her shop. (left) Zumzum, shop assistant. Photos by Ben Weller

Figuered grew up in Chicago and came to Bloomington 35 years ago “looking to escape the city.” She lived in a log cabin outside of town and eventually bought land and started growing flowers and vegetables. “It was a fairy tale I couldn’t have in Chicago,” she says. Today she lives on a 130-acre farm west of town where for 25 years she has bred Rottweilers. Her affection for the breed began when she was given a puppy—“a tank of a dog”—all those years ago.

Now, with a change of seasons approaching, the pastels of summer flowers will give way to the “hot colors of fall” at White Orchid. “We’ll have the most gorgeous, bizarre varieties of colored roses.”

Whether your taste runs to pastels or hot colors, there are no rules about creating flower arrangements, Figuered says. She wants her customers to “think out of the box.” And out of the big-box stores.—Janet Mandelstam

ented. “We’ll go to someone’s house to set up a dinner; we’ll make garlands and wreaths at holiday time; we do flowers for the university art museum and president’s office.” Of course, you still can walk into her flower shop “and buy one flower or a hundred flowers,” she says.

True to its name, the White Orchid stocks several varieties of potted orchid plants. And for collectors, there are special orders. “If it’s out there to be had, we’ll try to get it,” she says.