

Floral revolution

FRANZ Gräbe's flower couture is about to take Fashion Week by storm, writes JULIA PATERSON

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FRANZ Gräbe oozes enthusiasm... It's obvious he loves what he does and that he has a good eye for floral creations. And now Mott & Chandon and Style magazine will partner with Franz Gräbe Flower Couture when they unveil their world-first couture line - the Mott & Chandon Couture Collection on July 29 at the country's premier fashion event, SA Fashion Week.

Franz Gräbe Flower Couture, which is based in Parktown North, has since its inception always dared to be dramatically different.

A hallmark of the company's success, say partners Franz Gräbe and Cosmie Hattingh, is that it has never slavishly followed trends or copied designs. Gräbe and Hattingh continually draw their inspiration from trends in interior design, fashion and art.

"We are influenced by developments in international fashion and interior design and do keep abreast of trends. But importantly we only absorb the elements we like and translate them into the African context so they relate to

their lunchtimes watching them weave their magical The Hyatt.

Today they continue to make statements with flowers at The Hyatt, and their unmistakable artistry can also be experienced at some of the city's other top hotels such as the Westcliff, the Saxon and the Palazzo.

Their creations - dubbed "floral installations" or "disposable art" both by a large following of loyal customers and by admirers in awe of the pairs unique artistic talents, also grace the interiors of South Africa's luxurious Blue Train.

Referrals come by word-of-mouth and today the studio has as clients the cream of South African society, including the country's blue chip organisations, restaurants, celebrities and high fliers. It also works with the top fashion designers.

"We are totally self-taught and for this reason our work is different. We don't see ourselves as florists, but rather as floral designers who cater to discerning clients who appreciate the finer things in life," he says.

