

Another *Wonderful* Experience Because of WAFA

by Gail Emmons, Orinda GardenClub

The World Association of Flower Arrangers (WAFA) has opened many doors to those who participate in their flower shows every three years. I have been lucky enough to participate in several of WAFA's shows and have met some terrific fellow flower arrangers along the way.

One of these new friends, Marie-Francois Deprez, is a floral art teacher who has her own school in Bourg-en-Bresse, France. She invited me to be one of the judges for the international flower show in Bourg-en-Bresse in November 2006. The show was part of a landscape garden show similar to The Philadelphia Flower Show, but smaller in scale.

There were 9 classes with 125 plus participants from 12 countries. The Bourg-en-Bresse Flower Show (really the Marie-Francois Show) is held every three years and anyone can enter. New Zealand had a group of 24 that entered the show.



Thunder and Lightning First Place

They all had a fantastic experience. (Let's form a group and do it in 2009.)

It was an exciting show with a wide range of talent. The cutting edge designs seem to belong to the continental Europeans. I didn't see a traditional flower arrangement in the whole show.

I judged with two lovely ladies, one spoke English and one did not. My language limitation was frustrating in that it restricted the normal lively communication among all the judges.

The first judging criteria was "Does the design conform to the name of the show and the name of the class?" After that, the judges focused on the principles and elements of design. With few exceptions there were no written comments.

There were many activities for the floral artist participants.

We were able to see a demonstration by a top European designer Stef Andriaenssens, attend an all day workshop with three different teachers from Belgium, Italy and France (my favorite day).

We were offered a day trip to "Discover Lyon", and all of the out-of-town flower show participants were treated to a wonderful evening with Marie-Francois and family in her home.