



GEOFF GILLETTE

"View from the Bay" host Spencer Christian (left) jokes around with co-host Audrey Mansfield (center) and floral designer Ria Sim while the three rehearse for Sim's appearance on the daily talk show. Sim, a Danville resident, said that having fun on the set is one of the charms of being a frequent guest on View from the Bay. "They are so open and inviting," Sim enthused. "They just make you feel like you're part of the family."

BY GEOFF GILLETTE

Ninety minutes before air time, the set of KGO-TV's "View from the Bay" is frenetic. Motorized cameras swirl around the set in an electronic ballet choreographed by a watchful cameraman; producers and stage manager Jean Tuckerman calm the fears of a jittery restaurant chef who has realized he does not have all the ingredients he needs for his food demonstration; and co-host Spencer Christian breezes through the set, paper bag in hand with the vain hope that he'll have a chance to bolt down lunch before the cameras start rolling.

At the center of this storm of activity, calm and serene, surrounded by vibrantly colored flowers and beautiful scents, is Ria Sim.

The Danville mother of two, owner of the floral shop Ria Sim Designs/Twigs Studio, is an often requested guest on the show, which has been on the air for a year and a half.

"This just sort of fell in my lap," she explained. "I was a fan of the show. I sent them a letter with one of my plants. I got an e-mail from the executive producer saying they will put me in touch with one of the producers."

"View from the Bay" producer Jason Fong said they took one look at the floral arrangement Sim had sent and decided to get her on the show.

"We loved what she sent us. There was no interview, the only thing we needed to know was if she could talk," he said.

Fong said after meeting her, he could tell it was going to be a natural fit for the show. "She had a perfect look, a perfect angle, she was this 'momprenneur' who owned her own shop."

Sim said that first show started a relationship between her and "View from the Bay."

"They kept on calling me back. We have this great relationship and now I'm on basically once a month," she said.

## Flowers with a flair

*Danville florist shares her design magic on 'View from the Bay'*

Co-host Spencer Christian said that Sim has been coming on the show almost as long as they've been on the air and, for him, it's been a very enjoyable relationship.

"From the first time she appeared on the show, we all thought she was an absolute natural," he said. "You know, a lot of guests who haven't done TV before are nervous and intimidated. She was lively and fun and she has only gotten better as time passed. She's one of our favorite contributors."

Christian said one of the things that makes the segments with Sim fun is that she is able to bring in new and different flower arrangements and make them interesting and doable for the audience.

"You watch her segment and you think, 'I could do that,'" he said.

Sim said she enjoys the experience of coming up with ideas for projects to present on the show. And for her, being able to do it at reasonable prices is an important part to the things she picks.

"I didn't grow up with a lot of money, so I had to be creative. And I'm a mom so I have to be practical," she explained.

On the show that aired May 6, Sim showed Spencer and fellow host Audrey Mansfield how to use the plastic ring in the center of flower tape to make a wrist corsage for prom season. She also talked about which flowers are beautiful but less expensive and can be found in many back yards as well as at local stores.

She ended her segment by quickly throwing together a boutonniere for Spencer and pinning it to his lapel.

While the experience has been fun and enjoyable, it has also allowed Sim to grow her business. What started as an enterprise based out of her home has grown to a shop in downtown Danville next to Starbucks.

"I've been very fortunate that I've gotten a lot of people who've come in after seeing the show and they want me to do their weddings or other things." With a grin she added, "I've gotten some celebrity clients, some I can't even tell you who they are. But I can say that Ellen Degeneres named us as her favorite Danville florist after seeing what we have."

Sim said she doesn't know where it's all going but so far it's led to other opportunities in her burgeoning television career.

"They asked me to start doing another show, too, 'Live Well HD,'" she explained.

"View from the Bay" is local to the Bay Area market, but "Live Well HD" is a national show broadcast on the digital channels as well as online. Sim does segments similar to what she does on "View of the Bay."

"It's such a great compliment to be asked to do that show. I honestly never thought I'd get that far," she said. ■