

Features

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Spreading Joy

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Anne Geddes' photography has been around almost as long as I can remember. The native Australian burst onto the American (and worldwide) scene in the 1990s during my college years with iconic images of babies with a variety of nature-inspired props, like flower petals, cabbage leaves and flower pots. During her nearly 40-year career she's photographed countless babies, capturing the essence of their innocence and joy.

Ball Horticultural Company's Claire Josephson, Sarah Makiejus and Sean Valk with iconic photographer Anne Geddes at a downtown Chicago reveal party.

So it seemed like a natural partnership when the folks at Wave were looking for special ways to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the flower brand that helped inspire many other brands in its wake. Sean Valk, Global Director of Sales for PanAmerican Seed, brought the idea to PanAm's Global Marketing Manager Sarah Makiejus, and she immediately started making some calls.

"It was such a great fit," Sarah said. "We aligned so much with our interests and objectives, and when you think about the impact that Anne's photography made on pop culture back in the '90s—similar to how Wave Petunias made such an impact bursting into the market with the first REAL consumer branding (pink pots, etc.)—the partnership made so much sense!"



I was able to chat with Anne by Zoom in mid-May and the partnership was a natural to her, too. For two days in December, she was surrounded by pots of Wave Petunias—Easy Wave Rose, Plum Vein and Berry Velour, among others—along with 14 babies (yes, you read that right, 14). They used props like balloons to keep the babies entertained and interested.

Anne Geddes and Sean Valk unveiling the results of Anne's December Wave photo shoot.

"It was one of the most joyful campaigns I've ever worked on because it was so natural," Anne said, noting that she thought she'd retired the classic flower pots that she'd used so many times before (which, by the way, are lined with fleece to make them more comfortable for the babies). But she brought them out for these photos because they were a perfect fit for the theme.

“It was joyful. It was positive. [Sarah] and her team were so great to work with. It was one of those campaigns where it just wasn’t a problem at all, right? Everyone got it and the shoot was lovely.”

As a mother of two children, I remember the early days and trying to get kids ready for photo shoots. I asked her if it was chaotic at all and she said it was not. In the early stages of her career, she photographed kids of all ages, and through that has found babies right around the six or seventh month mark are very agreeable with photo shoots like these—although she said she did learn early on to work quickly.

“It’s a really nice age because they’re just sitting. And they’re really happy about that because they’ve been looking at the ceiling for the last six months,” she said, laughing. “They’re really interested in what’s going on around them. You put them in a pot, for instance. They will stay there, pretty much.”



It’s that wonder and awe of the world around that’s she been able to capture so well, and now the Wave campaign has an artistic print of these curious and cute babies in pink Wave-like pots. The Wave crew, along with Anne and her team, unveiled the final results at a rooftop event in downtown Chicago in April, where guests heard Anne’s insights into the collaboration and saw the finished product.

Sarah Makiejus and Claire Josephson prep the Easy Wave Plum Vein flowers before the photo shoot in December.

The partnership doesn’t stop there, however. Retailers can get in on the fun with a sweepstakes that runs through July 30 via special “Baby Bee” plant tags nestled among their Wave Petunias. One lucky winner will receive a trip to New York City for a baby photo shoot. They can scan the QR code on the tag to enter and more details about that can be found online.

Anne’s career has been built on beautiful imagery of pregnant moms and sleeping or joyful babies, and she wants people who view her work to know it goes deeper than the cuteness.

“There’s a more serious message behind my collection of work and it’s really about renewal. That we, you know, can cut all the flowers, but you can’t stop the spring,” she said. “There’s new babies coming along every day and they’re good people. It’s just a reminder.

“And it’s the miracle of pregnancy, as well, and how we’re all linked to nature. That’s why this campaign, this Wave campaign was just a perfect fit.”

For the team at Wave, this collaboration also was about taking a big swing on a unique idea and bringing it to fruition. It’s that creativity and drive that has helped Wave get to 30 years and will take it well into the future. **GP**

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcr6re-913Q> to see the Wave photo shoot in December.

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxrUVlodtqM> for an inside look at the April reveal party.