

## Front Lines

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### Rose Named for An Industry Icon

*Jennifer Zurko*

With hundreds of colleagues gathered at this year's International Floriculture Show in Miami, breeding company Preesman and the show's sponsors unveiled a new rose named 'High & Icon—Bobbie Ecker' to the recipient's surprise.

"There is no one in this wonderful floral industry more deserving than the Magnificent Ms. Bobbi," said Deborah De La Flor of De La Flor Gardens. She was one of several hundred who witnessed the formal presentation: the pouring of champagne and "baptizing" of the rose.

Bobbi Ecker Blatchford is a renowned designer and presenter, and has been the recipient of both the Society of American Florists' Tommy Bright Award and the Award of Distinguished Service to the Floral Industry from the American Institute of Floral Designers.

"Bobbi is the personification of a rose: She appears lovely and delicate, but is also tough and hard-working—and she has a bit of an edge," said Robbin Yelverton of Blumz and JRDesigns in Detroit. "She's a fabulous ambassador for the floral industry who only expects of you what she expects of herself: the best."

Rose naming is a venerated tradition in Europe where cut roses have honored and been named for people of distinction, including nobility and heads of state. In the U.S., this tradition has been observed in garden roses. "I was aghast," said Bobbi. "This was the first time a cut rose flower has been given the name of someone in our industry, versus a celebrity. I was completely floored."

The rose's grower is United Flowers, a division of Preesman, with farms in Bogota, Colombia. **GP**