

ikebana



Ikebana, or Japanese flower arranging, begins with a thoughtfully chosen vessel, some blooms and branches or grasses. Once involved, people often fall into a creative rhythm trying to achieve their artistic vision while keeping a natural aesthetic.



Ikebana dates back to 6th century Japanese Buddhist priests, who used floral arrangement as a discipline, ultimately showcasing their arrangements to shoguns and aristocrats.

"It's a very refined, high-end floral art that is still vibrant today on an international level," says Jane Sahagian, owner of Rikka, LLC in Avon.

Japanese Ikebana creations are "the hallmark of simplicity and elegance," she says. "Ikebana is the refined expression of Mother Nature that harmonizes blooming branches, simple flowers, grasses and buds with unique vessels."

Like a little black dress, each

arrangement stands on its own, she says.

The process begins with a very simple, but artistic, vessel or vase, and employs a lot of blooming branches to create a sleek and architectural statement. For instance, a willow branch may follow an interesting, horizontal line of a more horizontal vessel. It may contain one large flower, or a few main blooms, but "because it's so graceful and elegant in its own style, you don't need a lot of flowers — but you do need a very artistic vision to make this Ikebana style come to life ... it's a marriage of all products: delicate flowers that punctuate the vase and the branches, and

maybe one very dominant flower."

Sahagian uses music to relax students during tutorials, as she finds it a very important part of her "creative spirit."

The art of Ikebana is calming, in that people move into a creative zone, where they're focusing on simplicity and art.

"It eases the blood pressure," she says. "It's very meditative — and it's fragrant. It taps into all of the senses visually, texturally, aroma-wise."

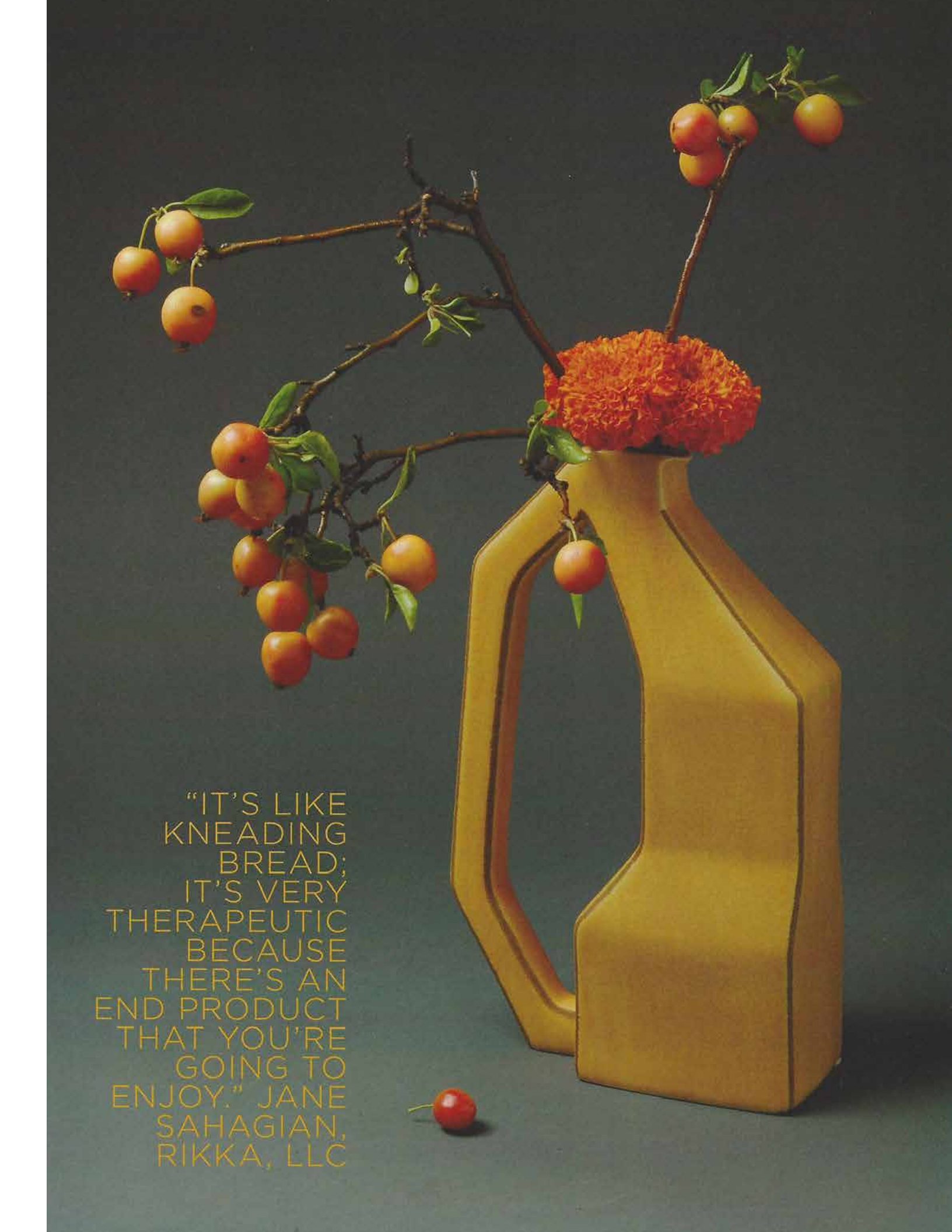
As people blend flower stems to fit into their vision, yet still maintain a natural aesthetic, they discover their natural rhythm.

"It's an expression of oneself because you're choosing the vessel,

the branches, the flowers and your space," she says.

And, it's simple: You can search your backyard or the mountainside for branches, and then buy a few flowers. The branches last a long time, so there's minimal cost to refresh the arrangement with new flowers.

When there's no pressure to excel, "there's great energy that can be released during the creative process," she says. "It's just a very sensory experience that invigorates the soul, mind and spirit ... there's a sense of flow and life. It's like kneading bread; it's very therapeutic because there's an end product that you're going to enjoy."



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