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REAL ESTATE | FLOWER SCHOOL

A Late-Summer Bouquet Inspired by a Vincent van Gogh Painting

'The Red Vineyards at Arles,' a blazing scene by the Dutch artist, serves as a jumping-off point for floral designer Lindsey Taylor—even if its color scheme problematically reminds her of cookout condiments

THE ARRANGEMENT | Deep blue delphinium and purple salvia in this bouquet echo the cooler hues found in Vincent van Gogh's 1888 painting 'The Red Vineyards at Arles' that help to mellow the canvas's fiery red and yellow colors. *PHOTO: STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, FLOWER STYLING BY LINDSEY TAYLOR, PROP STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART*



By **LINDSEY TAYLOR**

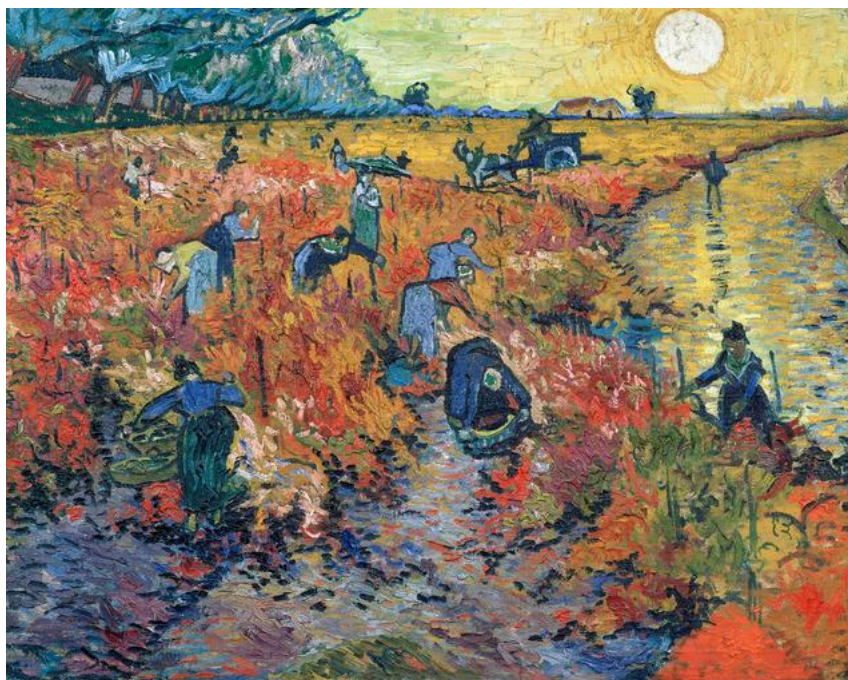
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LONG AGO, when my parents’ summer cookout menus dictated a lot of mustard and ketchup, I developed a bias against pairing the colors red and yellow. I was more of a relish girl.

It’s important, however, to push yourself beyond your comfort zone on occasion. So, as the inspiration for this month’s flower arrangement, I chose “The Red Vineyards at Arles,” an 1888 painting by Vincent van Gogh that was, incidentally, the only canvas that he sold in his lifetime.

Even though the red-and-yellow color combination is one of my least favorites, the painting’s energetic palette reminds me of the “hot” colors found in gardens during the month of August, when sunflowers, helenium, goldenrod, amaranthus, black-eyed susans and red dahlias are blazing up the borders.

The Inspiration



Vincent van Gogh's 1888 painting 'The Red Vineyards at Arles' PHOTO: HIP/ART RESOURCE, NY

When I started to really analyze the canvas's color scheme, I noticed how some of the quieter, and cooler, hues help mellow the harshness of the red and yellow. Note the periwinkle blue of the field workers' uniforms and the creamy white brush strokes that accent the field, the sky above and

its reflection in the water. Without these touches, the painting might have been too strident.

In keeping with the painting's French country feel, I selected a simple copper bucket with a greenish-blue patina that picks up on the mad mix of colors found in the horse-drawn cart in the middle distance as well as the far-off tree line.

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When
it
came
to the

blooms, I gathered orange and red dahlias, bright yellow yarrow and billy buttons in a mustard yellow (deeper than the Kraft-brand glop of my youth) to represent the painting's vines as they metamorphose into their fall colors. To echo the blue and cream mentioned above, I tucked in stems of indigo delphinium, purple salvia and white coreopsis.

Admittedly, my lifelong prejudice against red-and-yellow is still intact. But this arrangement opened my mind to the way that softening that palette with ameliorating shades can make it more, well, palatable, whether it's for a bouquet, a larger patch of

garden or an interior. And maybe even a hot dog.

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