



BRUISING BOUQUETS: Charis Yule and Katie McLaughlin are swapping bunches for punches in the Corporate Fight Night Christmas with a Punch.

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Fighting florists no shrinking violets

Boxing

By Greg Taipari
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Usually Rotorua florists Charis Yule and Katie McLaughlin's hands are used to make someone's day — but come December 10 they will become deadly weapons.

The two women are part of the drawcard for this year's Corporate Fight Night Christmas with a Punch.

Like most of the fighters on the night it will be the first time the pair don gloves and step into the ring.

Yule, 26 and who works at Fusion Florists, admits to some nerves about jumping into the ring.

"It's definitely challenging and really out of my comfort

zone. But everyone likes a good challenge and I'm glad I'm doing it because if I hadn't got asked, I probably wouldn't have decided to do it myself."

McLaughlin, who works at Daisy Chain, said it was unusual to find two florists going toe-to-toe in a boxing ring.

"Yeah definitely not the usual thing I would do anyway. I'm totally out of my comfort zone."

McLaughlin, 28, said she would be using skills from her job to help her on the night.

"We can't have snips with us — that could be an advantage if we did," McLaughlin joked.

"I know it's totally opposite, maybe sort of like time management and organising stuff and getting myself prepared [for the fight]. The

lead up to Valentine's Day is huge mentally and the lead up to [the fight] is huge mentally as well."

McLaughlin said she was aware it was ironic comparing a day of love with a boxing match.

"A florist hates that day. It's the worst day; you get all these lovely guys coming in [buying flowers]. Especially when you're single, I create like these beautiful bouquets for these girls in Rotorua and I go home to nothing."

All joking aside McLaughlin said she has enjoyed training with the boxing coaches at the Rotovegas Boxing Gym who are organising the event to be held at the Rotorua Girls' High School Arena on December 10.

"It's amazingly awesome, they are so positive out there

... They just push you and make you think you can do it yourself. They give you all this positivity, the training has been awesome ... It's a great way to get motivated."

Being a member of the Blue Team, McLaughlin said jumping into the ring and sparring was an intense situation.

"It's cool to hit someone but it's not cool to be hit back. It's quite hard because the girls in the Blue Team have bonded quite well, there's four of us and we've become good friends. So it's hard sparring with them because I hit someone and I say 'I'm sorry'."

Yule agreed the training was intense but was focused on having to go up against someone she knew well.

"I've known Katie for a long

time — all of the florists know each other. I'm nervous but excited at the same time [about fighting McLaughlin] you never know what's going to happen because we haven't been training together. Whether I win or lose I'm not too worried about it. Just to complete it and to do it is huge, because I never thought I could ever do it."

This is the event's third year and the pair's fight is one of 12 corporate bouts on the night.

Rotovegas Boxing Gym will use the money raised from the event on training equipment.

■ Tickets for the event are now on sale at Go 360 Gym on Eruea St and Golds Gym on Old Taupo Rd. Ringside corporate tables, which seat 10, are \$2000 and fight-night experience tables are also on offer at \$1500. For more information contact Tanya Warren on 07 345 3085 or 027 548 2692.