

# Native Poppy Taps EV Vans to Save on Delivery Costs

*RETAIL: Founder Says EVs Present Sustainable Solution for Small Businesses*

BY **MADISON GEERING** - JULY 4, 2025

👁 75



*Native Poppy's Mullen One All-Electric Class 1 Cargo Van costs \$0.07 per mile to charge, compared to the company's Nissan V200 vans, which cost \$0.21 per mile for gas. Photo courtesy of Native Poppy*

SAN DIEGO – “There was so much water,” Native Poppy founder and CEO Natalie Gill recalled. “It was devastating.”

In January of 2024, the floral retail and event company's Mission Gorge warehouse experienced severe flood damage. When Gill arrived to assess the situation, her facilities were filled with over three and a half feet of water.



“Everything was ruined,” Gill said. “And it was crazy, because it was right before Valentine’s Day, so we had a lot of our Valentine’s Day inventory in there...We didn’t know what we were going to do.”

Among the damage, Native Poppy’s two delivery vans were totaled.

While recovering from the flood, Gill prioritized cost-effectiveness. When researching replacement delivery vehicles, the Mullen One All-Electric Class 1 Cargo Van was the most economical option. The van’s upfront cost was about \$40,000, and it cost \$0.07 per mile to charge compared to Native Poppy’s Nissan V200 vans, which cost \$0.21 per mile for gas.

“It was, honestly, a no-brainer,” Gill said. “It wasn’t more expensive than a regular van. It saves you money in the long run by not using gasoline. Gas prices are fairly inconsistent. Electricity is pretty consistent. You can charge it off peak hours, and it’s better for the environment.”

## Environmental, Economic Sustainability

Gill’s business philosophy has always put nature first. Her shop’s design is centered around fostering connection between people and plants.

“In terms of being socially motivated with our buying power, we are very environmentally focused,” Gill said. “We prioritize sourcing pesticide-free flowers. We also do everything we can to eliminate single-use plastics from our business—from our 100% biodegradable shopping bags, twine and hydration bags, to our gift cards, which are paper.”

Opting for Mullen’s EV delivery van was a natural step in the company’s commitment to sustainability. Many companies shy away from implementing sustainable practices for fear of high cost. However, Gill said that this tends to be a misconception.



*Native Poppy founder and CEO Natalie Gill believes that using EV delivery vans can be a major cost-saver for small businesses. Photo courtesy of Native Poppy*

“Regular gas vehicles release ethanol, which makes flowers die faster, so having an electric vehicle is actually even healthier for our flowers,” Gill said. “We save a bunch of money by charging our vans overnight. We set the charging timer for midnight and charge when it’s low peak hours. The carrying capacity of the van is also larger than any of our other vehicles. It’s a great choice.”

Since commercial businesses do not qualify for free green waste pick up, Gill said, Native Poppy pays \$180 each month with Republic Services for a 3-yard green waste dumpster. The company moves all of its overflow green waste to that location’s dumpster.

Gill said that, as a small business owner, she believes that providing incentives for property owners to add solar power, environmentally friendly building practices and more EV chargers can support major progress in the community.

During the pandemic, the company saw a major spike in orders because people wanted to feel connected. Since then, growth has stayed consistent and the local delivery program has thrived, creating jobs for people who want to be in a creative field.

While Native Poppy was born in San Diego, Gill said that she hopes to establish locations in Orange County and San Francisco in the future.

## Origins of the Business

When Gill founded Native Poppy in 2014, she sought to live a life aligned with her values. She wanted to be creative, connected with nature and provide others with good jobs. The company started out on her apartment patio for a year and a half before moving to North Park in 2016.

“I saw the opportunity to open a retail shop in San Diego for flowers,” Gill said. “I wasn’t seeing it done the way I envisioned—I wanted to do my version of a flower shop.”

Native Poppy brings an immersive, holistic twist to the traditional flower shop. Each location features a Stem Bar where customers can build their own bouquets. Also included is a gift shop section with wares from women-owned and BIPOC vendors.

Responsible sourcing is paramount to Gill, who collaborates with local, women-owned farms Psalter Farms, Cielo Hills, Bee Worthy and Remy for inventory.



Being a flower shop owner is about loving your craft and having a passion for flowers—it is not about making money,” Gill said. “Every time we open a shop, it’s very expensive, and it takes a long time for us to recover from that, unlike the quick recovery we experienced in the beginning.”

Native Poppy also generates revenue by creating floral arrangements for weddings and events and hosting workshops at spots like Extraordinary Desserts and Fernside.

“Our mission statement is sharing love through the power of flowers, which is beautiful, and we do that through design,” Gill said. “We’re so excited to create art to help celebrate moments and send messages of love.”

## **Native Poppy**

FOUNDED: 2014

CEO: Natalie Gill

HEADQUARTERS: San Diego

BUSINESS: Retail and Event Florist

EMPLOYEES: 23

WEBSITE: [www.nativepoppy.com](http://www.nativepoppy.com)

CONTACT: [natalie@nativepoppy.com](mailto:natalie@nativepoppy.com)

NOTABLE: The company’s name references the founder’s California roots.



in

## **Madison Geering**

[+ posts](#)

Born and raised in San Diego, Madison takes great pride in local storytelling. Her coverage at the San Diego Business Journal includes tourism, hospitality, nonprofits, education and retail. An alumna of San Diego State University’s journalism program, she has written for publications including The San Diego Union-Tribune and The San Diego Sun. At the 2024 San Diego Press Club awards, Madison was recognized for her exemplary profile writing. She was also a speaker for the 2023 TEDx Conference at Bonita Vista High School. When she’s not working on her next story, Madison can be found performing music at a local restaurant or on one of San Diego’s many hiking trails.