

Hudson

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Get to know
Pete and Linda McDonald

Go behind the scenes at Jewelry Art

Turning fine jewelry into an art

Gazing into the glass cases at Jewelry Art in Hudson, it's easy to dismiss the notion that jewelry has been around since the beginning of civilization. Surely these gemstones were created for us alone to enjoy!

Yet, in ancient Egypt, Pharaohs adorned themselves with gold bracelets, pendants and ornaments. Around 1400 B.C., Greeks wore beads produced from seashells, stone, clay and bone. With knowledge derived from the discovery of ancient tombs, we can trace the history of jewelry back to the Neolithic Age.

Over time, jewelry has symbolized social class or rank, religious custom, even political affiliation. In fact, jewelers as artists can be found in nearly every civilization.

Jewelry Art owners Georgianna Bojitos and daughter Barbara Johnson continue the tradition of jewelry as art in their store at 214 N. Main St.

Personal attention, quality craftsmanship and exquisite designs lure shoppers to Jewelry Art, where, Johnson says, you can "truly find something unique for all budgets."

How it began

No story about Jewelry Art is complete without sharing the fascinating tale of how the store materialized. In 1976, Bojitos accompanied her husband, Laszlo, on a business trip to Chicago, where the couple planned to shop for an anniversary gift for Georgianna. Little did they realize at the time that a visit to a Water Tower Place jewelry store would change their lives.

Laszlo and Georgianna, both



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Jewelry Art staff include, from left, founder Georgianna Bojitos, Tony Johnson, Barbara Johnson, Michelle Shoemaker and Dawn Urich-Taylor.

Hungarian immigrants, were astounded by the quality and craftsmanship of the pieces on display. They were so impressed with the workmanship that went into the jewelry, they hastily scheduled a meeting

with the jewelry designer before leaving Chicago.

The rest, as they say, is history.

They returned to Cleveland with an attaché case full of jewelry, which they quickly sold to friends who also

appreciated the designer's creations. After several more trips to Chicago, the couple realized a store would give them the opportunity to share their discovery with a larger market, and so, in 1977, Jewelry Art moved into its original location in the Pavilion Mall in Beachwood.

Through the years, Jewelry Art outgrew its Beachwood location and, when the freestanding building on North Main Street in Hudson became available in 1991, they jumped at the chance to make it Jewelry Art's new home.

More than jewelry

You can find more than fine custom-designed jewelry at Jewelry Art. Decorative gifts for any special occasion from respected companies like Waterford, Orrefors and Simon Pearce sparkle on the glass shelves in the store.

Jewelry Art offers a bridal registry and many great gift ideas for brides and grooms to purchase for their bridal attendants, suggests Johnson.



Jewelry Art owner Barbara Johnson shows an item to John and Lia Montgomery.

The store maintains an in-house full service jewelry repair shop, regardless of where a piece was purchased.

A store that cares about its community

Jewelry Art employs eight people — all educated in the jewelry industry, including Johnson's husband Tony, who brings his accounting and financial background to the business.

"He's really been involved since 1989, but has become more and more active as business has grown. He also joins me on all of our buying trips," says Johnson.

Bojitos continues to take part in buying trips and many of the jewelry design projects, in addition to working in the store three days a week. On other days, explains Johnson, "she's a grandma — watching my

children so I can concentrate on work."

Jewelry Art forges strong ties with its loyal customers. So much so, that many remain customers long after they move from the area.

The development of First & Main has brought an influx of new faces, says Johnson.

"It's a nice extension of Main Street that hopefully is benefiting Hudson as a shopping destination," she says.

Jewelry Art is well known throughout the community for its continued support of many local organizations.

"We love the community. We've tried to give back as much as we can," says Johnson.

Johnson, her husband and their two children recently relocated from Cuyahoga Falls to Hudson to be closer to the store. Their son, Erik, 8, walks to the store twice a week after school.

"My 5-year-old daughter, Eva, often visits too," says Johnson.

Will the family business continue?

"They've both grown up here and notice fine jewelry," affirms Johnson. She recalls a day when her daughter noticed a \$25,000 necklace she was wearing.

"Mommy, that's really pretty!" exclaimed Eva.

Johnson enjoys the thought of sharing the business with another generation. She says, "It's such a fun business. It's a pleasure to have the privilege of being a trusted part of people's lives."

Changes over the years

Johnson began working in the business as a teen and has seen trends come and go, but the biggest change she has noticed is the move from mass produced pieces to more designer-oriented pieces.

"There's lots more to choose from," she says, adding, "Not only are there more designers, but we're seeing creativity that wasn't there before.

Also, she notes, the gap between fashion and fine jewelry has narrowed.

"As our lifestyles have changed, the pieces have become more versatile," Johnson says.

The days of bringing out nice jewelry only for cocktail parties are over, she says.

"Today, more women, especially professional women, are buying jewelry for themselves — wearing fine jewelry from day into evening," she says.

Johnson finds that buyers today are more knowledgeable than in the past.

"They want to be educated about jewelry. They're open to wearing new things," shares Johnson.



RPC PHOTO / ROBERT J. LUCAS

Jewelry Art, which opened in Beachwood's Pavilion Mall in 1977, moved to Hudson's historic Main Street in 1991.

“They’ve branched out from diamonds and the big three — rubies, emeralds and sapphires. That makes buying more fun and interesting.”

Of course, Johnson explains, people still buy jewelry for what she refers to as “marking a moment.”

“Since the beginning of time, jewelry has been a token of love — celebrating life’s moments with jewelry. That will never change,” she says.

Custom design

Jewelry Art’s in-house jewelry design sets the retail store apart from many other jewelers. Bojitos and Johnson share design duties and design pieces based on the client’s style, need and purpose.

“People often think of custom design jewelry as only the avant-garde, yet it can be something very classic,” says Johnson.

Johnson is in the final stages of completing an engagement ring for a couple’s second marriage.

“They wanted something unique,” shares Johnson. “They wanted their piece to tell the story of two families (each has children from a prior marriage) uniting.”

Johnson showed the couple a variety of gems. After they made their selection, Johnson sketched an idea, which was later carved into wax by Jewelry Art’s in-house master goldsmith. After the customer’s approval, she will cast and complete the piece. The entire process takes only a few weeks.

International designers

Several times each year, Johnson and Bojitos attend invitational jewelry trade shows, their main source of viewing and purchasing jewelry lines for Jewelry Art.

“The international exhibitors select a limited number of independent upscale jewelry stores to attend,” explains Johnson. “We see the newest and most creative offerings at these shows, and it is our passion to share these with our customers.”

“We carefully select designers that share our philosophy about quality, workmanship and uniqueness.”

Some of Johnson’s favorite designers include Alishan, Susan Sadler, JFA Designs, Scott Keating, Pascal Lacroix and Mark Patterson. In the spring, customers will have an opportunity to meet Keating and Sadler when they each visit Jewelry Art for a trunk show.

“Trunk shows provide an opportunity to meet the designer and experience their awesome collections,” says Johnson.



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Jewelry Art features several designer jewelry lines, as well as custom-designed pieces.

After returning recently from a jewelry show, she’s excited to introduce new lines from New York designer Alex Sepkus and KWIAT, specializing in brilliant cut classic diamonds.

A colorful trend

Despite the fact that the Cleveland-Akron region is slow to adopt many fashion trends, one jewelry trend has caught on here.

“Color! Color! Color!” exclaims Johnson.

Gemstones in nearly every color and shade imaginable fill the glass cases. Johnson insists she has no favorites — as long as they’re gem quality, she notes — but says, “I can get lost in gazing at the autumn sun in Malaya garnet. It’s not your grandma’s garnet. It has a high refractive index. It has brilliance — it just dances.”

For engagement rings, Johnson says the trend of platinum and white gold continues, even though both coasts are seeing a yellow gold comeback.

According to Johnson, as a couture jeweler, she carefully watches what’s currently in style, but also “keeps a careful eye on tomorrow.”

Jewelry Art, at 214 N. Main St., can be reached at 330-650-9011. ❖