

by Lorrie Bryan

A Jeweler that's a *Rare Gem*



When the world was a simpler place, your local jeweler could take care of all your jewelry needs—he cleaned and repaired your jewelry, created new jewelry for you, and looked out for special pieces on the market that he knew you'd like. You trusted the merchandise he sold was of the finest quality and that the price was fair. But these days, with the explosion in Internet commerce and mass marketing and the proliferation of retail chains, buying jewelry can be a complex buyer-beware chore rather than a simple pleasure.

Gems in Art, a local jewelry design studio, offers customers an experience that hales to a simpler time and value that is unprecedented. At this cozy unpretentious shop in Vickery Village, you will find exquisitely hand-crafted, one-of-a-kind creations at great prices. Owners Joshua and Gladys Avella are buying much of the jewelry they offer directly from the artists, and Joshua, a certified Jeweler of America master jeweler, creates the balance in his on-site studio. "So our jewelry hasn't been marked up several times as it has exchanged hands," explains Gladys. "And we have purposely kept our overhead low so that we can pass those savings on to our customers as well."

And although there is nothing pretentious about the shop or its owners, the merchandise they offer is far from plain and Joshua's talent is extraordinary. He is an artist with an eye for beauty and a craftsman with the deftness to execute his designs. One of the few artisan jewelers that can do hand engraving, Joshua came to the United States from his native



country of Colombia nearly 30 years ago to become a chef. Instead he followed his passion for jewelry, studied jewelry design at the esteemed Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, and distinguished himself by becoming one of the first jewelers in Georgia to earn the Jewelers of America certification.

In 2006, the Avellas decided it was time to open their own local jewelry business. Having spent 25 years working for large national jewelry chains, Joshua knew that he wanted his business to be different. "Our goal is to offer our customers unique, high-quality jewelry that is affordable and accessible. And we are able to bring in the work of some of the best designers in the world and offer it at very reasonable prices. When you look at the price tags, you'll be amazed," affirms Joshua. Another element of the business that is important to Joshua is the relationship with his customers. "I want to know them and earn their trust," he adds.

Joshua's studio space is strategically located right in the front picture window of the shop. Here he turns molten metal and polished gem stones into exquisite works of art and attends to the needs of his customers. He routinely offers complimentary jewelry cleaning and will often offer suggestions for remounting stones or updating pieces. He enjoys working with customers to create new settings for passed-down diamonds or gems and loves to see their faces when he unveils his creations. "It is very gratifying for me to be able to see the pleasure my work brings to someone," he says. "Many jewelers don't routinely get to experience that."

This husband and wife duo work seamlessly together. "He is the talent and I am the management," Gladys explains smiling. She has long encouraged her husband to start his own business, and two years ago they decided the time was right. "He is so talented and so personable. He has a passion for what he does and it shows—in his designs and in his relationships with our customers. They share my appreciation for his talent, and this is very rewarding."

"When people hear *custom made, hand-crafted, unique design* they tend to think that they can't afford that. But we have a wide range of prices, starting at less than \$200," Gladys explains. "Jewelry doesn't have to be expensive to be beautiful."

To view samples of the collections at Gems in Art, stop by the shop at 5930 Odell Street, Suite 100 in Vickery Village in Cumming, or you can visit www.gemsinart.com. Call 770.844.8005 for more information.

Photography by Haigwood Studios.



Looking for Your Own Personal Jeweler?

Here's What You'll Find at Gems in Art Jewelry Design Studio:

- Fine Jewelry Sales
- Jewelry Remounting and Redesign
- Artistic Hand Engraving
- Flat-fee Appraisals
- Professional Repair
- Professional Cleaning

