SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON........

BY LAUREN RUSSELL

As part of our Customer Spotlight series, find out more about the winner of our recent Gesswein Twitter Contest.

The winner of the contest, Laurie Lynn Berezin, will put her new Eco-Torque 280 to good use while creating her eco-friendly “one-of-a-kind, meticulous, hand-fabricated jewelry.”

Laurie Lynn explains,

“Intention runs like a river through all facets of my jewelry. By using minerals that I mined myself and other American gemstones, as well as recycled precious metals, I allow my artistic vision to be realized while respecting other people and the planet. Through my jewelry, I ultimately aspire to contribute to a culture of intentional living that encourages the ownership of fewer, exquisitely made, responsibly-sourced goods.”

How it All Began
Like many of our customers, Laurie Lynn’s path to opening Beryllina, her own jewelry business, started as a hobby. She discovered her passion for jewelry making as a college student majoring in Business, Art, and Environmental Ethics at Penn State. She took a class in metal smithing and describes it as “love at first solder.” She spent the next few years engaging in jewelry making as a hobby before finally deciding to attend North Bennet Street School’s Jewelry Making Program to fulfill her dream of becoming a professional jeweler. She aimed to create a business that would successfully represent her “personal commitment to living in an eco-friendly way” which she feels is a “challenge in an industry that often overlooks environmentalism and social responsibility.”

Relationship with Gesswein
It was during her time at the North Bennet Street School that turned her into a true Gesswein fan. Laurie shares, “I found out about Gesswein while I was in school, as my classmates and I started to build up our requisite tool collections. My all-time favorite Gesswein purchase is my Made in the USA Arbe Benchtop Polisher/Dust Collector. It’s the best!”
A Symbolic Leap into the World of Jewelry
Making the transition from being a hobbyist to a full time jewelry-maker can be intimidating. Laurie Lynn cites “making the decision to leave a comfortable, well-paying office-manager job and leap into the unknown of running my own creative business” as the most challenging element of starting her own business. After debating it for several months, she symbolically jumped into the world of full time jewelry design on Leap Day in 2012. Ultimately, she feels that it has “been an amazing and interesting experience” with her “business growing each year.”

Laurie explains attending the North Bennet Street School provided confidence to engage in jewelry making as a full-time career, “Having thrived in their rigorous program, I knew that I was not only ready to be a professional jeweler, but that I could make jewelry that I am proud of as well.”

Eco Practices
Berezin works hard to provide customers with handcrafted sustainable designs. She employs a number of techniques to create her eco-friendly jewelry. She uses only 100% recycled silver, gold, and platinum, natural, untreated gemstones and minerals mined in the USA, and eco-friendly packaging.

Although Berezin cites “limitations in materials” as the most challenging thing about creating her sustainable designs, she used the roadblock to her advantage. She describes, “For instance, I don’t use lobster claw clasps on any of my necklaces because I haven’t found a supplier that makes them with 100% certified recycled metals. Though this initially was a limitation, I seized it as an opportunity to equip all of my necklaces with clasps I make by hand – which has become a selling point.”

Mining
As part of her green initiative, Laurie Lynn uses only untreated gems and minerals mined in the United States. She even takes it a step further by mining some of her own gems and minerals! She shares that she “loves spring time in nature and digging through the dirt and rocks in search of beautiful crystals.” Berezin also cites immersing herself in nature as a great way to get in the mood to be creative. She explains, “I am lucky enough to be surrounded by nature at my studio, so spending some time outdoors can really get the juices flowing. Digging in the ground for gems and minerals is really inspiring too. When I find a beautiful or interesting stone in the earth, designing and making its forever-home is really exciting.”

Community Service
Berezin also supports two other causes near and dear to her heart. She provides a bracelet to support cancer-fighting charities and a necklace supporting The Society for the Advancement of Pet Pigs, Inc. The one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces are handmade by Laurie within 3-5 business days or less in her Concord, MA studio.
Keeping the Passion Alive and Staying Motivated

When asked how she faces “Jeweler’s Block” or lack of motivation to create, Laurie says she tries to, “take a step back and work on other things for a bit.” She elaborates, “Running this business on my own, there is always something else for me to work on such as photography, marketing, social media, updating financial records, etc. Doing something else for a bit always gets me inspired to get back to my bench.”

Berezin credits her membership with Boston Handmade, “a group of local artists and craftspeople,” as a factor in keeping her passion alive. She explains, “I joined last year and have really appreciated being a member. I love being my own boss and working alone, but it’s nice to have a community of other creative people to share experiences with and make being an artist-entrepreneur a little less solitary.”

Want to start your own eco-friendly jewelry business?

Laurie’s journey into sustainable designs provides her with unique insights into developing a successful environmentally focused jewelry business. She advises, “My advice to someone wanting to start their own eco-friendly jewelry company is to be very diligent in sourcing...You really have to do your homework (don’t be afraid to call companies for more information), not take anything for granted, and honor your convictions when sourcing materials. Remember who you are and why you’re committed to environmentally conscious practices, and this will help keep you strong and steer you in the right direction.”

We enjoyed the opportunity to learn about Beryllina and provide the chance for you to get to know more about the business. Beryllina by Laurie Lynn can be found at http://beryllina.com/. Look forward to more Spotlight Features coming soon!

Sources: www.bostonhandmade.org