

MONTECITO

MAGAZINE





PHOTOGRAPHY - ANDREA RUSSELL



◀ New Silverhorn Design Studio ▶



When Michael and Carole Ridding opened their new business nearly 41 years ago, they knew they wanted to specialize in fine jewelry, not mass-produced items. For Michael, a gemologist, this meant searching the world for rare gemstones of the highest quality. But finding people trained in old master jewelry and goldsmith techniques was difficult, as only a few European countries still teach these skills today. "These gems deserve to have one-of-a-kind settings created by hand," Michael explains. "In order to meet this challenge and put our own signature style to the pieces, it was obvious that we would need to establish our own design studio."

From the beginning the European-styled jewelry design studio—one of just a handful in the entire country—operated out of public sight in Montecito. The design team members arrive at Silverhorn with exceptional credentials. They study their craft for five years before qualifying for an apprenticeship with master craftsmen. After the apprenticeship they go on to work at fine European

design houses or with private clients, or receive commissions from famous firms like Friedrich in Frankfurt or Cartier in Paris. A lucky few receive an invitation from the Riddings to move to Santa Barbara and work at Silverhorn.

In April 2018, after 34 years of operation at 1155 Coast Village Road, Silverhorn shuttered its doors. This did not mark Silverhorn's demise, but rather the dawn of a new era for the business, as the Riddings commenced construction on a sophisticated first-floor space at 1235 Coast Village Road. For the first time, visitors will be able to view the designers in action, through a glass partition next to the displays and reception area. The gallery and design studio are expected to open in mid-November.

"We decided it was time to explore the idea of bringing the design team to the forefront and creating a more personal experience for our clients," says Michael. Carole adds, "We are also determined to be part of the revitalization of the Coast Village retail corridor."

Stop by the design studio to watch the team painstakingly transform gems into exquisite works of art. Each designer has a personal wooden work bench, lined with fine Swiss and German tools.

"The importance of highly specialized craftspeople is one of the keys to Silverhorn's success," says Michael. "Each one of our design team is the very best at his craft and this is essential to our overall look. It is a great collaboration that creates significant, collectible pieces that indeed are rare." ♦

1235 Coast Village Road • www.silverhorn.com