

THE SILVERHORN DESIGN STUDIO

BY CHERYL CRABTREE

IMAGINE YOURSELF in a couturier's studio, watching an expert dressmaker sewing your dream outfit, tailored to your particular wishes and measurements. Or sitting in a restaurant with an open kitchen, where you can watch a skilled chef create a delectable cooked-to-order dinner.

That's the type of setting Michael and Carole Ridding envisioned when planning a new studio for Silverhorn Jewelers, a business the Riddings started in 1976 and operated at 1155 Coast Village Rd. in Montecito for 34 years. For decades the jewelry designers practiced their craft in a studio on the second floor, hidden from the public. In November 2018, Silverhorn moved into a sleek, contemporary gallery at 1235 Coast Village Rd., just a block away from its former abode. As before, customers visit Silverhorn to chat with designers about custom jewelry, browse books and sketches from the vast portfolio, and "try on" wax models of commissioned pieces before the jewelers create the final versions. But they can also

view, through glass partitions, the highly skilled team of artisans at work.

"Last year we decided to spend some time dreaming of an ideal situation, a new concept for our retail store. And this is the result of that dream," says Carole Ridding, Silverhorn's CEO and president.

Gemologist Michael Ridding points out that the new concept also showcases the exceptionally detailed and skilled work that goes into Silverhorn jewelry. He searches the world to find rare, high-quality gemstones, and handpicks staff from graduates of the few European schools that teach old master jewelry and goldsmith techniques. Qualified candidates have studied for five years and completed apprenticeships. "The importance of highly specialized craftspeople is one of the keys to Silverhorn's success," he states. "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.

