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Jeweler aims to dazzle in new storefront

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By Eric Schwartzberg

Staff Writer

A long-time Butler County jewelry store recently moved into a new, more spacious storefront.

JL Jewelers recently celebrated a weeklong grand opening of its new 2,000-square-foot showroom at 6580B Dixie Highway in Diplomat Village Shopping Center.

"I just had so much merchandise and materials and just needed space," said owner Jeffrey Long, who previously occupied a smaller storefront in the same center but further away from the road. "We have a steady business and I've been doing this 29 years so I have a very good following and I was just ready for an upgrade."

The jewelry trade is a family tradition dating back to 1904 when Long's great-uncle started Gosling Jewelers in downtown Cincinnati. Long learned the craft from his brother in 1984, then launched the family-owned and operated JL Jewelers in his sister's Fairfield home, moving it to Florida and Glendale before opening a Fairfield storefront 14 years ago. In March 2011, Long closed the Glendale location and consolidated operations to Dixie Highway.

The new showroom includes a fine art gallery, improved customer consultation area, an expanded work room and better lighting to show off the store's unique jewelry.

"I had a lot of wasted space at the other place," Long said. "This store, we were able to design from the floor up ... and have more showroom space and less wasted space."

Besides jewelry, the business also specializes in watches, clocks, bead-stringing, wax-carving and mold-making.

Custom-made jewelry can take anywhere from two days to four weeks to create, depending on whether Long has items in stock or needs to fabricate from scratch.

Because Long attends 10 different jewelry shows a year, JL Jewelers has a large following of clients from as far away as North Carolina and Florida.

As enjoyable as owning a business has been, "just sitting at the bench" designing jewelry is Long's true passion.

He employs different ways of conducting business with clients who order custom-made pieces, including how much money they are able to spend, how much time they have before a deadline and what kind of piece they are looking for in the long run.

"We have pieces from \$50 to \$10,000 in stock and we stock probably a couple thousand pieces of jewelry, so I have an extensive inventory that I can work with but making it per order is probably what I enjoy the most," Long said.

In August, he entered his first design contest — the Mid-America Jewelry Show — and walked away with first prize in the up to \$1,000 category and third prize in the more than \$1,000 category.

Barbara Voelkel, a customer for the past 15 years, said she shops JL Jewelers for all of her jewelry needs.

"He has incredible talent when it comes to taking old stones and redesign them and make a new piece," Voelkel said. "When it comes to quality workmanship, he does not cut corners."

Rebecca Scripture, a customer for the past eight years, said there's no comparison between Long and his competition.

"The good, older jewelers who were in Hamilton are long gone," Scripture said. "Jeff is an excellent jeweler and goldsmith ... and I'm thrilled he's there. I just wish I knew longer ago that he was there."

For more information, call (513) 942-9271 or visit www.jljewelers.net.

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