

Jersey Boy

Custom work, exotic cars, bank jobs—all in a day's work for George Press



George Press works around the clock to complete special custom orders.

GEORGE PRESS
GEORGE PRESS FINE JEWELRY
LIVINGSTON, N.J.
 Owner
georgepress.com

"I'm a jeweler's jeweler with many years of experience at the bench. I sign off on every repair and custom job."

1 What one mode of advertisement elicited the greatest response for you?

In 1995, my brother and I purchased the old Mayflower Bank, a landmark building in our city. We were pretty well known in town, with me in the jewelry business for 15 years and my brother a professional photographer for nearly 20 years. The first ad I created to announce the new location looked like an actual news story. The headline was "Press Brothers Pull Bank Job." A lot of customers called in to say how much they liked the ad.

2 What's your most memorable sale?

In January 2008, a customer asked me to create a custom ring with a 4.01-ct. triangle-shaped diamond. Given the stone's unique shape, I had to set it sideways. I then put pavé accents around it.

But the sale isn't memorable because it was an \$87,000 ring. Since she began wearing the piece over two years ago, I get a call every month about it. Some people have asked for direct copies of the ring, but I can't do that—especially to a devoted follower of my custom work.

One person who saw the ring has bought at least 12 custom pieces from me in a few years. The sales I've made from that one ring are amazing.

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3 What was your finest hour in the realm of customer service?

During Operation Desert Storm, a young soldier contacted me about his idea of presenting a last-minute engagement ring to his girlfriend before being deployed to active duty. The only problem: He was leaving in 14 hours on

an early-morning flight to meet her in North Carolina. I stayed up all night to finish the ring and met the soldier and his father in front of my store at 4:30 a.m. The two men were amazed it was finished in time. Years later, the young couple got a divorce. Now both of them are getting remarried and I'm making their second set of engagement rings.

4 How do you differentiate your store from the competition?

The competition is stiff in my market with five jewelers in the city and one of the busiest shopping malls in the country across the street. I'm a jeweler's jeweler with many years of experience at the bench. I sign off on every repair and custom job. And I carry top brands in every category, such as Ritani, Tacori, and Scott Kay for bridal and Charriol for diamond fashion. Marco Bicego has also been excellent for us.

5 What's the best idea you've come up with for your store?

In recent years, I held a contest where each customer who made any purchase, from a \$5 watch battery up to a diamond ring, would be eligible to own a Harley-Davidson for one year—on me. The logistics with motorcycle insurance proved problematic, so I dropped the idea. Somehow, the owner of an exotic-car-rental company found out about my contest and asked if I'd be interested in giving the winner a weekend driving a Ferrari F430 Spider. I jumped at the chance given it's a \$200,000 car. A few days before the drawing, I parked the car in front of the store. The whole city was buzzing about it. The winner was a local fire captain. Normally I give civil servants free repairs on small jobs. But when Kevin came in to pick up the repair on his lucky cross, I told him if he paid the \$10 he could have a chance at the Ferrari. And he ended up winning. I guess it is his lucky cross. —Paul Holewa