



# What a lot of charmers

WORDS **CHRISTINE ESAU** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW BEVERIDGE**

**T**HERE IS A LOT OF burgeoning talent in South Australia's jewellery trade, much of it residing in the young artisans who train through the apprenticeship program offered by TAFE SA or through a Visual Arts degree offered at TAFE SA and Uni SA.

"An apprenticeship involves securing work with a jeweller," explains Christie Anthoney, creative director of TAFE SA's Adelaide College of the Arts. "Graduates leave armed with a Certificate III in Jewellery Manufacturing and are already working within the industry. Some apprentices have a family background and have grown up tinkering with their father's or grandfather's jewellery tools, which makes it an ideal pathway. The other, increasingly sought-after, route is a Bachelor of Visual Arts and Design or a Certificate IV in Jewellery."

We asked all 10 of the current TAFE SA apprentices to design a charm to attach to a Mother's Day bracelet that will be auctioned later in the year to raise money for the Little Heroes Foundation.

The charms were then attached by master jeweller James Thredgold to a white gold bracelet donated by Paul

Shadiac Imports. The result is a beautiful bracelet of unique charms designed and made by our latest generation of jewellers – a true heirloom piece.

"It is vital that there is a constant stream of new jewellers entering the industry to ensure that the local industry doesn't grind to a halt," says Paul Shadiac, a wholesaler who sources jewellery locally as well as from Europe and Asia on regular buying trips.

"There's room for local artisans to be at the forefront of jewellery design both within Australia and overseas, and to ensure this happens established jewellers need to support the apprenticeship program and employ new graduates to take over."

"There's a body of people in the jewellery trade who are committed to restoring confidence in the jewellery industry and reviving the romance of being able to own handcrafted jewellery rather than mass-produced pieces made overseas," adds James Thredgold. "Jewellery is such a tangible product and in Adelaide we have a number of artisans who handcraft beautiful pieces. It is great to see the work of a number of young people entering the trade who will carry on this tradition."



It's scarcely a surprise that Amelia Fabian (pictured page 28) was interested in jewellery design from an early age. Her father is a master jeweller and goldsmith, trained in London and Europe, and her mother is a diamond grader and gemologist. "I still have a couple of the first pieces of jewellery that I made when I was 12, including a few brooches and a pendant that I still wear a lot," says Amelia, who designed a profile of a mother with her arms wrapped around a baby for our charm bracelet. Once Amelia was happy with her design, she hand-carved the profile in wax and then had the wax covered in an investment mould and heated. After the mould cooled it was injected with molten metal and then polished with a variety of textures, including a brushed finish for the mother's hair. "I like working with metal, not just jewellery but also more traditional bigger pieces," says Amelia, a final-year apprentice. "My dad makes traditional silver items including candlesticks, ladles and spoons incorporating some of the old methods of sinking and raising to form bowls and decorative work including repousse and chasing so I get to do it all – silversmithing and jewellery design. It's great."



David Abrahams is particularly interested in medieval and historic jewellery and looked to traditional tattoo art for inspiration for the diamond-set swallow he designed as a Mother's Day charm. "I carved a wax sculpture and then covered it with a plaster cast. The cast is then heated and the wax burns out. This technique is called lost wax casting. I then poured molten white gold into the hollow space inside the cast. When it sets, you break open the cast and file and clean and polish it. I then set a small diamond eye into the charm and polished it all over." David, a final-year apprentice, has been working with Mark McAskill Jewellery throughout his apprenticeship and says that he feels great pride whenever he sees the result of his workmanship. "Sometimes friends comment on something I have made that my girlfriend wears and it feels satisfying when they like it. I make a lot of rings at work and I like working with different components to get a good result."





Daemen Bray (*opposite page*) says he visualised a traditional autumn afternoon tea party when looking for inspiration for the charm. “I had this mental picture of an olde-world garden scene with ladies in the sunshine sipping champagne and wearing beautiful hats so I designed a wide-brimmed hat with a rose gold bow on it.” Daemen, a second-year apprentice with James Thredgold Jeweller, says he entered the jewellery trade because he was interested in working in an industry where he could be “creative and technical at the same time”. He loves that every piece is a new challenge “to create something special from scratch”. Daemen’s handmade charm was cut from a single piece of white gold that he manipulated to form the shape of a hat. He modelled a separate piece of rose gold into a bow shape and then soldered the two pieces together.

Chrysanthemums are the iconic Mother’s Day flower,” says Tim Parker, when explaining why he chose to create a stone set styled interpretation of a chrysanthemum using eight semi-precious stones set in white gold. “You see people selling buckets of chrysanthemums in their driveways so I just couldn’t go past the idea of making one to symbolise Mother’s Day.” Tim, a second-year apprentice with Samuel’s Fine Jewellery, used marquise-shaped yellow citrines to resemble petals and hand-moulded strips of white gold around each stone to form eight bezel set petals. The petals were then soldered together around a bezel set diamond centre to form a flower. “I started studying architecture at university because I was interested in design but I wanted to do something more hands on, so I decided to become a jeweller like my dad. I really enjoy being able to create unique pieces that are technically challenging but I also enjoy learning some of the fundamental aspects of the trade from my dad.”







“Most women love shoes”, says Harris Hambi, a final-year apprentice, who works at Fili Jewellery, his family-owned business, “and stilettos are the hallmark of femininity. When I started thinking about charms that might appeal to mothers, I was pretty sure that a stiletto would be perfect as my girlfriend and mother have a massive interest in shoes.” Harris used a CAD computer program to design his stiletto. After he was happy with the design, he “printed” a wax mould that was then covered in a plaster cast. The cast was heated so that the wax melted out (the lost wax method) leaving a hollow space that was filled with molten white gold. When the shoe was cool, the cast was broken open and the charm was cleaned and four diamonds were set into the strap before it was polished to a high shine.

“Every mum’s a star, especially my mum,” says Kosta Tsimikis, a third-year apprentice at SA Casters – who chose to produce a cast star for our bracelet. “My grandpa began SA Casters and designed hundreds of the charms that my parents still produce today, including a lot of Australian charms of kangaroos, koalas

and Australian maps, so I chose to create a traditional charm that grandpa would have liked.” Kosta used a rubber mould to produce his five-point star and also used the lost wax method. Molten gold was poured into the hollow and after it set, the cast was broken open and the charm filed, sanded and polished.





When I started thinking about Mother's Day I thought that a trophy would be a good idea," says Nathan Sawley, a second-year apprentice with his father at Mark A Sawley Jewellers. "All mothers, including my mum, deserve recognition!" Nathan, whose father, grandfather and great-great-grandfather were all jewellers, had no intention of following them into the trade but says he more or less drifted into the business because he liked the idea of hand-crafting original pieces from raw materials and saw how much his father enjoyed his work. To make the trophy he moulded a flat disc of white gold into a cup shape and used sheets of gold to create the handles, stem and base of the chalice. He then assembled the individual parts and soldered them together and polished it. "I like the creative process and I think it is a rewarding job," says Nathan.



Last year Michelle Kennedy made herself and her sister matching rose rings that her mother admired, so Michelle seized the opportunity to design a rose charm for our bracelet – and has also made an identical one for her mother as a Mother's Day gift. Michelle cut four layers of petals from flat metal sheeting and then swirled the petals and soldered them together to form a rose in bloom. "I know mum will love it; she loves flowers and I think most mothers love flowers on Mother's Day." Michelle, a second-year apprentice with Class A Manufacturing Jewellers, says her love of jewellery stemmed from a work

experience position during Year 10 at school. She helped out at The Bead Shop at Norwood and realised that she loved creating jewellery. She says that she loves the saw piercing technique that enables her to create intricate filigree designs in metal. "I made a butterfly with filigree wings using this method and it is probably my favourite piece. You have to be very careful not to make a mistake or the whole piece will be ruined, but I love the intensity of concentration that saw piercing requires."



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A keen interest in contemporary design led James, a third-year apprentice at Pure Envy Jewellery, into jewellery design. "I started a science degree at university but preferred creating things at home using some of the tools that were lying around from when my dad did an elective in silversmithing before he became a potter." James (*above left*) has since become passionate about working with gold, platinum and titanium. "Titanium is a light, strong metal so you can create very fine pieces that you couldn't make in other metals. It is a lot harder to forge and shape so some jewellers avoid the challenge of working with it but the results definitely pay off. We feature it here, including a lot of rings with titanium for men. It is quite amazing because it is a dark grey metal that changes colour into a variety of vibrant tones when it's heated." James's modern

heart charm was made by taking raw gold and then hammering, forging and filing it until he achieved the shape and profile features he desired. He then set diamonds into it and finished it with a combination of polished textures.





I like to make pendants and rings with different geometrical shapes that are appealing to the eye and a real stand-out among the modern jewellery today," says second-year jewellery apprentice Zachary Kensen, who is the third generation of his family to be involved in the business. "To really appreciate the final product you need to know how much work is involved in designing and making the piece. The main thing that inspires me is to see the effort, creativity and skill that goes into each handmade piece of jewellery." Zachary, who works at J & C Manufacturing Jewellers, created a three-dimensional heart by hand-cutting separate hearts in white, yellow and rose gold. He then moulded each of the hearts so that they could be soldered together to form a three-sided solid

heart. "My charm reflects the love that is involved with mothers in society today," says Zachary.





*Back: Nathan Sawley, David Abrahams, James K., Tim Parker and Harris Hambi. Front: Daemen Bray, Amelia Fabian, Michelle Kennedy and Kosta Tsimikis. Absent: Zachary Kensen.*



As a unique tribute to Mother's Day, this piece of jewellery has been donated to raise funds for the Little Heroes Foundation. Details of where to view the bracelet will be published in the June issue and on [www.salife.com.au](http://www.salife.com.au).

