

Inspiration & Restoration

Studio by the Sea by Allie Herzog

If you have a drawer full of old jewelry and trinkets lying around, and you've always wondered what you should do with them, it might be a good idea to go visit Peter Tirpaeck at Studio by the Sea in Tiverton.

Tirpaeck is what some might call a magician. He can turn old jewelry into brand new, one-of-a-kind pieces and increase their value in the process. From turning grandma's old ring into earrings to setting sea glass or beach stones found on local shores, Tirpaeck does it all.

"It's all about what you can do at the bench," Tirpaeck said. "I'm good at it, very good at it, and it's rewarding work."

A large part of what Tirpaeck does at his shop is what he calls "transforming" or "redirecting" rings, which basically involves re-purposing the components of older rings, cutting up different parts and making an entirely new ring, many times without having to buy any new materials at all. Compared with the melting-down process that some shops offer, his way is much more economical and embedded with symbolism.

"You're actually adding to the value of what you already have, rather than losing value," he explained. "When you re-use some of your own pieces, you're able to leverage what you own instead of buying [something else], so it opens up a lot more possibilities for folks."

Tirpaeck does a lot of work with engagement and wedding bands, often working with rings that have been handed down through the generations. He offers a program for brides and grooms to come in for a design session, getting truly involved in the process of creating their ideal ring.

Priding himself on the ability to create something completely custom and new from original pieces, he recently melded three older rings into one new and unique piece. Some past projects have included turning an old, unworn ring into a pendant and repairing a broken money clip with a piece of quahog shell.

The biggest diamond he's ever set? A whopping three and a half carats. Besides wedding and engagement rings, Tirpaeck sells a variety of other handmade creations at his shop, including a new line of men's belts with hand-carved bronze fish buckles, or for the ladies, belts with handblown glass embellishment, done locally in Tiverton.

One of his earlier pieces, a silver cosmos flower bracelet, is a favorite of Tirpaeck's, as are his wave rings, which

his two daughters also especially appreciate. Stemming from a little sibling rivalry, one daughter began wearing two at a time as a stack, and discovered a new trend in the process. His daughters also play an important part on his design team, offering their valuable input into the college market.

Trained as both a geologist and gemologist, Tirpaeck attended RISD, where he studied metal-smithing, and has experience working in factories, family jewelry stores and his own business for several years now. When he's not working, you can find him out fishing, which is also a source of endless inspiration.

"Obviously I'm inspired by my surroundings, the ocean and the countryside," Tirpaeck said, who also finds inspiration in other cultures, old books and museums. "I do a lot of antique restoration, and you see designs that you otherwise wouldn't have seen before."

Studio by the Sea is located at 3879 Main Road, in the historic and tax-free art district Four Corners of Tiverton. It's open year-round and offers free ring polishing, as well as traditional jewelry services such as eyeglass repair and watch battery replacement.



Peter Tirpaeck in Studio by the Sea