



## *In the* **SPOTLIGHT**

*After learning the ropes from his stepfather and cutting his teeth at TH Baker, William Knight went into business for himself and now runs Knight Jewellers in East Grinstead with his wife Julie. A year into a major rebrand of the business, he talks to Facets about this fresh start*

### **How did you first get into the jewellery and watch business?**

I followed my stepfather Richard Burrell into the trade, who had shops in Canary Wharf, Croydon, Bromley and Royal Tunbridge Wells. He taught me much of what I know today, as well as a good work ethic, drive and passion for what we do. Nine years ago a former business partner and I started George Knight Jewellers in East Grinstead, and five years later we opened a second store, putting into practice what I had learnt from my stepfather and from my previous job as an area manager and director for TH Baker.

### **Who works with you in the business now?**

My wife Julie and I work alongside one another and we have a loyal and enthusiastic team of three staff plus my stepdaughter, who works with us on a Saturday.

### **This time last year you rebranded from George Knight Jewellers to Knight Jewellers. What made you want to overhaul the business, and what did it entail?**

After a very successful eight years in business together, my former business partner and I decided to divide the business and forge ahead in our different directions. In rebranding to Knight Jewellers, we had a shop refit along with building a new e-commerce website, all bringing our name, shop and image up to date with the current marketplace. We have had a very successful first year, seeing an increase in revenue and repeat custom. We have invested heavily in our diamond collections, which is where we have seen a huge increase in revenue. We have also seen growth in our preowned watch sales and now stock a few prestige preowned brands.

### **You have mentioned that e-commerce was a major part of the rebrand. What sort of online presence did you have before?**

We only had an information website but now have a Shopify-platformed website that enables our customers to view our stock and purchase online. We have had great success with orders coming in as far afield as Australia and America

and we look forward to expanding this over the coming year.

### **You pride yourself on offering a first-class service at Knight Jewellers. What does first-class service mean to you?**

Customer service is very important to us and we like to go the extra mile for our customers. We treat our customers as our friends and never overlook the importance of their custom or take for granted their purchase, be it large or small.

### **Who shops at Knight Jewellers?**

We have no fixed demographic. Our customers range from teenagers to pensioners and all in between. We are the leading jeweller in town and because we stock a variety of brands and offer a range of services, we therefore attract a wide audience. We hear time and time again from our customers they like shopping with us because we have something for everyone.

### **How are your sales split between watches and jewellery?**

Jewellery sales and repairs account for 70% of our business whilst watches make up 30%.

### **You offer on-site jewellery repairs and watch servicing. How important is it to you to have your own workshop?**

It is very important to have an on-site workshop as it enables us to provide a quick and efficient service for our customers. By not outsourcing all work, it also enables us to be very competitive on price, which is important in today's current climate.

### **You also offer a bespoke jewellery design service. Tell us a little more about this.**

I am really passionate about this side of the business, from the initial consultation with the customer to CAD drawings and then the commission. No two commissions are the same and I love seeing the end result, both the actual piece of jewellery and also the customer's delight and the elation on their face when finally seeing their unique piece of jewellery. It's really special. This year's highlights so far include a

£50,000 engagement ring with 2ct centre stone and a halo setting, a circular rainbow pendant made with 65 coloured sapphires and a 3ct emerald-cut diamond and platinum eternity ring.

### **What trends are you picking up on in watch and jewellery retail right now?**

Rose gold is still very popular. We are seeing pastel blues and mint greens coming through in a variety of new products this summer. The Emozioni collection from Hot Diamonds is still very popular with our customers, as is stone-set jewellery.

### **What are the biggest challenges facing you as a business right now?**

Thankfully I can say there aren't any big challenges facing us right now. We have a strong team and Julie and I work tirelessly, making sure the Ts are crossed and the Is are dotted. I would say we are proactive rather than reactive, which enables us to stay current.

### **Why did you decide to become a member of the CMJ? What benefits does it bring you and your business?**

Being a member of the CMJ gives us preferential rates with CMJ suppliers, as well as the combined accounts facility. Lucy Reece-Raybould has been a great help since we joined and there is always someone on hand to guide and help us with any enquiry we have.

### **What do the next 12 months look like for Knight Jewellers?**

We are constantly trying to improve the business and every day we strive to make improvements to the way the store looks and the way the store is run. Furthermore, having just released a new promotional video last week, we are hoping to further establish our presence in social media. And we are looking forward to the next CMJ regional meeting. ■

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