

LEEANN HERREID's jewelry is made out of such things as rules, compasses and screws. Below, a pair of compass key rings.

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BOB THAYER



Warren artist's jewelry really works

It's not often that you see a pair of earrings that are not just lovely to look at, but also make you laugh.

Spirit Level earrings, a creation of Warren jewelry artist LeeAnn Herreid, are not only beautiful and funny, but they also could come in handy for carpentry jobs around the house.

BROWSING



Small glass tubes, filled with chartreuse-colored water in which a tiny bubble floats, are the same items that are normally seen in carpenters' levels. But Herreid casts them in a more decorative role, attaching them to sterling silver strands to make a remarkable pair of earrings.

"I got the idea to make the spirit-level earrings for a friend of mine who was always spilling things," says Herreid, taking a break from working in her bright new studio on the Warren River waterfront. (Wearers of the earrings quickly get used to jokes about being "level-headed.")

The earrings, which cost \$65, are part of a "jewelry that works" series designed by Herreid, who calls her small company Individual Icons.

"I love tools, and I started out by designing a compass ring and then a compass necklace for my mother, who really needs it!" she laughs. For

customers other than her mother, the ring costs \$85, the necklace \$82.

These and other "useful" jewelry pieces in sterling silver are part of Herreid's production line. She also designs and makes custom jewelry pieces in silver, platinum, or 18-karat gold.

But it's the "tool" series with which she's most associated, selling the pieces from her Web site (www.individualicons.com), from her Warren studio, and also through dozens of galleries and shops around the country. In Providence, Herreid's work is carried at *risd/works* and at *Oop!* contemporary gift galleries; in Cambridge, Mass., at the Museum of Useful Things; and in New York at the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of American Folk Art.

Herreid, 34, graduated from Rhode Island School of Design's jewelry program in 1991. Afterward, she worked in Newport and later spent four years in Santa Fe, N.M. But as a Massachusetts native, she wanted to come back to New England to live. In Warren, the house that she shares with her architect husband and shepherd-mix dog is right next door to the garage that the couple recently redesigned as her studio.

Among the other pieces of working jewelry in the Individual Icons line are thermometer earrings and necklaces (\$44 and \$48), a bulls-eye spirit-level ring (\$84) and cuff-links (\$140), "gearrings" (\$70), ruler cuff bracelets (\$40), Phillips head screw earrings (\$30) or cuff-links (\$84), and a depth-measure ruler bracelet (\$30).

Herreid is in her studio weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's at 65 Church St., Warren; 247-7867.

— KATHERINE IMBRIE