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Mount Kisco's Rose Jewelers, Patronized By Celebs, Closing After 30 Years

 Donna Christopher



Rose Garden Jewelers at 12 South Moger Ave. in Mount Kisco specializes in antiques and one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry. Photo Credit: *Shirley Wang*

MOUNT KISCO, N.Y. – Antique, jewelry, custom jewelry and appraisals are hallmarks of Rose Garden Jewelers in Mount Kisco. Owner Shirley Wang, a certified gemologist, said the store has drawn a faithful following for three decades.

Among new and existing customers at the South Moger Avenue store, have been celebrities from the area. Bill Clinton, Catherine Zeta Jones and Blake Lively are among those who have been in the store, according to Wang.

Both modest and low-key, Wang said she's about to retire, though she did not specify a time-frame. She did, however, tell Daily Voice a closing sale is underway.

And when asked about when the former president stopped in, she offered the following, "Bill Clinton did come in one time. He always knows what to say, is charming. He came in with the Secret Service standing at the door. I realized I was talking to Bill Clinton."

Wang added, "He said, 'I've been wanting to come to your store for a long time. Every time I come to your store, it's not open. He bought something for his daughter and may have bought a brooch for Madame Albright (Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright). She wrote a book on brooches. She loved brooches.'"

Rose's daughter, Shaweii Wang, used to help out at her mother's store from time to time. She told Daily Voice by phone that on the day Clinton was in, she had sent her nanny in her place to help out and "missed him."

"Mount Kisco is losing a woman-and-immigrant-owned small business, where you get a personal story, the story behind each piece of jewelry you buy," Shaweii Wang said.

Wang is proud of her legacy and admits she's carved her niche among local customers because of her high standards for the jewelry she sells.

"Either I buy from good suppliers or I design it myself," she said. "Any time I'm able to buy some good gems, rubies or sapphires, I would design the ring, the jewelry. And I started the business selling antiques. Whether custom made or antiques, there's a lot of treasures in the store. They're impossible to replace. I would like people to come and buy something for the family, for keeps."

The business began in 1986 and moved to its present location in 1993.

Back then the whole street was "pretty much in a depressive state," Wang said.

"There were a lot of empty storefronts and cob webs and a broken window here. As soon as I moved in I beautified it. I hired an architect to build a storefront. All the locations on the street got rented and the street was very successful for many years, even with the chain stores coming in."

Today, Wang still caters to longtime customers, although many have retired and moved to places like the South.

The timing of winding down seems appropriate, Wang continued.

"The town has changed a great deal and I'm not doing as well as I used to when I first started. But my customers follow me. They are very much into antiques. I seem to be the only store they come to to get the real selection. I also do a lot of appraisals, diamond grading."

Lately, too, Wang has seen businesses move out of Mount Kisco.

Wang's background includes a rigorous course load which led to her certification by the Gemological Institute of America.

"You have to study all the required courses, from diamond grading, to gemstones grading," she stated. "There's five courses. Each takes years to study. Then you have to pass a comprehensive test that you are not allowed to even make one mistake on. And if you do, you have to sign up to take the test all over again."

Shaweei Wang waxes nostalgic when thinking about her mother closing the store. She noted how internet shopping has changed the landscape for local retailers, not just the jewelry store.

"People buy so much online. You might get a better price but you don't get an 'I know your family' (experience.) Jewelers, especially, are always close to their customers. People come in on special occasions. She hears about the world. She gets to know the family, knows what they get for their birthdays. It's a very interesting way to meet people," she said.

Rose Garden Jewelers is located at 12 South Moger Ave. To reach the store, call 914-241-4908.

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