

On Small Business

Exclusive: A sneak peek at the new (not so) Tiny Jewel Box

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The Tiny Jewel Box, which started as a 100-square-foot shop, has grown more than 80-fold in 80 years.

Today, the homegrown company opens the doors to its expanded store, a sprawling 8,000-square-foot space that commands the corner of Connecticut and M streets NW.

Jim Rosenheim and his son, Matthew, took over the former Burberry location next door. They knocked down the walls and connected the new space with the company's longtime six-story building, increasing the store's square footage by 50 percent.

"When rumors started to swirl about Burberry leaving this property, our eyes got wide," said Jim, chief executive of Tiny Jewel Box.

The revamped store includes more of the same — high-end jewelry, corporate gifts and watches — but also has a designated bridal boutique, private gemstone viewing rooms and a ground-floor watchmaking facility. Here, a sneak peek at the company's new location. Photos by Bill O'Leary for The Washington Post.



Tiny Jewel Box has been located on Connecticut Avenue NW since 1958. The company, which has more than \$10 million in annual sales, continues to operate only one store.

“A lot of people in our position would have gone the multi-store route,” said Matthew, the company’s president. “But we’ve never been interested in that. We’ve wanted to be hands-on and create a destination business.”



Watches, which used to be tucked away on the third floor of the store, are now front-and-center in the new location. The company has also expanded its collection by about 50 percent, and begun carrying watches by Cartier and IWC Schaffhausen. It remains the only authorized Rolex dealer in town.

“A lot of what we do had been hidden from our customers because of our old format,” Jim said of the former six-story building. “Some of our jewelry customers never saw our watches. Now they will.”

“For the guy who comes in and says, ‘Price is no object,’ we can challenge that,” Jim said, pointing to a \$131,000 ring with a five-carat vintage Colombian emerald. Above, he shows a custom creation he had made using an 5.5-carat emerald he bought at an estate sale. The gemstone had an inclusion — that’s technical speak for a flaw below the surface — but Jim found a way to disguise it.

“It was a really pretty stone and I didn’t want to cut it in half,” he said. “I thought I could create something interesting and funky, so now the inclusion is buried in the body of the snake.”

The custom piece, which was made in house, costs \$27,000.



Matthew, left, is the third generation of the Rosenheim family to be involved in the business. His father, Jim, right, took the helm from his parents in the 1980s.

“My dad said to me, ‘I want people to come to me because I have something special — not because I’m convenient,’ ” said Jim, 72. “That message continues to drive my bus.”



The store continues to sell a mix of established brands, such as David Yurman and Ippolita, and newer lines, including Marli, which specializes in gold and diamond jewelry. Jim said he is constantly looking for up-and-coming designers and expanding the store’s inventory.

“If there’s a line of jewelry that’s not here, it’s not here for a reason,” Jim said. “I want people who walk in to have a unique experience, both visually and in terms of what they can buy.”