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ROLEX REVIEW

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ISSUE



INDEPENDENT— AND LOVING IT

The owners of Oster Jewelers, Jeremy and Melissa Oster, worked for watch companies and other jewelers before opening their own store in Colorado. They chose Cherry Creek, an upscale community near Denver, as the location of their 1,000-square-foot store because it fits well with their philosophy of championing independent brands.



above—Clients discover new timepieces at an in-store event; one client often parks his sports car in front of Oster Jewelers' Cherry Creek, CO, store.

"The one thing we have no control over is time."

—Jeremy Oster

"We decided to base our store here in Denver, because of the lifestyle, and we wanted to target a market that didn't have a luxury watch and jewelry boutique," explains Jeremy Oster. "We didn't want to be in a major city. We liked Denver, and Cherry Creek in particular, because it really had a shopping district filled with independently owned boutiques. Today, the world is very generic and chain-driven, and we wanted to be surrounded with individuals."

Both Melissa and Jeremy developed a passion for watches early in their careers, and both feel fortunate to work in an environment where they deal with watches every day. "Watches are the most individual statement a man or woman can make about themselves," Oster says. "It is something we turn to perhaps a hundred times a day, and yes, it may be functional, but no one needs a watch. It just looks great and feels great. It's like having 300 years of history on your wrist. When I wear a fine watch, I might look at my watch and think about the people who made

the watch and the amazing journey the company has been through. The one thing we have no control over is time, so you have to value every passing second, and wearing a fine watch is one way to really value and appreciate time.

“The best part of my day is when I get to set up the watches in the morning,” he continues. “In the natural daylight, I get to appreciate the beauty of every piece. I am touching the legends of the industry and the finest, most amazing watches. It’s a true pleasure. I would not be doing this if I didn’t love it. You have to have a passion for it. I am very fortunate that I found my passion quite a while ago.”

Oster Jewelers has been successful because they take the time to establish relationships with their customers, explaining the brands they have and the history and meaning behind the watches. Rather than work with the bigger watch companies, the Osters prefer to work with smaller companies and to succeed together with those companies.

“Our biggest challenge is that, in our market, we are very young, and not enough people know us,” Oster details. “Most customers would be very happy to discover that these special products are available, so it’s our mission to tell them about it. We are building happy experiences one customer at a time. Where we really help people is in



WATCH LINES AT OSTER JEWELERS

Anonimo
Audemars Piguet
Bell & Ross
Breguet
British Masters
Cyclos
Jaquet Droz
Magellan
Momo Design
Mondia
Parmigiani
Robert Lighton
Scalfaro
Ulysse Nardin
Votime



Melissa Oster (top, far left) and Jeremy Oster (above, right) enjoy a special event with clients.

offering a wonderful selection so that they can choose what is best for their lifestyle. If someone is going to play golf and go SCUBA diving, a Breguet Perpetual Calendar is not the right watch, and we can help that customer make the right choice of watch.

"We are not for everyone, but our clients are very satisfied and very happy with their decisions because they have been made with knowledge," he continues. "Each customer has a relationship with us, and they are buying from us because they trust us."

The Osters have set out to make their store as friendly and inviting as possible. "What we've tried to create is a store that represents us—it's high-end in terms of taste, but without pretense," Oster explains. "We bring our dogs to work every day; the color scheme is contemporary, and it's very comfortable. We try to be a non-intimidating store. We have products in any price range you want to shop in, from \$100 to \$100,000, and we have gone out of our way to find the best in every category."

With so many new watch companies appearing and brands coming and going, it can be difficult for an independent watch retailer like Oster to decide which brands to carry. "We try to purchase based on the integrity and the passion of the manufacturer," Oster says. "It's important to be current, to be ahead of the trend,

which is why we go to Basel—we try to stay up on the pulse of the watch industry. We do have clients who want the next greatest thing and want to be ahead of the trend, and that's where we specialize. The reputation we have developed has made it much easier for us. The brands are coming to us."

With the store being in demand, it is no wonder that Oster is enthusiastic about the future. "I think the future of the watch industry looks amazing," Oster says. "When I was first selling luxury watches, nobody knew who Audemars Piguet or Breguet was, people only knew Rolex and Cartier. America now has become incredibly knowledgeable. On the other hand, the American market remains the most untapped market in the world—the potential is huge here."

With all the talk about the Internet and its effect on brick-and-mortar retailers like Oster, Jeremy and Melissa aren't worried at all. "I don't see the Internet as a threat, although you can't ignore it either," Jeremy explains. "At the high end of luxury watches, the products are becoming more and more scarce, and with more people entering the luxury market, demand is incredible. When I get only one of a limited series of eight watches, I'm not going to worry about the Internet because there aren't any others available. I know many brands that are readily available on the Internet, but those are not the brands I am interested in."

"Also, the Internet is not able to exhibit true passion and get you inside your watch," he continues. "If you buy a watch from us, you will understand what you are buying. You will know the passion, you'll understand what is special about the dial, the finishing on the case, you will appreciate it more."

Jeremy and Melissa Oster are fiercely committed to special watch brands and zealous in their desire to educate and inform people about the joys of owning a fine watch. "Buying a mechanical watch is buying romance and passion more than anything," Jeremy concludes. "Learning a little about what each brand represents can help a person find a company they can truly connect

with, a story they enjoy and believe in, which is a big part of the enjoyment of buying a fine watch.

"The only way to truly enjoy a watch is to wear it and see it in different lights," Jeremy continues. "A fine watch should be interesting every time you wear it and have some mystery. Try not to dismiss a watch simply because you've never heard of it. A really fine watch is like great art or great wine, it might not be immediately obvious." ❖

*Reported by Keith W. Strandberg.
Oster Jewelers is located at 251 Steele Street, Denver, CO, 80206; telephone 303.572.111 or visit online <www.osterjewelers.com>.*



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