



INSPIRATION FOUND

Announcing the winners of the 2018 MJSA Vision Awards

Every creative type knows how elusive inspiration can be. Sometimes it arrives out of the blue, striking like lightning. Other times it takes its time, only emerging when it sees fit. But when inspiration does arrive, it's best to stand back and let it work its magic. And that's exactly what the winners of the 2018 MJSA Vision Awards did.

Whether it was a bug, a plant, or a one-of-a-kind gemstone, the inspiration behind this year's winning designs helped these jewelers to create spectacular and memorable pieces. No matter the source of their inspiration, these jewelers followed it down a creative

path that ultimately led to victory.

Since 1992, the MJSA Vision Awards have celebrated outstanding achievement in jewelry design. And as you'll discover on the following pages, this year's winners continue to uphold this annual tradition. (The competition also features a Custom Design Distinction category. To read about this year's winning design, please go to *MJSA Custom Jeweler* on page 48.)

Before we share the inspiring stories behind this year's winning designs, we'd like to take a moment to thank the MJSA Vision Award sponsors, without whose support these awards would not be possible. Our sponsors

are featured on pages 28-29, where you can learn more about their products and services.

We'd also like to thank the judges of this year's competition: San Francisco-based designer/educator/author **Alan Revere**; **Klaus Kutter** of A Jour Jewelry in Bristol, Rhode Island; **Michelle Graff** of *National Jeweler* in New York City; **Jim Grahl** of J. Grahl Design in Balboa Island, California; and **Michael Coan** of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

And now, it's time to be inspired by the winners of this year's Vision Awards...

A Special Piece

Andrew Bugher

Andrew Bugher Design, St. Paul, Minnesota
First Place, CAD/CAM Distinction

BY SHAWNA KULPA

Sometimes, the best part of a piece of jewelry isn't how it looks, but the story and meaning behind its creation.

For many years, Andrew Bugher ran his business out of a space he shared with two partners. When one of those partners, designer Janel Russell, hosted a gemstone roundtable in 2016, her mother attended and selected a 9.53-carat oval peridot. Janel purchased the stone for her, and they commissioned Bugher to create a ring with it.

"But it couldn't be just an ordinary ring," Bugher explains. "She wanted it to be a statement piece, something that made an impact. The timeline was unimportant; it just had to be stunning."

The client loved antique open filigree

designs, and had a special fondness for Bugher's use of scroll work. But she also wanted the ring to have a modern feel, so Bugher worked to design a ring that blended those two styles. After some initial sketches, he began designing the ring in Gemvision's Matrix CAD program.

The ring was to feature four scroll-filled panels. He created the first panel, drawing a few initial scrolls and then using the software to scale, mirror, and duplicate them. After bending, rotating, and resizing each scroll to make sure it conformed to the shape of the ring's profile, he used the program's mirror function to duplicate the panel, creating the other three quadrants.

"CAD was absolutely critical to the execution of this piece because of the amount

of intricate detail as well as the symmetric nature of the design," he explains.

Satisfied with the design, Bugher milled a wax model of the ring and presented it to Janel and her mother. The client was initially a little nervous when she saw the large wax version of the ring, concerned that it might be too big to wear. She decided to take some time to think about the design, so the ring was put on the back burner—where, unfortunately, it stayed longer than expected.

Shortly after the ring model was presented to her mother, Janel was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given only a short time to live. After her passing a few months later, her brother was settling her affairs when he remembered the project. He encouraged Bugher to complete it.

Bugher reviewed the original design with the client, who requested that he make the ring two-tone with yellow and white gold. Given the mixed-metal look, combined with the ring's heavy shoulders that would have to be hollowed out of a milled wax model to lighten up the piece, he knew he wanted to print the model on a 3-D printer, which he did not yet own.

"I had been contemplating buying a 3-D printer for some time, so the complexity of this piece gave me all the excuse I needed to pull the trigger," he explains. "I knew this was going to be a very special piece for this client, so it had to be done correctly."

He was familiar with printer technology, having owned an early 3-D printer that he describes as "pretty basic." After some research into the current crop of machines, he finally settled on the Asiga Pico2 HD model and began experimenting with it.

During his initial trial runs, Bugher



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discovered that the scrolls in the panels were too small, and he had to enlarge them throughout the design. “My initial attempts at printing the panels came out incomplete because the scrolls were too fine,” he explains. “I knew they had to be larger so they would print completely and then fill completely during casting.”

To make assembly of the ring easy, he separated it into six parts: the white gold center section that held the peridot and diamonds, the yellow gold shank with an under-bridge area attached, and the four yellow gold scrollwork panels.

“The shank and the inner bridge printed successfully the first time around,” he notes. “I had to print the other parts and the panels several times to get them to come out successfully. There was a lot of trial and error involved.”

Once Bugher worked out all of the issues, he printed the final set of parts and cast them in 14k yellow and white gold. After cleaning the parts, he used a laser welder to tack weld them, making sure all of the pieces fit together perfectly.

“Using the laser welder allowed me to physically hold the pieces in place with

my fingers and make any micro adjustments to the fit while I was making my welds,” he says. He then went in and soldered all of the joints and seams “to give it a cleaner look.” After tumbling and repolishing the piece, Bugher set the diamonds and then the peridot.

Janel’s mother had wanted a show-stopping ring, and that’s exactly what she received. But it also had a much deeper meaning attached to it—for both client and designer.

“It’s one of the final pieces that [Janel and I] worked on together,” he says.