

# RAPAPORT®



## HOLIDAY OF HOPE

EVEN AMID UNCERTAINTY, JEWELERS ARE FINDING REASONS TO SMILE THIS SEASON

### REPORT

MEMO DEALS SOMETIMES GO TERRIBLY WRONG, BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO REDUCE THE RISKS

### RETAIL

HOW TO HOLD VIRTUAL TRUNK SHOWS SO YOUR GOODS CAN SHINE FROM AFAR

### STYLE

DISCOVER THE ON-TREND DESIGNS THAT STORES ARE STOCKING THIS YEAR

### BOOKS

PRECIOUS GEMS, ROLEX WATCHES, AND EXCITING JEWELRY STORIES

# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Jeweler Rhett Outten talks about the benefits of selling estate pieces and modern ones in the same store.

BY PHYLLIS SCHILLER

*Is there an advantage to having a growing estate jewelry section as well as contemporary jewelry?*

Pairing a robust estate collection with contemporary jewelry gives the customer a full range of choices. Contemporary jewelry lends contrast and gives the store modern energy. Vintage jewelry celebrates workmanship, timeless design and interesting curiosities. The presence of both makes for a vibrant, relevant jewelry store with an exciting and sometimes unexpected inventory. Located in Charleston, South Carolina, a city rich in its history, we have local customers who appreciate the attributes of both.

*Is it best to display and promote both areas the same way?*

We have had great success in separating the antique and estate jewelry from the contemporary. We use suede displays for our contemporary jewelry and different-color velvet displays for estate, as well as different signage and marketing materials behind each counter. Modern pieces show off that shiny, new feel, with no scratches, dings or dents. We celebrate the imperfections of well-worn antique jewelry as a positive selling point, including a card with each estate piece sold, stating: "This is a special piece of jewelry from our estate collection. We hope you will enjoy the character and imperfections that are associated with a vintage item."

In our marketing approach, however, we show antique and estate jewelry side by side with modern designs, whether photos are for newspapers, billboards or Instagram. It is an eclectic look we have become known for. Social media gives us a daily chance to share all of our jewelry in many different ways. Most of our customers buy both antique and new, but we also have purists who only collect antique jewelry. That is where hashtags come in quite nicely. We like to use #antiquejewelry, #antiquerings, and #estatefinds.

*Do price differences and one-of-a-kind availability of estate/antique jewelry help or hinder overall sales?*

One of the best things about selling estate jewelry is the ability to offer that one-of-a-kind item to your customers. It creates a sense of urgency

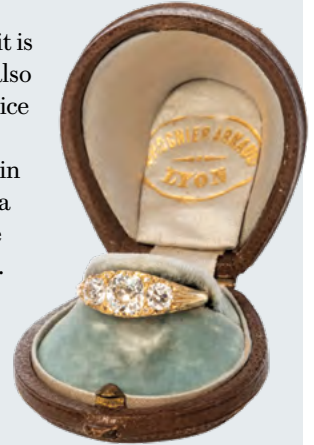


## WHO IS RHETT OUTTEN?

Rhett Ramsay Outten and her sister, Mariana Ramsay Hay, are third-generation owners of Croghan's Jewel Box in Charleston, South Carolina. The 115-year-old business is a treasure trove of antique jewelry, modern finds, and gifts galore. Outten is involved in all aspects, but plays a primary role in marketing and public relations, spearheading social media outreach and website development. [croghansjewelbox.com](http://croghansjewelbox.com)

for the buyer, because once it is sold, it is forever gone. It is also un-shoppable in terms of price point and value. If you buy well, the margins are better in the estate business; there is a perceived value that you are getting more for your dollar.

The more your staff learns about each piece of estate jewelry, the better they are at romancing that piece to the customer. Each salesperson should have an understanding of why antique diamonds are warm and be able to explain the attributes of a hand-cut stone. The more knowledge the sales team has, the more successful they will be.



Victorian three-stone diamond ring.

*Is it easy to cross-sell to customers who come in looking specifically for either modern or vintage jewelry?*

Absolutely. Many customers who think they want a new item often find themselves purchasing an estate piece that fits their budget and taste a bit better. And vice versa: The bride who comes in wanting a vintage ring is sometimes won over by the perfections of a modern brilliant-cut diamond that an old mine cut does not offer. It is optimal to have both choices under one roof. Our customers often move seamlessly from one to the other when considering a purchase. ■



Assortment of one-of-a-kind jewels from Croghan's Estate & Antique collections.