



CHARLESTON CHARM

South Carolina family retailer Croghan's Jewel Box is continuing its 118-year legacy with a new, larger location to showcase its estate offerings and designer lines. **By Sarah Jordan**

Hand-engraver and jeweler William Joseph Croghan occupied just the slimline side porch of an 18th-century house on King Street when he first debuted in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1907. In the years that followed, he expanded to encompass the entire building, setting the stage for a family-owned business that would remain in situ for more than 115 years. His descendants — including granddaughters Mariana Ramsay Hay and Rhett Ramsay Outten, and great-grandchildren Mini Hay Avant, Kathleen

Hay Hagood and Mikell Hay — are now responsible for driving Croghan's Jewel Box further into the 21st century.

"We each bring something unique to the table," says co-owner Ramsay Outten. "Family is at the heart of everything we do, and customers see and feel that connection. We've watched generations of families shop with us, and I think they value that continuity just as much as we do."

It was under their combined leadership that the company decided to relocate to a two-story, 6,000-square-foot premises



at 155 King Street, just a few blocks south of its original home. "We'd simply outgrown our space," Ramsay Outten explains. "We wanted to offer a more comfortable, expansive experience for clients while staying rooted on King Street. The new location gives us room to properly showcase our full range and provide more workspace. It was about honoring our past while building for the future."

'History and heart'

Surrounded by landmark neighbors like the Preservation Society of Charleston and the Charleston Library Society, Croghan's Jewel Box is purposefully leaning into its heritage status and reputation for classic southern hospitality.

"What sets us apart is our blend of history and heart," says Ramsay Outten, adding that the company's mix of antique pieces, estate finds, designer lines and in-house collections plays into an "old-world charm" that appeals to locals and tourists in equal measure. "Our clients value craftsmanship, character, and pieces that hold meaning. They're loyal, curious and often looking for something a little different, whether it's an old mine-cut diamond or a modern heirloom."

Decisions like expanding the store's vintage collections and adding a design studio and workshop on the second floor have stemmed from the shifting status of Charleston itself. The city is undergoing something of a popularity boom, according

to Ramsay Outten, who says global visitors are drawn to its authenticity and flourishing destination status. "Charleston has a deep appreciation for heritage and storytelling, which makes antique and estate jewelry especially popular here."

It's what's inside

The new home of Croghan's Jewel Box taps into that local appeal by blending history and modernity, including a soft blue color palette, custom jewelry cases designed in Spain, and a strategic layout to improve customer flow. Bespoke lighting fixtures, exterior awning poles and interior stair railings come from Charleston-based businesses. The store has dedicated areas for custom design projects and jewelry repairs, as well as an enhanced workspace for the company's five bench jewelers and four certified gemologists, all of whom work on-site. ●

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Rhett Ramsay Outten. Above: A 14-karat-gold bangle from Croghan's with the Charleston skyline in diamonds. Left: A blue-topaz and pink-tourmaline ring from the retailer's Mini Collection.

IMAGES: CROGHAN'S JEWEL BOX





On its shelves, Croghan's has created more space for antique, estate and contemporary collections, notably those that fourth-generation family member Hay Avant has designed. Her Goldbug collection of yellow-gold, diamond and gem-set jewels is especially popular, tapping into a modern-vintage aesthetic for its charms, pendants, rings, earrings and chain-link bracelets, among other styles. The designer's self-titled Mini collection and the Croghan's Exclusives line also lean into yellow gold, including pieces that stack together easily.

"We are seeing a real appreciation for color right now," reports Ramsay Outten. "People are loving emeralds, sapphires and even opals. Chunkier gold silhouettes are trending, and layered looks remain popular. Our Goldbug collection has been resonating across age groups, and clients continue to gravitate toward antique pieces that feel rich in history. People are moving toward jewelry with a sense of individuality and depth."

In addition to these in-house ranges, Croghan's now has more shelf-space for a curated roster of designer brands, including longtime partners Temple St. Clair, Elizabeth Locke, Marla Aaron, and Single Stone.

Setting itself apart

Ramsay Outten describes her approach to design, sourcing, and especially diamonds as the opposite of "cookie-cutter," focusing on antique cuts and one-of-a-kind settings that tell a story. "Diamonds are certainly a core part of what we do. Our clients come to us because they want something personal and distinctive, and we guide them toward pieces that feel both timeless and uniquely theirs."

With its inviting location and southern charm, Croghan's is stepping into a new business era. The fact that Charleston's tourism industry hit \$14.03 billion in 2024 — a 7% jump from the previous year, according to the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism — is simply the icing on the cake. ☪

From top: Petite Club bracelet by Croghan's Jewel Box in 14-karat gold and diamonds; the exterior of the new store; a fistful of rings from the retailer.

