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READY, SET, SHOP!

Designers and Retailers Reveal
Strategies for JCK Show Success

PLATINUM BOND

Five Talking Points That Drive Sales
of the Precious White Metal



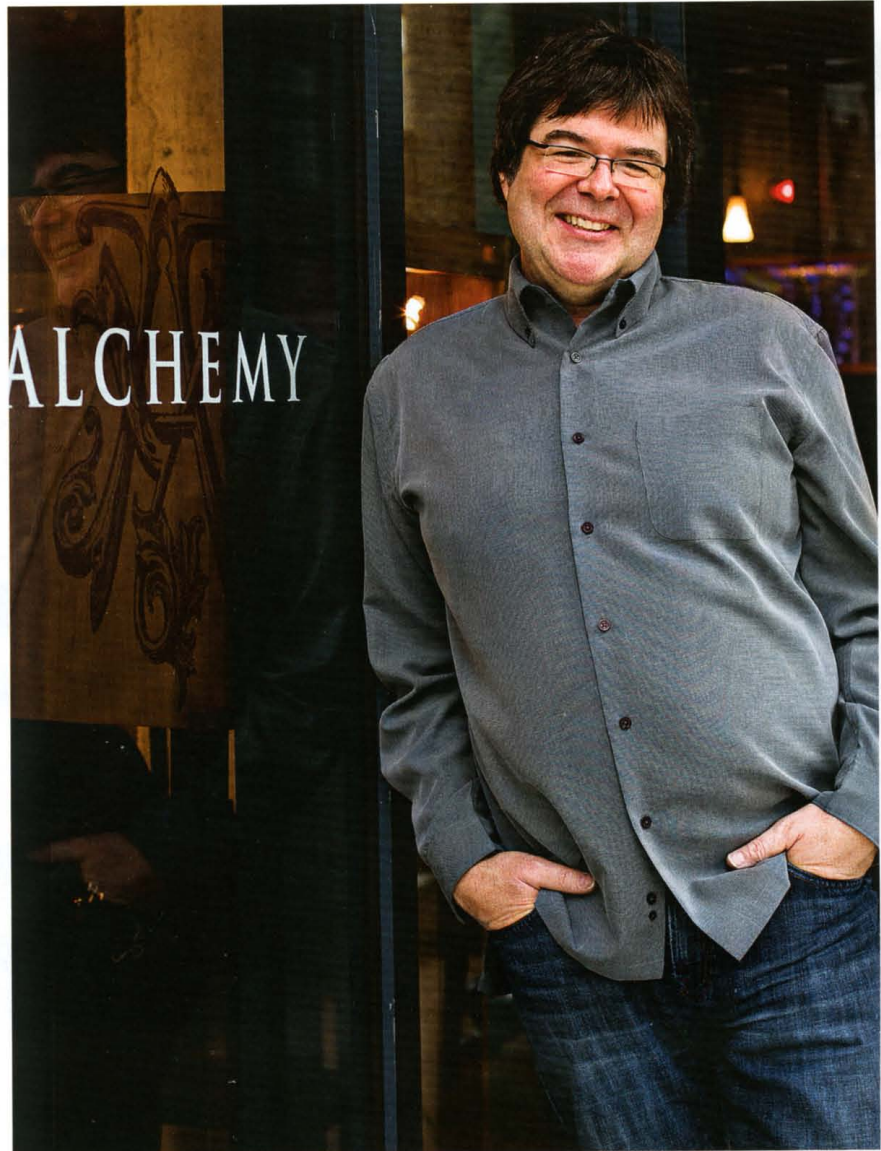
Alchemy

**1022 N.W. Lovejoy St.
Portland, Ore.**

Master jeweler David Iler couldn't have picked a better location than Portland's Pearl District for his own shop. Like Iler, the district has industrial roots. In the 1990s, its former manufacturing facilities began to be transformed into urban-chic lofts, boutiques, galleries, and restaurants. Since 2005, the neighborhood has also played home to Iler's Alchemy. After spending almost 20 years in steel fabrication—and another seven running a trade shop for Portland institution Zell Bros. Jewelers—Iler opened this stylish warehouse space to showcase his own exquisite, handcrafted works alongside those of other inventive artisans. And behind the walls of his airy showroom, Iler also maintains a full-service workshop. He designs, crafts, and maintains jewelry the old-fashioned way, albeit with a little help from some modern equipment. —*Kristin Bartus*

METAL HEAD

Prior to getting into the jewelry business, Iler spent about five years building Portland's KGON radio tower, which at the time was the world's largest freestanding tower. "That's kind of a really big piece of jewelry," he jokes. He's just a big fan of metal. "You know metals, metals are terrific. They respond and I approach them on the atomic level, so I can make metals do what I want them to," he explains. "It's a relationship though, too. There are points where metals will not cooperate, and you have to respect some of those boundaries. But they'll allow you to push the boundaries as well." Iler even played guitar in a heavy-metal hair band. It was called Alloy. "I'm all metal all the time!"





ARTISAN IN RESIDENCE

While metals require a scientific approach, Iler has always considered himself an artist, and Alchemy gives him an outlet. “I think artists are always looking for a stage to present their wares, their style,” he says. Iler’s jewelry is inspired by sources as varied as Polynesian tattoos, Egyptian artifacts, and the whimsical bubbler that graces the walls of Alchemy. To produce his pieces—which range in price from \$250 to \$25,000—he utilizes everything from a hand graver to a laser welder, along with exotic alloys (purple gold!).

SETTING THE BAR

Though Iler put a lot of thought into the whole store’s look—rich wood accents, steel walls—perhaps the most went into the cases. “If you step up to a case, you want to lean on it. It’s right at the perfect bar height. That’s

literally what I did: I went around town and measured bars. I was trying to observe which ones people liked the most,” he explains. “I like the way it brings the jewelry up to people. A ring is very close to where it’s going to be on your hand, so it’s a really good visual.”

THE STYLE NETWORK

Alchemy features a small group of high-quality designers such as Victor Velyan, Zaffiro, and Temple St. Clair. Locals are particularly drawn to the striking, organic look of Sarah Graham’s oxidized chromium cobalt jewels. “They’re all very complementary in style and form and materials, but different as well,” Iler says of the artists. “Each piece speaks to the people.” ■



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