

# Sooke News Mirror

## The little guy that works in the back

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Brett Borrie, right, is a self-taught engraver who fashions silver jewelry and has three pieces in the Sooke Fine Arts Show. Pictured are samples of his cuff bracelets. / PIRJO RAITIS

Tucked away at the back of B&K Jewelry & Gifts, Brett Borrie meticulously carves scroll designs into a bracelet. His work bench is cluttered with the tools of his trade — silversmithing. His steady hand guides the impact hammer onto the piece of silver creating swirls, leaves, hummingbirds and all manner of intricate scrolls.

Borrie is a self taught hand engraver. He came by his profession from fashioning hand made and handcrafted bits, spurs and belt buckles for the horse trade. At first he just sculpted the pieces out of metal leaving the engraving to someone else, then when he needed a job he started

engraving. That was 15 years ago and he has been making his living at silversmithing ever since.

“People have always called me an artist,” said Borrie, “but to me, I’m just someone who makes things. I probably failed in art,” he joked. He didn’t really fail art class but it was not where he saw himself, even though other people now consider him an artist.

He designs his pieces from start to finish and includes scrolls, filigree, lettering, Celtic designs and whatever else he feels would fit with the piece. He often sets gemstones into the piece. Custom made wedding bands are also a favourite as people can help design their own rings.

“I like the gold jewelry I do,” he said. “Cuff bracelets are the biggest thing I do in jewelry.”

Borrie said he’s been doing it so long that it’s become pretty easy depending on how intricate a piece is. He will do the scroll work free hand, but lettering is a little more time consuming.

He uses an impact hammer to carve because he can carve a deep scroll in one cut as compared to doing it by hand where he would have to go over and over the cut.

Borrie prefers working with gold but silver is more affordable for people. On the wall above his work bench are photos of some of the more intricate and complex pieces he has done.

Borrie had three pieces accepted for the 2014 Sooke Fine Art Show and has entered every year for the past seven, and he’s won some awards in the process. This year he put in two gold rings with diamonds and rubies and a scroll pendant with sterling, gold and blue sapphires.

He’s never entered any other juried shows and keeps his work mostly in Sooke.

Behind the glass case are bracelets, earrings, belt buckles, and even a knife. The pieces are one-of-a-kind and range in price from \$50 to \$800 for a silver belt buckle and belt hardware.

When he started making jewelry, his wife Kathy had the marketing background and they have thrived at their shop in the Village Markets shopping centre (Sooke Centre Mall). B&K Jewelry & Gifts is where they have worked for the past two years.

They don't just carry Borrie's work, but sell and support about 100 local artists and craftspeople. Nine of them have their work in the 2014 Sooke Fine Arts Show. The other artists make the store what it is, he said.

"We gets lots of support from the community," said Borrie. "We love it. I'm just the little guy that works in the back."