

FAMILY TIES

A FOCUS ON BUSINESSES THAT SPAN THE GENERATIONS



Darren Barthau (left) with parents Janet and David (and Isabella). Three generations of the Barthau family have been selling, repairing and making jewellery since 1968.
Bruce Stapley photo

Forty Seven Years of Marking Milestones

By Kinjal Dagli Shah
Stouffville Free Press

Barthau Jewellers is the kind of business people love bringing into their personal lives. After all, diamonds and gemstones are often the only tangible memories one can retain of people, occasions and milestones.

Just like the diamonds it sells, the business too has lasted through generations and retained its sparkle. "My father opened the first jewellery and watch repair shop in 1968 on the anniversary of his coming out of the hospital," said

David. "I opened mine ten years later in 1978. My son Darren is now involved in the business and handles the purchasing and business side of things."

Lloyd Barthau, who died a few years ago, was a man of courage and conviction. "My dad had tuberculosis as a child and was in the Sick Kids Hospital for close to nine years. He came out of the hospital when he was 17 years old and the doctors had told him he wouldn't be able to walk without crutches or live past 45 years," said David.

Lloyd proved them wrong on both counts. Armed with some knowledge of watch making, he found employment at a jewellery shop and went to work on the first day without crutches. "He was very knowledgeable and a people person. His employer encouraged my father to think about opening his own store one day," recalled David.

While involved in repair work, Lloyd learnt jewellery making and did trade work. All the while David was acquiring a natural affinity towards the business. "He made sure I did a little bit of work here and there. I was about 16 or 17, and if I wanted to use the car, I had

to pick up deliveries from suppliers," said David, who made his first silver ring in Grade 8.

David proved he was his father's son when he won a contest in school where the kids were given a clock motor and asked to design a clock. "They chose the three best designs, and mine happened to be one of them," said David. "I later went to George Brown College for two years of watch making and qualified for a year-long scholarship program in Switzerland. It was an intense program visiting watch factories and learning repair work."

By then, it was an expected transition for David to join his father in the business and open his own store in Stouffville. His wife Janet helped him along the way by taking care of the bookwork. Darren showed an early interest in the trade when he dressed up as a jeweller for Career Day in Grade 1. "It's something I always wanted to do. I had seen my grandfather and my father working. But I wanted to take the business in a slightly different direction and my dad lets me do it. I'm not a bench person who can sit at the jewellery bench doing repairs. I am more

interested in the purchasing and business side," said Darren, who also attended George Brown College and later went to California to study gemology.

"I love diamonds and the business," said Darren. "I am very proud to be part of a family legacy where my grandfather and then my parents were involved." Most people are surprised at how well we get along but we make the perfect combination. Dad gives me suggestions in my area and I give him suggestions in his. We all do our bit," said Darren.

The Barthau family hopes their Main St. West business will continue to be a household name as it has been for three generations. As David points out, "We always put our customers first. We're there to help them mark a happy occasion and honour a special event. It's our job to point them in the right direction and help them make the right choice. After all, jewellery, especially pieces that become family heirlooms or a wedding ring, are also generational, just like our business."

Write to Kinjal at kinjal.dagli@gmail.com

OCTOBER IS

Breast Cancer awareness month

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Pink Ribbon Boutique

CERTIFIED MASTECTOMY FITTINGS

Mastectomy Bras · Mastectomy Bathing Suits
Partial Mastectomy Prosthesis

Amor ad
Trulife & Yutu

Pink Ribbon Boutique

Please call Marie for an appointment

905-201-7371

377 Main St. N., Suite B, Markham
pinkribbonboutique.ca · marierandorf@gmail.com

The advertisers on this page encourage everyone to be an advocate.

For initiatives that encourage awareness and prevention of breast cancer.

Please support campaigns which provide funding for research.

MOLLY MAID

20 Freel Lane, Unit 8
Stouffville • 905-642-2575

YES!
WE CARRY
MASTECTOMY BRAS.

And during October, we're offering 20% off.

Girls

6316 MAIN ST. STOUFFVILLE 905-642-3339