

Bijou has glittering debut in Katonah

By EVE MARX

All that glitters is sometimes gold, that is when it's not diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, pearls, rubies or white gold, pink gold, silver or platinum, for that matter. Dazzling gems, the glitzier the better, are the focus of Casey Carter's stylish new jewelry salon, Bijou, recently opened in the heart of downtown Katonah.

Bijou, which opened late this summer, is Mr. Carter's baby. Many people in and around town know Mr. Carter, whom everyone calls by his first name. Mr. Carter is a highly visible personage in the Bedford area. A graduate of Fox Lane High School and a lifelong area resident, Mr. Carter, after high school, decided to pursue a career as a professional gemologist. He is a graduate of the Gemological Institute of America in Carlsbad, Calif., (the school also has a program in New York City), with degrees in design and wax. But even as a child Mr. Carter loved shiny things.

"I started off with a mineral and rock collection when I was just a kid," Mr. Carter said, standing in his sparkling new space at 135 Katonah Ave., in the retail location formerly occupied by Free & Co.

"In high school, my father took me with him to pick out my mom's gifts," he said. "My mother's style was very glitzy and full of sparkle. She loved sequin ball earrings, shiny gold, anything sparkly." All of which left their influence on informing Mr. Carter's taste.

For over a decade, Mr. Carter



R.J. MARX PHOTO

Bijou, situated on Katonah Avenue in the heart of the hamlet.

worked at two jewelry stores in Katonah. He was Ila Manner's assistant and right-hand man at Ila Manner Jewelers on Valley Road, and when Ms. Manner later moved out of that location and Robin McCormick Jewelry moved in, Mr. Casey joined Ms. McCormick and stayed on as a designer and salesman. Over the years, he developed a coterie of devoted followers who came to love and trust him, as well as a burgeoning career as a designer himself, specializing in repurposing a woman's no-longer-loved and unwanted jewelry. With a keen artistic

eye as to how a stone or stones might look in a newly imagined setting, he took awkward or ugly engagement rings, wedding rings, and inherited jewelry, and transformed them into magical personal pieces specially designed for the wearer.

Last spring, Mr. Carter decided it was time to step out on his own.

"I wanted a younger, more modern style of store," he said. "Uptown meets country everyday glamour." To that end he began scouring the jewelry shows and reading every jewelry blog in search of hand-

made pieces to source from jewelry artists all over the U.S. Bijou now features a carefully edited selection of everything from high-end costume jewelry to jaw-dropping engagement rings. His featured lines include works from designers Chan Luu, Alexis Bittar, Mauri Pioppo, Roni Blanshay, Gabrielle & Co., Bounkit, Kelly Wearstler, and Rebecca Overman.

The store (although the word "salon" seems more appropriate) is an especially visually attractive space, with

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

a very clean, neutral background that displays the jewels themselves as art. The walls are clean white, as are the white showcases. A pair of French doors closes off the back room, which can be quickly turned into a private engagement ring/bridal retreat so that gentlemen (with or without their ladies) can discreetly study rings.

"My engagement business has gone through the roof," Mr. Carter said. "I believe that is because of my reputation and because I am bringing the New York City 47th Street diamond-buying experience to Katonah. Not to mention, most men don't want to be on display when they're choosing a ring."

In addition to women's jewelry, Mr. Carter is ramping up his business by offering more jewelry for men. A bit of a peacock himself, he has a natural affinity for male adornment.

"The big trend for men this fall is a simple wrap bracelet stacked with a good-looking watch," he said. "Also be on the lookout for the rise of the cufflink." He said the thin watch is back, both for men and women, as well heritage pieces such as signet rings. Also necklaces with meaning, such as a religious or spiritual symbol, something showing faith." "Men are wearing jewelry," Mr. Carter said definitively. "It's the influence of period shows like 'Mad Men' that have generated new interest."

Bijou has an active presence on social media. "Look for us on Facebook," Mr. Carter said, where he makes daily updates. The store also has a few trunk



EVE MARX PHOTO

Casey Carter, proprietor of Bijou.

shows planned for this fall, as well as holiday shopping events.

"We'll be open Thursday evenings starting in December," Mr. Carter said.

In addition to selling jewelry, Bijou also does repair work, ear piercing and appraisals. Bijou is located at 135 Katonah Ave. in Katonah. The phone

number is 401-9264. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

It's also a nice place to browse and hang out.