

# SOUTHERN JEWELRY NEWS

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## Retailer Roundtable

**Q: How do you deal with a potential customer asking you to match a price from the internet?**

"If a young person comes into my store with an internet price list, chances are they distrust whatever source(s) they've found on the internet. We operate under that assumption and that this individual is simply looking for some professional advice from a trustworthy source. During such a sales presentation, we take the opportunity to inject a little fear of the internet. Jewelers like me work with reputable diamantaires to source fine diamonds.

Like an old wreck sold in a car auction, lower quality, what I call 'orphan' diamonds, go to internet-based companies, and are sold to unsuspecting and inexperienced buyers. The grading report just tells a diamond's measurements, and it doesn't tell you whether or not the diamond is pretty. I can show him two diamonds that have the same grades like color and clarity, yet they look completely different. When the customer sees the difference, it's a slam-dunk. Also, we're an authorized Forevermark Diamond retailer. These are not sold on the internet and is a product unique to authorized jewelers. Finally, we warn the customer who is shopping for the cheapest diamond that's what they will end up giving their loved one - a cheap diamond. They just think they want the lowest-priced diamond until they learn otherwise. Selling is nothing more than conveying that the benefits outweigh the cost of the product. You don't get that online." *See Roundtable page 30*



**Tim Lewis, CEO  
Lewis Jewelers  
Moore, OK**

## With roots in Cuba and New York, Sal Praschnik Jewelers celebrates 50 years in Miami

By Liz Pinson

Sal Praschnik Jewelers of Miami is celebrating its golden anniversary in style, with Sal holding steady at the helm and loving every minute of it at the age of 87.

Just days out of knee replacement surgery in April, Sal is literally a walking tribute to the grit and elegance of times gone by, granting an interview from his hospital bed. "Pardon me for a moment," he says softly. "The nurse is giving me an IV."

Sal was all for the surgery as he has no plans to retreat from working five days a week at the business he loves - even though he prefers the higher style of days past when men and women dressed and adorned themselves to the nines. The jewelry industry, perhaps more than most, has felt the pinch of changing times as younger generations have adopted more casual lifestyles. Still,



(l-r) David Praschnik, Sal Praschnik, Ilene Wallace (Mayor of Bay Harbor) and Virginia Praschnik at the 2011 grand opening of Sal Praschnik Jewelers in Bay Harbor Islands, Florida.

the store that's known for its original nature-themed and classically bold designs remains one of the industry's leading jewelry companies.

Sal was born and raised in Cuba in the 1930s and '40s, drawn in to the jewelry world at age 16 when an uncle invited him

to apprentice in a diamond factory run by war refugees who had worked in the diamond business in Israel and Antwerp, Belgium. Those refugees, Sal says, opened 30 factories in Cuba, employing about 3,000 people. Sal's uncle was a partner in one of those factories. *See Praschnik page 39*

## LaserStar forges ahead with ever-growing technology for retail jewelers

By Liz Pinson

LaserStar Technologies, a worldwide manufacturer of laser equipment for a variety of clients including retail and manufacturing jewelers, has enjoyed a productive year of technological progress.

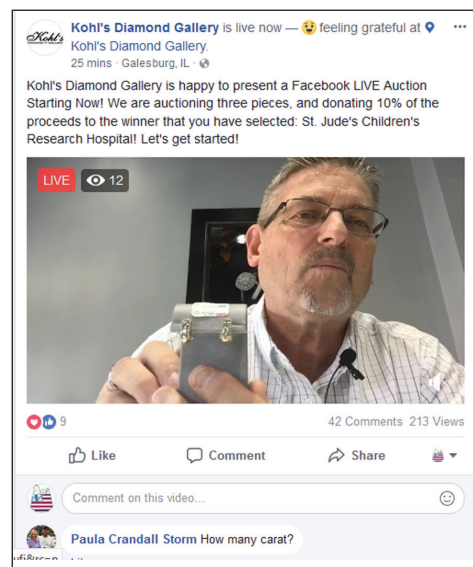
With facilities in Riverside, R.I., Orlando, Fla., and Arcadia Calif., LaserStar has the nation covered. The company has upgraded its state-of-the-art application labs in all three locations, offering comprehensive laser solutions for material processing for laser marking and engraving, laser welding, laser cutting and more. *See LaserStar page 24*



Laser engraved titanium rings.

## Facebook Live Auctions help IL jeweler reduce inventory, give back to the community

By Paul Holewa



In addition to helping move old inventory Jeff's Facebook Live Auctions provide the opportunity to connect and interact with customers.

Jeff Kohl is like a lot of jewelry store owners. He wears many hats in managing his business. As of last fall, being a live auctioneer on Facebook is yet another role he performs. The co-owner of Kohl's Diamond Gallery in Galesburg, IL, Jeff's live auctions have helped liquidate non-performing inventory and increase followers on his store's Facebook page, while adding a cause-marketing component to benefit non-profits and charities.

Streaming video on Facebook is Jeff's preferred medium for his store's periodic live auctions. A textbook "digital immigrant," Jeff's a laid back, average guy, and "this Facebook thing" approach to his social media live auctions has become a staple of his five (at press time) and counting social media live auctions.

Another management quality of Jeff

*Please see Live page 34*

Visit Southern Jewelry News at JCK Las Vegas Booth L3

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# LASERSTAR

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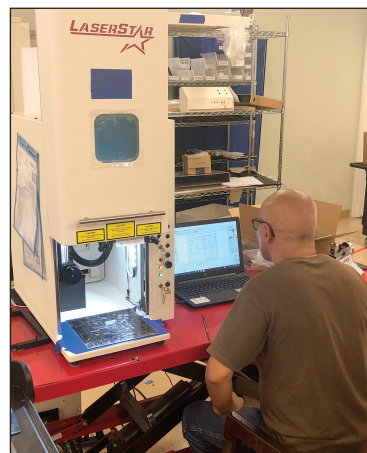
LaserStar recently introduced its 3901 Series FiberStar Compact Laser Cutting System, allowing for a compact footprint, low operating costs and rapid return on investment. Company specialists provide turnkey solutions by evaluating a client's needs, specifying the correct technology, and defining a complete laser system configuration.

"The FiberStar's fully integrated laser source provides excellent beam quality while producing many years of reliable performance," the company says. "FiberStar's 3901 Compact Cutting Systems produce high-quality, dimensionally accurate laser cuts on a wide variety of materials," including gold, silver, platinum and titanium for jewelers.

FiberStar 3901 CNC Cutting Systems, available in 150-

and 300-watt models, come with 3-Axis (X/Y and optional Rotary) CNC system controller, an integrated computer with a Windows operating system, and ready-to-use LaserStar MotionFX software.

LaserStar also has unveiled its FiberCube@XL Laser Engraving System, "a full size, turnkey marking, engraving and cutting



FiberCube in testing.

system that offers the speed, reliability and flexibility required to meet large batch production applications, stringent quality control and process certification standards." Suitable for almost any material, it includes an extra large workspace for engraving larger parts.

The full line of FiberCube Engraving Systems, used for many purposes including jewelry laser engraving and cutting, provide "controllable pulse rates that can be adjusted from continuous wave to single pulse for laser marking, deep laser engraving and cutting, or fast throughput thermal mark applications at up to 200 characters per second."

### The Path to LaserStar's Success

LaserStar's President and Chief Operating Officer James Gervais and his father, Donald, bought the company in 1988, when it was a small tool and die



Groundbreaking at the Orlando facility expansion. The state-of-the-art facility will be completed later this year.

business in Rhode Island. By 2000, the company was primarily producing laser welding systems and now employs close to 100 people. "Fundamentally, this company is a classic American success story where we are designing and engineering products that are made in America," James said. "We started very small many years ago and have grown through the ingenuity and creativeness of our employees - and we continue to expand into different markets including medical device, fire arms, novelty and giftware, etc."

High-wattage laser welding systems are designed, engineered and manufactured in Providence while laser cutting, marking and deep engraving systems are designed, manufactured and engineered in Orlando. LaserStar's new 3,500-square-foot, state-of-the-art Applications and Training facility in Arcadia, Calif., is scheduled to open on May 29, 2018.



LaserStar engraving systems are proudly made in the U.S.A.

The company's growth doesn't stop there. Last December, the company announced plans to double the size of its Orlando production facility. Expected to be completed in late fall of 2018, the new state-of-art facility will enable LaserStar to produce up to 1,000 laser systems per year in Florida. Some 200 visitors visit the Florida facility alone every year for training and demonstrations, says James.

Retailers interested in LaserStar's offerings have ample opportunity to check out the company at trade shows, the next being JCK Las Vegas June 1-4. LaserStar will be in Booth No. B-63079, showing its full product line of laser equipment for jewelry repair, design and fabrication, including its best-selling laser welder in the jewelry market, the iWeld Product Line, the new FiberCube Laser Engraving Systems with proprietary STAR-FX software for deep laser engraving, and the FiberStar line of laser cutting systems.

Looking ahead, LaserStar will be at The Atlanta Jewelry Show Aug. 4-6 in Booth No. 328 with the latest in laser technology including its iWeld Laser Welding System, which revolutionized jewelry welding years ago with its lower price and compact design. Quick and accurate, it's well suited to jewelers doing custom or repair work because it doesn't damage metal surfaces or heat-sensitive stones.

For more information about LaserStar Technologies, call 401-438-1500 or visit [www.laserstar.net](http://www.laserstar.net) or [www.laserstar.tv](http://www.laserstar.tv). **SJN**

To Learn More, Visit Us at the JCK Las Vegas Show - Booth No. B63079



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