

WANDERLUST

HOUSE OF JEWELS

A pair of local jewelers commit to creating timeless yet modern pieces that Nashvillians can wear for years to come.

McLaine Richardson has two serious legacies to preserve. The first is her family's: She, her mother, and her maternal grandmother are all native Nashvillians who have been dedicated to the local community. The second is her other family, the one at Margaret Ellis Jewelry (margaretellisjewelry.com), the company she bought from its namesake in 2013.

As the head of a business that does not bear her name, which she took over after working as a metalsmith in the studio, Richardson knows she has an extremely high standard to live up to. After all, many Margaret Ellis customers have been devotees since growing up in the '80s.

"I've had customers who come in and bring pieces that they've been wearing since high school and say, 'I want to remake this,'" Richardson says.

The trick to keeping the customer base engaged, she acknowledges, is to create a piece that works for the here and now but has lasting power beyond the client's years.

"Part of the design aesthetic is making something that's very timeless, that's cross-generational, something that can appeal to a 20-year-old and a 70-year-old," she explains. "A lot of our customers are extremely loyal and got their first taste of us at McClure's [clothing store]. We're happy they keep coming."

To keep her customers interested, Richardson pulls more than 30 years of archives and continues using Margaret Ellis signatures like bold shapes and textures. But she's also trying to bring a new relevance to those

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classic pieces. For the fall collection, which debuts this month, that means taking archival silhouettes and adding touches like lapis, garnet, and yellow citrine and then working with her two metalsmiths to create pieces that are true to the brand but have a touch of modernity to them.

"Edward [in the studio] actually taught me how to make jewelry," Richardson says with a smile. "We don't cast anything; it's literally all handmade, and for us it's that differentiating factor."

Richardson understands the importance of the technique and artistry, though when asked whether she thinks she's participating in a dying art form, she admits: "We're preserving this skill right now with our own little thing, but eventually I want to bring someone in younger to learn the craft. It's very interesting navigating this new, more modern era. It's a learning curve all the time."

Meanwhile, another Nashville native, **Brooke Worthington**, is at the beginning of what she hopes to be a long career in jewelry. She stresses that her focus is on doing it right from the get-go.

"My brand is an extension of

McLaine Richardson



X Cuff (sterling silver and bronze), \$500



Fancy Egg Earring (sterling silver), \$465



Fancy Charms Bracelet (sterling silver, bronze, lapis, lemon quartz, and garnet), \$2,000