



Adam Foster

An introduction to a St. Louis custom jeweler.

BY SARAH STALLMANN

Tall, bearded, and slightly sarcastic, Adam Foster exudes the persona of a modern craftsman. He welcomed us into his clean, minimal Brentwood studio wearing a canvas-apron and stylish black specs, and warmed us with his laid-back style and masculine edge. He clearly has a keen eye for original design. We chatted among the grey walls, concrete floors and wooden furniture of his studio as he explained how his process is a far cry from what some might call a traditional jewelry buying experience.

“I don’t sell,” says Foster matter-of-factly. “I really hated everything about the average fine jewelry buying experience and wanted to take that

completely out of the equation. Who wants to go into a store and feel pressured, or buy over a counter? This isn’t the ‘pick a band, then pick a stone, creating a ring that you customized because you picked a square instead of a round’ type of experience.”

While most people would assume that having a personal jeweler is something that is reserved for a limited set, Foster is passionate about his commitment to cater to his clients, gauge their needs and create something beautiful for their budget. “It’s really all about them,” says Foster. “I want to know what they would want if money wasn’t an issue, what their interests are, their careers, and most importantly, what they hate. I want to



hear about all of the girlfriends who got rings you didn't like, basically, because that lets me inside your head."

Using a mix of rough sketches, 3-D CAD and 3-D prototyping, Foster creates a mockup product giving the customer a detailed visual of what the piece will look like. He says, "At that point, we will go back and forth about what you like about it, what you don't like about it, cutting out the margin for error. This also allows me to gauge a price based on the stones, settings and amount of work that will go into it."

Foster's approach takes out the middleman, creating less of a telephone effect when it comes to the creation process. "The same person who is talking to you initially about

what you want is the one who's setting your stone and creating the piece from scratch," Foster continues. "There's no 'was I talking to the same person?' or 'this doesn't look like what I asked for.' It's a very personal and communicative experience for the client the entire time, unless you don't want it to be. I can work that way too."

The customer isn't just involved in the ring-making process, they're learning the industry as well. "It's not about me selling you a diamond—they aren't my diamonds," says Foster with a chuckle. "I don't care if I sell it or not. What I care about is that you are picking something you really love, know where it was sourced, know why the price is what it is, and that the result is something you are excited about."

