

# The art of the gift



## OMO Jewels & Gifts is a hidden gem of a boutique in Watch Hill

By Jenny Quill

 Cruising along Watch Hill Road, the shoreline scenery speeding by, it's easy to miss OMO Jewels & Gifts. A small roadside sign is the only indication that you're in the right spot, a postage-stamp-sized gravel parking lot shared by a produce stand and Avondale Arts. Walk through the Avondale Arts entrance and you'll find yourself in OMO, a bright, welcoming space that occupies the gallery's two front rooms.

Owner Joanna Papineau Allen opened OMO just two years ago, but she practically grew up in the space. At the age of 17, she began working as a jewelry buyer for Sun Up Gallery, the building's prior tenant. She remained with the gallery for 20 years, right up until it closed in 2014. When Avondale opened its doors a few years later, Allen saw an opportunity to carve out her own niche as a shop owner. "It felt like coming full circle," she says of the shop, which she aptly named OMO, for "on my own." She initially leased the gallery-size space in back, expanding to the larger front room last fall. Allen's keen eye, honed during her years buying and selling

jewelry, is evident in the tightly edited selection of one-of-a-kind, handmade gifts sourced from across the country, all displayed with the kind of symmetry, balance and proportion befitting an art gallery.

There's truly something for everyone and every budget. "I want everyone to feel like they can come in and find a beautiful gift, no matter the price," she says. Given Allen's background, it's no surprise that bewitching gems and eye-catching silver and gold jewelry occupy much of the display-case real estate. Shoppers will find everything from an \$18 pair of shoulder-grazing earrings to stunning gemstone rings ranging in price from \$750 to \$1,500. Beaded-stone and crystal pendants and drop earrings designed by former ballet dancer Miguel Ases beckon some attention. Handmade in New York City, Ases' vibrant pieces lend serious fashion-cred to any ensemble. Lovers of all things vintage would welcome the reclaimed silver, gold and bronze talismans cast from authentic wax seals and images from the Victorian era. Each piece is symbolic, with images intended to inspire, offer protection, or celebrate a milestone. And for the star gazers,

