

FEBRUARY 2022 | THE LOCAL LOVE ISSUE

# BOZEMAN

CITY LIFESTYLE™



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LIFESTYLE LETTER

# Lost Wax

Every month we get to do some fun things while building content, but this month had some added benefits.

This month we had the opportunity to go to the bronze foundry and learn about the “Lost Wax” method of casting bronze with Elaine Hanserd of Waterhorse Bronze. The Lost Wax method has been around for thousands of years. The process is fascinating and there are so many steps, each requiring a different skill set. There is a raw coarseness to it that is very appealing, and Elaine’s passion for the entire process is contagious.

Once again we had the pleasure of working with Blacksmith Italian. While working with Cory Dragone and his team is great, I must confess, sharing a couple of amazing steaks with my photographer was my favorite part. I grew up in the livestock business, but I had never heard of Piedmontese cattle before Cory told us about them. They are an interesting breed, the bulls being more muscled up than the Charolais bulls we had on the ranch in Grass Range, and the cows remind me a bit of a Jersey.

While I am certain that if I had been the chef, the steak would have been far less than what Cory prepared for us, I understand why Cory uses that beef exclusively. It is tender and juicy and both Rico and I took our time savoring every bite.

It is a truly Italian breed of cattle, but it is also an exceptional meat for a cowboy connoisseur.

Alara opened the Atelier to us for photos and we got to see what a private jewelry design session looks like. While it is a “workroom,” it is luxurious and creates an individualized experience, unlike anything I have seen.

The Alara experience in the original location remains the same, and now there is a second option for a whole new level of living Alara.

The world-class artisans that we have here in Bozeman as neighbors are worth a visit: I encourage you to explore.

BRENT R FJELDHEIM, PUBLISHER  
@BOZEMANLIFEMAG



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**PUBLISHER**

Brent R Fjeldheim | brent.fjeldheim@citylifestyle.com

**EDITORIAL COORDINATOR**

Joni Diehl | joni.diehl@citylifestyle.com

**EDITORIAL COORDINATOR**

Meghan AmRhein  
meghan.amrhein@citylifestyle.com

**STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

Ricardo Aquino | rico@contentcreativelab.com

**AD DESIGNER**

Whitney Lockhart

**LAYOUT DESIGNER**

Zane Smith

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Camille Bisselle, Jeremy Good, Babs Noelle

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Siana Smith, Ricardo Aquino

## Corporate Team

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Steven Schowengerdt

CHIEF SALES OFFICER Matthew Perry

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**Proverbs 3:5-6**

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The Alara

# Atelier

atelier noun [AT-ell-yay] 1: an artist's or designer's studio or workroom



ARTICLE BY BABS NOELE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICARDO AQUINO

So, what is an atelier? Literally, a workspace. The Alara Atelier houses the bulk of Alara's jewelry manufacturing and crafting machinery, tools, and humans. And while it is a manufacturing space, it is also a place for private design consultation. One can specifically request to have jewelry made (or not) during your appointment.

More importantly, this is a place where art, craft, and camaraderie intersect. Since the artisanal workspace is enclosed behind glass walls, the alchemy of the craft performed by human hands is part of the experience, no matter what. But the remaining spaces in this atelier are comfortable living spaces from which one can experience the visual conceptualization of a possible piece from the comfort of a leather rocker; or experience the "hard rock" nature of everything from mineral specimens to precisely-cut rare gems and fine diamonds; all from a sapphire blue, yards-long sofa. Go ahead—put your feet up on the ottoman. That steampunk liquor cabinet? It's here for you, too. Think both comfy and non-traditional when experiencing this space.

You are surrounded by late 18th- and early 19th- century European oils with a story that is personal to Alara's founder, Babs Noelle. The collection of family paintings is literally the only thing of value that her mother and father were able to bring to the US when they emigrated from Germany in 1954. "Growing up, I was aware that the artwork on our walls was far more sumptuous than the remainder of our décor," she says. "People always commented on the fanciness upon entering our home. As it turns out, I've never had a home myself where this collection seemed to fit. But the moment I saw the Atelier space, I immediately envisioned the paintings hanging on the walls."

Juxtaposed with the paintings are the featured mineral specimens, which bring together everything: the crystals from the earth reminding us of the gemstones we treasure...across from the glassed-in workshop that makes possible the human contribution to the personal and fine decoration we wear.

Much like the jewelry created within the space, eclecticism reigns supreme at the Alara Atelier: a rustic farm door slides adjacent to

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“This mixture of decorative aesthetics is meant to celebrate not just many different types of beauty, but many different styles of jewelry.”

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a modern, internally-lit, sculpture of an elegant female form. While one meeting table features a natural edge of wormhole black walnut; another artisanal table features swirls of pearlized resin. “This mixture of decorative aesthetics is meant to celebrate not just many different types of beauty, but many different styles of jewelry,” Noelle explains. “And with perhaps a formal event as a possible exception, most folks that embrace the Rocky Mountain West personal style wear a mix of casual and dressy jewels together: a classic, diamond-heavy wedding set is adjacent to a slew of silver bangles...or a gem-encrusted pendant along with bronze earrings.”

With the original Alara Jewelry gallery also on Main Street in downtown Bozeman, it begs the question: “Why an Atelier?”

Growth, from both business volume and human perspectives, was demanding an expansion, but how? Pull up stakes entirely, and bank on a different part of

town, and have a larger enterprise, all under one roof? “No way. Downtown runs in my veins,” says Noelle. Much like how she acquired her original location by the fortuitous notice of a “For Lease” sign in its window, her walk to work revealed the new location—at the other end of downtown. The space had a shape more conducive to fulfilling her dream of a “fishbowl studio.”

The two locations work in concert, bringing out the best that Alara has to offer. “Our curated jewelry collection of work by seventy-plus designers, found at our original gallery location, is always available for reference and inspiration,” interjects Noelle. “In fact, we encourage people to take a spin through our gallery to point out examples of features they like—or don’t—because we can be sure to make those items available during their custom design appointment at the Atelier.”

Noelle firmly believes that the more design details, jewelry art eras, beautiful gems, and fascinating crafting techniques

to which one is exposed, the closer one is to finding a personal, wearable artwork that celebrates the personal joys in life... whether they be individual in nature, or part of a loving bond. “And with over 70 designers in our quiver,” Noelle shares, “I don’t know of many jewelers who can boast more aesthetic variety.”

Coming full circle to the atelier concept, the Alara Atelier is soon to be home to a first-in-Montana, nationally-recognized jeweler apprentice program. “What a wonderful and fitting, light-filled space in which to learn the ancient craft of jewelry-making,” beams Noelle.

The Alara Atelier is located at 424 E Main Street and is available via private appointment only. In addition to hosting custom design consultations, the Atelier is also where the Alara team offers private curated shopping experiences, gemstone and diamond private viewings, estate evaluations, and jewelry box reviews.





# *Atelier Alara*

CUSTOM FINE JEWELS.  
RARE GEMS. FINE DIAMONDS.  
CURATED PRIVATE SHOPPING.



*by appointment only.*

424 E. Main Street, Downtown Bozeman