



Milton Krasner

*The People Pleaser:* Milton Krasner started his career selling price point jewels with mass appeal—karat-gold dolphin charms he wholesaled to stores through a manufacturing business he founded with his brother in 1980. Today, however, he's asking clients, "What can I design for you?"

The San Diego-based jeweler has managed his own store for the past 10 years. Ninety percent of his business at *Krasner Jewelers* is custom work, while the remaining 10 percent comes from vendors GelinAbaci and Jolie' Designs. Krasner's specialty: creating one-off talismans of an extremely personal nature. "My niche is getting in my customers' heads," he says.

Take, for example, a woman who brought three expired bullets from a three-volley salute—a ceremonial act performed at military and police funerals—to Krasner this year to make into a piece of jewelry. The result: a silver cuff with the flat part of the rounds mounted on the surface, and a poem inscribed on the underside. Another client wanted to remake an old family ring, which suffered from a chipped center diamond as well as mediocre-quality melee. "I hid the stone on the inside of the shank, so that the diamond was touching her skin," he explains. He also set the melee—a mishmash of sizes and colors—on an angle on the topside so the stones wouldn't feature so prominently in the piece. "I kept the spirit of the person in the ring and used the materials that made her comfortable," he says.



The cuff Milton Krasner fashioned of silver and three expired bullets

Another couple came to Krasner for an engagement ring and brought along a story of love linked to the Coronado Bridge in San Diego. They had sailed beneath the bridge for fun, driven across it to see one another during their courtship, and the groom even worked alongside it repairing naval ships. To capture that connection, Krasner created a ring with two bridges that served as pillars beneath a center diamond and included, at the couple's request, a note engraved on the inside shank: "Love is a bridge between two hearts."

"Many people want to put way too many things into a piece," Krasner says. "In Yiddish, we call this *ungapatchka*, or, overkill. I start off plain—with a white sheet of paper—then add what they want while taking into

consideration how they're going to wear it, as well as addressing issues of practicality, aesthetics, and personality.”

During the process, Krasner's own personality often surfaces. When a mother and daughter both got engaged in rings he'd designed—the daughter's ring featured the center stone given to her mother by her father, who died of cancer years earlier—the jeweler couldn't contain his happiness. He performed the Jethro Tull flute rendition of Bach's “Bourrée” during the presentation.