



An Interview With Dr. Marc Dussault

Hello.

Hello Sam.

Yes Marc, how're you going?

Very good; yourself, how's your day been so far?

Excellent, thank you very much.

Excellent; well listen Sam I just wanted to have a quick conversation with you because the listener is interested in your services. So I'll introduce myself and then introduce you; I'm Dr Marc Dussault of Exponential Programs, that's exponentialprograms.com. And I'm here with Sam Kritsotakis of Eskae Jewellery.

Sam first of all what is Eskae Jeweler and what is it that you do?

Well basically Eskae Jeweler is a jewellery studio where I would meet clients and you know discuss with them one-on-one what they're after personally in a customized, custom designed piece of jewellery.

Okay. And is this a retail, or is this like a special private kind of experience for them?

No, this is definitely a private experience for them; it's by appointment only and you know I do have a little studio space but you know it's for selected people.

So why, well first of all how long have you been in the jewellery business and what's your history? Because the person listening to this obviously wants to deal with someone who has a track record; and explain to me what you started doing when you first got into that and how you got to this point where you started Eskae Jeweler.

Well I, obviously I've done my apprenticeship, my jewellery apprenticeship; that was 4 years with 3 years at []. I did quite well there, I finished 3rd in the statewide course; I during that time also won a gold medal at the 1998 Regional Work Skills which is a statewide work skills competition.

Wow!

So that was fantastic yeah, and from there I was consistently headhunted by better and better jewelers which is great, all through Sydney, until recently where I've just spent the last 3 years with one of the leading jewelers in the country. So all in all I've been a jeweler for 15 years now and yeah, I just got this opportunity one day to purchase this property that I'm in now in the CDB at King Street. And you know I just haven't looked back basically; it just was the right time and I felt like I was needing to do something more to follow the creative side of my craft.

Yeah you mentioned the creative side because that's really what got you interested; I know you're quite technical about the pieces that you create but it's really the artistic creative side that you like to create one-off designs and limited edition designs. Is that right?

Absolutely. I mean that's the most rewarding part of it for me; I mean basically we'll sit down with a client one-on-one and you know I basically dig out the ideas from the client's head, or mind, you know, if you know what I mean.

Yes.

And basically from there you know I've got this design on a piece of paper and then we start crafting the jewellery; it just takes on a form of its own, it almost takes on a life of its own to be honest. And then you know when you hand that piece over all finished and



polished up and everything, it's just spectacular.

Now you do this for special events; can you give me a range of, obviously you know weddings and the obvious ones, but can you give me just an idea of why and when people do this and some of the projects that you've worked on? Because jewelry for a lot of people is something that's quite personal; and it would be interesting for the listener to get a sense of what other people have done and what kind of things they've celebrated with jewelry.

Yeah; look the obvious ones are engagements, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, the birth of a child, they're probably the 5 most common reasons why people come in and purchase a customized piece of jewelry.

Yeah.

The other reasons is, I've had some people celebrating graduation from a medical school, I've also had another young lady who had a family diamond, and I've done some work for a mum. So they just really wanted to keep the same theme and the same person working on that family piece of jewelry.

Yeah.

So it's not really such a celebration but it is in terms of the fact that it's a family diamond so they're really continuing that family theme with that sort of a piece.

Yeah.

So that would probably be the reasons why people come through.

So you can take like estate jewelry, or heirlooms and other nostalgic pieces and craft them so that they get modernized because in a lot of cases it's something that was fashionable 100 years ago is maybe not as fashionable today. So you can actually modify those and in some cases transform an existing ring, or an existing earring into something new but similar to the original piece so that there's that continuity across generations, right?

Yeah absolutely, a lot of what we do is remodeling I suppose you'd call it, is those sort of pieces. And as long as we keep to the same theme which I find most people do want anyway...

Yeah.

And when I say theme I'm talking the design theme of the piece. So the other point I'd like to make on that is when you hear people talk about the diamond is forever, they literally do mean the diamond; the gold or the platinum surrounding that diamond, or gemstone for that matter, wears away you know and in time you do need to have a little bit of work done on that ring.

Yeah. Now that brings another service that you do which is the ring rejuvenation service. So a lot of people have jewelry that is sitting in their drawer you know, or you know in their jewelry box, and it doesn't really look wearable; but in fact you can rejuvenate that with a good clean and a polish. And in some cases it makes, you know I don't really like the expression it 'makes it look like new', but in fact it doesn't just make it look like new, it makes it look wearable. In other words that's a piece that if it was actually in your jewelry box you'd say, hey I want to wear that today.

Yeah.

Tell me a little bit about how many of those you've done and the reactions you've gotten from people; because I would expect that that could be quite surprising to many people..



Yeah the look of surprise on everybody's face once they pick up the finished pieces is extraordinary sometimes; and without fail it's on their face every time. I think people really don't quite realize that the gold is, and platinum as well, is such a workable material. So what that means is that if you've had a piece sitting there for 10 years say, for an easy example, and you've worn it for say the first 3 or 4 years pretty consistently and then as the time goes on it just sort of sat there more and more and it's built up a few scratches, it's got a couple of dings on it, we can actually remove all of those scratches and dings and bring the gold and the platinum back to life. So we talked about bringing it back to brand new, well it's pretty damn close to brand new, and the look on everybody's face is suggestive of that too.

Yeah, cause one of the things is it's obvious that if you fix scratches and you do the polish that will make a big difference; but one of the small nuances that you know you obviously would pick up and others might not pick up on but they'll subconsciously see the difference is the settings, if the settings are affected in any way, or inconsistent, that will make a huge difference in the look and feel of the gems that are sitting in those settings; is that right?

Yeah definitely, that definitely. There's one thing there; if it's a little bit damaged we'll obviously do the repair work and we're involved in that sort of thing as well. So sometimes it does involve a little bit more than just a simple cleaning or polishing, and removing all the scratches and stuff. But it's one of those services that really you get a lot of bang for your buck; so it's one of our main services actually.

So tell me something, what kind of jewelry do you create, or rejuvenate, or deal with? Give me just a short list of the types of things that you've done and where your area of specialty, or focus actually is.

With the ring rejuvenation service basically it is aimed at rings more than necklaces and earrings and so on; it is however valuable for those pieces but it's a lot more involved with a necklace and especially with an earring depending on how delicate the earring is and whether or not it's [] and so on. So you know we

try and tailor that service particularly for rings. The other areas of our expertise is we like to concentrate on handcrafting our jewelry so a lot of our time is spent physically doing the work. We use minimal, we have minimal use of machines throughout the studios so a lot, and when I say a lot probably 90% of the work is handcrafted and hand done and we just use machines for finishing off and so on. But that's about it really. We like to focus also on the engagement ring and wedding ring sets; so when people come through we like to think we'll do both the engagement and the wedding ring and so on, and as it goes down the years as well we like to do the anniversary rings.

Wow! So when you talk about the stones and gems what's your expertise and what do you focus on; do you focus on diamonds, or opals, or sapphires, or rubys, or emeralds?

You know we prefer diamonds, to work in diamonds; and that is mainly where our focus is. We've also got access to a lot of coloured diamonds as well; the a little bit of specialty area for us is the pink and the other colours as well, the blue diamonds as well but they tend to be quite hard to get depending on what you're after.

So you're a diamond expert but you can set as well as source other stones and semi precious stones as well?

Absolutely.

Okay. And the types of services that you offer, we started off that Eskae Jeweler is a private studio so it's a very hands on personalized experienced. Can you tell me a little bit about how you like to proceed with people so that they feel comfortable dealing with you? One of the things I think is great when I visited your studio, is that it's so well located on the corner of King and [] Streets; so tell me first why you picked that building and why you're so happy being in that building and the kind of experience that you want to create with your services.



Well the reason I picked that building is for 2 reasons basically, I just love that [] store, it's one of my favorite design periods throughout history. And that building is plum designed exactly through the [] store and suits with the marble finishes, it just suits the kind of jewelery that we do at Eskae so that was a big draw cut for me. The other reason is that building is also full of a lot of my suppliers so to me not having to go anywhere, or anywhere far, is quite handy. So it just helps speed up the process for everybody involved. Yeah, what was the rest of that question?

You've had the experience because when you walk in and you get a sense of that history and that tradition and you get a sense and seeing you know all of the suppliers in the building that it's really something that, it's like the epicenter if you will of the jewelery trade isn't it?

Yeah that's correct; yeah that building is definitely the jewelery building in Sydney.

Yeah.

You know more than half of the building is made up of jewelers and jewelery suppliers; so it's quite a center of activity.

So when you deal with a client, because the person who is listening to this is interested in considering your services, how do you like to proceed with them, what are the steps, the variations of how they would do business with you? If they went to a retailer they'd just walk in, you know talk to someone and you know buy a piece that anybody else can have type of thing, or you know even some of them are customized but it's a retail experience. You're offering something that's much more exclusive and much more customized. Explain how you go through that process in meeting people and the follow up and how you take them through the delivery of their creation.

Yeah, basically it's a fun experience as much as it is personalized and tailored specifically to the clients' wants and needs; it all revolves around that first and foremost. But what we like to do is we like to introduce ourselves here at Eskae; we'll generally have a meeting with the client, they're more than welcome to come into Eskae, or you know at the odd time it works out better that I can travel to you the client, that's also fine. Then basically what we'll do we'll sit down we'll discuss what it is that you're actually after in the piece of jewelery that we're looking to make and handcraft for you. Around that discussion is what follows on from there.

So basically the next step after that we source some diamonds, or some coloured gemstones, whichever it is, and then we develop the design, then we meet again with the client. In between that there's obviously a lot of communication sort of going backwards and forwards in that you know is this design okay and so on. And basically what we'll do then we'll start crafting, once we've got the okay on the design we actually start crafting the piece of jewelery for you. And at the 80% finish mark which is the piece is made but the gemstones or diamonds aren't actually physically set into the piece of jewelery, we'll actually bring the client in. And this is probably one of the major points of difference, is that at this point in time the client gets a chance to have a look at the piece of jewelery, make sure everything is okay and exactly what they're after before any of the gemstones or diamonds are set. So it just gives the client a bit of a safety net I suppose you could call it in terms of the look and the feel of the piece of jewelery.



Look, I've designed a few pieces of jewelry for Monica myself and I know what the feeling's like when you're involved in the process and you can literally fine tune the process all the way to you know the point of no return when everything gets finalized. And if you're listening to this it's a very exciting, personal and long lasting gift that really it transcends anything else that you've done. And even if you're not creative, dealing with someone like Sam he is basically the artistic outlet for the ideas that you might have and how you want to communicate your feelings, or commemorate the event. Sam has been doing this for so many years he knows how to mix and match the people and I'm sure Sam that you use photos of people, you ask questions about you know their progress in life, their ages, their tastes, you know their preferences, their colours, you know the kinds of clothes that they wear, you know how practical it needs to be versus a dinner ring that someone would wear you know in exclusive situations...

That's right.

You know versus the []. Look you know that's very exciting and I wanted to keep this first introduction to the listener quite short. So now we're at the point where how do people reach you, what are your contact details, what's your website and you know how do you deal with appointments; do they set those appointments on the internet, do they give you a call, what do you prefer and what are the options?

The best 2 options for that is 1, visit my website eskaejeweler.com.au; it's spelt e-s-k-a-e jeweler.com.au, there's a contact us form on that page where you can simply fill out the form and we'll receive an email and then we can take the appointments from there. The other alternative is you can email me directly sam@eskaejeweler.com.au.

Excellent. Now just one last question; why is it called Eskae Jeweler?

It's actually mine and my wife's initials spelt out phonetically; so our initials are sk...

Yeah.

And we've just extended the sound phonetically.

Wow! I like that.

That's what we came up with.

Yeah. So if the listener is wondering where it came from, now you know. So listen on behalf of Sam and Eskae Jeweler I'm Dr Marc Dussault and I just want to take a few minutes just to introduce you to what Sam does and hopefully you'll give him a call soon and start the process. Thank you very much for listening.