

Alan Revere

Teaching Future Generations

By Nancy Pier Sindt

For more than 30 years, master goldsmith Alan Revere has been sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for the goldsmith's art with thousands of students, readers and industry professionals.

If memory serves correctly, he once revealed that he arrived in San Francisco during the 1960s in what else? A hand-painted Volkswagen bus.

Unlike many of the flower children of the time, however, Revere devoted most of his time to learning, working and building a profession. Now, close to three decades later, he is the founder and director of one of the country's most unique jewelry academies, located in a historic building in downtown San Francisco.

Revere grew up in a family of creative individuals; both grandfathers and his mother were art hobbyists. In 1969, after receiving a BA in psychology from the University of Virginia, he took to the road. He landed in an art colony in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where he spent two years studying drawing, sculpture and crafts at the local university, learning the basics of design.

It was here that he was introduced to the art of metalwork and as he tells it, from the very first touch of a hammer on a silver band, he discovered his passion for jewelry-making. "Right from the start," he says, "I truly loved working with my hands, making jewelry. I wanted to learn everything there was to know about jewelry, but I could not find the kind of professional training I wanted in the U.S."

Revere's educational background continued. He took another two years to study at the 100-year-old Fachhochschule fur Gestaltung, in Pforzheim, Germany. Here, he learned the basics of metalsmithing and jewelry production by some of the twentieth century's most noted goldsmiths and designers. He completed his studies and returned to San Francisco, where he began designing his own jewelry collection.

In 1979, after putting together a roster of some of the industry's top professionals, Revere established the Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts. Its basic premise was to teach the most important techniques of jewelry design and manufacture, using instructors who were themselves working professionals in the jewelry business. "Our faculty includes over a dozen master craftsmen and experts who love what they do and are eager to share their passion and knowledge," Revere says.

Courses range from the basics of metalsmithing, mold making, wax carving, gemstone identification, diamond grading, setting, polishing and finishing to specific techniques such as granulation, gemstone setting, rendering and marketing designer jewelry. Each class is limited to 15



The Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts is located in the historic Pheasant Building in downtown San Francisco.



Students receive hands-on teaching and earn graduate jeweler certification at the Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts.

students, so each can receive the maximum personal attention. State-of-the-art equipment includes a live blowup of the instructors' hands allowing students to see the fine details of the lesson being taught.

The building he chose for his school is indicative of his creative outlook. The Revere Academy is located in the historic Phelan Building at 760 Market Street in San Francisco. The unique, triangular-shaped building was once the center of the jewelry-making in the city and from their ninth-floor corner suite, students enjoy a 270-degree panoramic view of Revere's favorite city.

The students in the school hail from all over the world. All come to the school wanting to learn how to work with their hands and create jewelry of lasting value. Right now, Revere Academy has pupils from Taiwan, France, Japan and Brazil. "About 50 to 60 percent of the people who study here have some background in jewelry," he says. "Of the other 40 percent, about half are planning to enter the business and the rest are retirees or hobbyists."

Revere designed his own jewelry collection for many years, offering moderately priced yet innovative designs using a variety of colors and textures in gold. "I'm still designing," he says. "I don't make a lot of jewelry, but the passion is the same."

These days, he devotes the majority of his time to lecturing, teaching and writing about the art of jewelry production and design. His columns on jewelry repair and production have been published in a number of trade magazines, including his regular "Practical Jewelry Repair" column in *Jewelers Circular-Keystone*.

Alan Revere is a member of the American Jewelry Design Council and the Contemporary Design Group. He has written several books, including *The Art of Jewelry Making*, *Ring Repair*, *Professional Goldsmithing* and *Revere on Goldsmithing*. Just after being interviewed for this profile, he left for Las Vegas where he accepted the Hall of Fame award from the Contemporary Design Group, proudly wearing two lapel pins designed by his mother.

Of all the work he does, if he had to choose just one thing he likes best, what would it be? "I would sit at the bench and make jewelry." As proof of this, Revere still owns the first silver bracelet he ever made and currently wears another one of 22-karat, hand-woven gold that gives him a thrill to own and to know that he made it. "It's the tinkerer in me that likes this; I have always enjoyed creating."



Designer, metalmith and author Alan Revere has spent most of his life teaching, writing and creating jewelry.