

A man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a white lab coat over a black t-shirt, holds a martini glass with olives. He is smiling slightly. In the background, there is a display case with jewelry. In the foreground, a silver cocktail shaker and another martini glass are visible on a bar.

MASTER MIXOLOGIST

CRAFTSMAN DOUG
ZARUBA TOASTS HIS MOVE
TO PANAMA WITH HIS
SIGNATURE MARTINI.

AFTER A LONG CAREER AS A JEWELRY CRAFTSMAN AND TEACHER, **DOUG ZARUBA** IS PACKING UP FOR A NEW LIFE IN PANAMA, BUT NOT WITHOUT LEAVING BEHIND SOME VALUABLE LESSONS FOR STUDENTS.

You might know Doug Zaruba the nationally recognized master goldsmith and teacher, but do you know Doug Zaruba the mixologist? When the artist isn't busy preparing new generations of students for careers as jewelers—or delighting clients with his own gold and platinum creations—you're likely to find him mixing cucumber-gin martinis, making art that celebrates them, or throwing parties in their honor.

Zaruba's career spans three decades. Originally a sculptor, he found jewelry to be more lucrative. So he apprenticed in Germany under a master goldsmith who shared his secrets only on the condition that Zaruba share them with others. "The master I learned with made me promise that I would teach," Zaruba said.

His protégés are glad to have him. They treasure every trade secret and bench tip—and such tips are plentiful, say his students, who describe Zaruba as generous with knowledge. One secret his students revealed: Zaruba encourages his pupils to grow more skilled than their master. "When I first learned jewelry, it was difficult to get information [from other jewelers]," he says.

Another example of his advice concerns saw

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AN EXAMPLE OF DOUG ZARUBA'S
CRAFTSMANSHIP: GOLD GLASSES
AND BEANS

frames. When you operate your own shop, you'll want to save time, Zaruba explained during a class he gave at a recent weeklong jewelry retreat. So own several different saw frames and set each with a different-size saw blade. His reasoning: Changing blades is a delicate and difficult operation, since they are dental-floss thin, break easily, and are tricky to set in the frame.

As he talked about his time at the bench, a white-haired student approached Zaruba with an apron and a Sharpie pen and asked him to sign the apron, which he did.

All week, everyone at the retreat had been talking about Zaruba's retirement from jewelry. Asked about his plans, Zaruba revealed that he's moving to Panama to sculpt.

"It's time for the older generations to step aside," he said. He's happy to see fresh faces at the craft fairs and even happier to return to his sculpting roots. He'll turn his gallery over to his son, but not until he throws one more martini bash. Friends, artists, and customers fly in from across the country to attend this annual affair, held in his gallery in Frederick, Md., and everyone who's an artist brings a martini-themed treasure. Zaruba's own 2-foot-tall martini sculpture will be on display.

Is Zaruba worried about abandoning his customers and students? Not at all. In fact, he thinks the jewelry industry will be fine without him. After all, he says, "They've got my notes." ▲

BY JENNIFER HEDNER