



# Maker OF THE month

Richard Talman lives and works in Wivelsfield, near Haywards Heath, where he creates bespoke jewellery pieces for clients around the world

WORDS BY ALICE COOKE

For Richard Talman, making jewellery was the combination of a lifelong passion for geology and having four generations of family with a background in metalwork. “Being bought up around metalwork and with my dedication to gemstones, it seemed only right this was the career I pursued,” he says.

Richard has always been a jewellery-maker, and names his favourite pieces as the dragonfly brooch he created to mark the end of his apprenticeship, and his wife’s engagement ring, pictured above.

For others wanting to follow a similar path, he warns that it is a very tough trade to get into. “Whilst there are jobs in the mass production side of jewellery, diamond mounting is very niche. Most have to complete a five-year apprenticeship following a foundation course that has fewer than 10 places in a year. The Goldsmiths’ Company, our livery company, assists our apprentices in this way.”

Richard has his own apprentice who he



says he is teaching all he knows. He also acts as a mentor in the WorldSkills competition, an initiative to drive excellence in workplace skills.

Born in West Sussex, Richard has lived here all his life, but his career actually started in Hatton Garden, London where he worked and trained for 14 years. In terms of inspiration, he talks about “anyone that takes their passion and dreams and turns it

into their daily work. My work now is fully bespoke - whilst some of my clients are both national and international, most are from Sussex and it is their requests and my visions that evolve a piece.”

All of his work is commissions, and when being asked to create a piece, he says he asks “for absolutely anything that I deem is appropriate. I need to know of any metal allergies, preferences and what the wearer does from day to day - there is no point making a delicate ring for someone who is very hands-on, so I make sure that my jewellery is stunning yet fit for purpose.” He goes on to say that “some people have superstitious views and want certain numbers of stones, others can be spiritual and request the stone is in contact with their skin. I think I have had every request out there, and it’s always a pleasure to comply!” ■

To talk to Richard about a commission or to see more of his work, call 01444 471380 or go to [www.rtfj.co.uk](http://www.rtfj.co.uk)