

Canadian LORD OF THE RINGS



CARVINGS ARE REMINISCENT OF THE MUNY MUSK, A SIXTH CENTURY LOVE KNOT THAT REPRESENTS THE DANCE OF LIFE WITH TWO SOULS STEPPING LEFT AND RIGHT AND LEFT AGAIN. IT IS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF KELLS.



By Pam Parker
Photography courtesy of Jason Bellchamber

YOU HAVE TO admire someone who calls himself “a crazed custom jeweler,” and that made Jason Bellchamber a perfect candidate for our March madness issue.



Bellchamber, of London, Ontario, is far from crazy. His extraordinary Celtic jewelry has earned him some interesting fame. Recently, he designed a ring used in “Born of Hope,” a 60-minute film inspired by “Lord of the Rings” and produced in the UK, a fan-based, noncommercial Internet production. The ring is one of many Celtic pieces he’s designed, and he pours a lot of his passion for history into his work. Each piece of jewelry is handmade, one of a kind and includes the historical description of the design.

“I really enjoy the history of it,” he says of the Celtic style. “It’s interpretive, all the symbols and legends, and it’s very personal.”

So personal that Bellchamber names pieces and series after the customers for whom he

designs his rings, cufflinks, pendants and crosses. The first series was named for his mom, Dianne, because she sent him on the Celtic path.

“I was really inspired by tribal and Native American designs until my mom encouraged me to try some Celtic designs,” he remembers.

And the rest is history, and does he cover some history! Bellchamber’s knotwork (think love knots beautifully scrolled into gold and silver) are based on historic motifs from 600 BC to 1100 AD. He traces some back to the Iron Age in Europe and he calls upon the “Book of Kells,” manuscripts transcribed by Celtic monks 1,200 years ago. The book displays the Gospels with calligraphy and elaborate illustrations, using knotwork, swirls and patterns.



top left: THIS PENDANT IS BASED ON A DESIGN FOUND IN THE BOOK OF KELLS AND REMINISCENT OF TWO HEARTS DRAWN TOGETHER IN THE DANCE OF LIFE.

center left: THE DIANNE SET IS NAMED FOR BELLCHAMBER’S MOTHER. IT CONSISTS OF TWO TRIANGULAR KNOTS WHICH COME TOGETHER AS ONE WITH A STONE SET IN BETWEEN. IT REPRESENTS TWO SOULS SIDE-BY-SIDE.