

Jewelry maker turns old typewriter keys into treasures

Story Discussion

BY KAREN DEER • kdeer@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8239 | [1 Comment](#) | Posted: Saturday, September 18, 2010 12:00 am



ANNE JANSEN

Age • 46

Family • Single

Home • Marthasville

What she makes • Jewelry and accessories from old typewriter keys, skeleton keys and, soon to come, piano keys. To buy her designs, visit thekeyofa.com or shop ajsoftail.etsy.com. Her company name is The Key of A.

Anne Jansen grew up working in her parents' flower shop, and she says she was lucky enough to be born with her mother's talent and creativity. The floral business led her to interior design work, and recently she mastered the art of jewelry making, creating jewelry and accessories with old typewriter and skeleton keys.

Jansen says: "I can take anything old and turn it into a treasure. There is a mystery in a skeleton key. You don't know what treasures they lock up or what doors they may open."

Where do you work?

I'm a legal secretary at Armstrong Teasdale LLP in Clayton. I've been there for six years. My jewelry business is part-time work, but seems like full-time.

What are your hobbies?

Rehabbing, shopping estate sales, refinishing old furniture, and I love my six rescued dogs.

AUGUST 30, 2010 - Anne Jansen, the owner and artisan of The Key of A, poses for a portrait wearing one of her custom designed necklaces and earrings. Jansen specializes in authentic typewriter and skeleton key jewelry. Photo by John L. White | jwhite@post-dispatch.com

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Where did your inspiration come from?

Four years ago, I saw a woman at a flea market in Chicago. She was wearing a bracelet filled with typewriter keys. I fell in love with the look. Later, I found an old Underwood typewriter and created four bracelets from the typewriter.

Where did you sell your first piece of jewelry?

I took them to work, and they all sold the first day.

What else do you make?

Besides necklaces, bracelets and earrings, I also create a full line of accessories that include hairpins, keychains, cuff links, money clips, wine charms, bookmarks and even dog tags. All my pieces are made from recycled typewriters, skeleton keys and cash register keys. Recently, I've found other objects such as chandelier parts and railway tokens to add to my jewelry making.

Where do you get your old typewriters?

Some of my customers bring them to me when I have shows. I also have friends that keep an eye out for old machines. I find some of them at garage sales and flea markets.

What is your price range?

I have bookmarks as low as \$7.50 each, and a loaded charm bracelet retails for \$150.

Do you wear your designs?

Yes. I try to wear them every day. That's the simplest and cheapest form of marketing my product. Plus, when you work in a law firm with tons of women, it's the best way to advertise.

What do you do with the old typewriters once you've removed the keys?

As a recycler, I make the other parts available to restorers around the country. I also take them to recycling centers. I am environmentally conscious, so my typewriters don't go to landfills.

Will you take old typewriters?

Yes. If you have an old typewriter sitting in your basement and it's looking for a good home, contact me at anne@thekeyofa.com

Upcoming shows:

Sept. 18 and 19 • 33rd Annual Heritage Festival in Nifong Park, Columbia, Mo.

Sept. 25 and 26 • Annual Fall Fair of Arts and Crafts on Main Street in Washington, Mo.

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