

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a dark shirt, stands in a jewelry store. He has his hands clasped in front of him and is wearing a watch on his left wrist and a ring on his right hand. The store is filled with jewelry display cases, some containing diamonds and other pieces. A large, ornate chandelier hangs from the ceiling. In the background, a sign for 'MONT BLANCO' is visible above a display case. The overall atmosphere is warm and elegant.

# UNCOVERING THE DIAMOND *in the* ROUGH

THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF ISAAC JEWELERS



**S**tories like Frank Isaac's are the stuff that American dreams are made of. At just 36 years old, he is a husband and father, the owner of a successful jewelry empire, living a life he's passionate about in a city he loves; you'd be hard pressed to find a person who wouldn't aspire to the same. But what makes Frank's story special is the sweat, tears, and toil that went into its creation.

Growing up in Damascus, Syria, the son of a military father and a devoted stay-at-home mother, Frank had always been taught that the value of a good education was immeasurable. And the United States, he decided, was the best place to receive such an education. So at the tender age of seventeen, Frank came to New York to attend college – equipped with nothing but a one-way ticket, five hundred dollars, and a fierce will to succeed on his own. It wasn't long before a major relocation brought Frank to Arizona State University.

Determined to put himself through school unassisted by his parents, he worked tirelessly at minimum-wage jobs from Taco Bell to Toys "R" Us, at times holding down two jobs at once. Thanks to his intense focus and discipline, he completed his degree in finance within just two and half years rather than the traditional four. Now, armed with a degree, he was ready to take on the next challenge: business ownership. With just \$18,000 – none of it handed to him – he opened his first store, Brown Avenue Gifts. Its eclectic collection of Native American and modern art and jewelry was a runaway success, and within eight short months, Frank had managed to triple his investment. He sold it, soon opening his second business, AZ Gallery. It was also well-received, and proved to be a stepping stone to what would become Frank's most successful business

venture: Isaac Jewelers.

He opened the first branch, a small 1500 square foot space in Kierland Commons, at the end of 2003. Then, just as today, Frank was extremely discriminating when it came to bringing his customers the best of the best, right down to the décor: though his space was modest, he filled it with rich cherry wood, lavish Italian marble, and extraordinary details. The hardest part of setting such a lofty precedent, says Frank, was persuading esteemed, upscale brands to take a chance on displaying their collections in a small startup store. After all, despite his previous successes in business, he was still a little-known presence: no influential partners, no investors, just a man with a vision and a passion for fine jewelry.

But Frank had never been one to shy away from a challenge, and this was no exception. His sincere, earnest ambition led even the most prestigious designers to take a chance on him – Philippe Charriol, for example, whose exquisite pieces can only be found at Isaac Jewelers and Neiman Marcus. With thirteen designers on board from the beginning, Frank's store was off to a promising start.

Fast-forward to today; in the four years since opening day, that "promising start" has blossomed into a thriving enterprise. The initial thirteen-brand inventory has expanded considerably, and Isaac Jewelers now carries over sixty name brands – Damiani, Judith Ripka, and Tycoon, just to name a few. Gone are the days of trying to convince designers of the store's worth; now brands are more than willing to associate themselves with Isaac Jewelers. Frank hand-selects each line, striving to bring his customers an array of unique pieces. The store also custom designs and creates jewelry, at a markup-free price of 30 to 40% less than anywhere else in the Valley. In the spirit of his own story, Frank also features many new

The sparkling success of Isaac Jewelers could be attributed to many things: dedication, perseverance, and business savvy, just to name a few. But Frank acknowledges that none of it would have been possible without the unfaltering support given by the people closest to his heart. His parents provided him with a strong, stable upbringing and an abundance of love, instilling the values and ethics he would need to excel. And, says Frank, there's more credit due: to his wife, Marlen, who has stood solidly behind him as their business has grown and expanded – and given him two beautiful children in the process. Frank realizes how much his loved ones' belief in him has helped in the achievement of his goals. "Everything I do is based on them," Frank says. "Their images are always in my head."





Scottsdale Waterfront



Kierland Commons, The Watch Company

designers, eager to prove their talents as the “next big thing.”

Between the tried-and-true brands, the exciting up-and-comers, and the custom jewelry, he says, there’s something for everyone – whether someone is looking to spend \$400 or \$100,000. Since many of the brands are exclusive to Isaac Jewelers, it’s easy to find a one-of-a-kind creation. And an ever-changing inventory means that customers are always met with the newest and hottest styles. But make no mistake – though the selection may be diverse, one thing never varies: quality.

Frank’s rigorous standards apply to his employees, as well. “We carry brands with complicated mechanisms, so they have to understand what they’re doing,” he says. To ensure that each staff member is kept fully apprised of the latest trends and technologies, they attend monthly training sessions. Each manager is a certified gemologist or diamondologist – an educated professional with a discerning eye and a thorough knowledge

of fine jewelry, ready to help customers select the perfect heirloom-quality piece. For everyone on the Isaac Jewelers staff, customer satisfaction is top priority, and their dedication helps build lasting relationships with the ones they serve. “Our clientèle is very loyal, because we treat them like friends and family,” says Frank. That means going the extra mile, whether it’s making a special delivery or extending an invitation to an in-store wine tasting party.

In 2006, Isaac Jewelers established its second location on the glamorous Scottsdale Waterfront. And in September 2008, its newest addition opened its doors: Isaac Jewelers, The Watch Co., in close proximity to the flagship store at Kierland Commons. It specializes in fine timepieces, stunning and precise, by trusted brands including Maurice Lacroix, Montblanc, Versace, and Baume & Mercier.

Even with business flourishing, there’s no way you’ll find Frank bowing out to enjoy the fruits of his labor; after all, it’s a labor of love, and he’s as hands-on as ever. Though he’s no longer the boy with \$500 in his pocket and a lofty vision in his head, he possesses the same drive and determination that brought him to where he is today. His success didn’t come easy, but every ounce of effort, every extra shift and lost hour of sleep, has paid off handsomely for Frank Isaac – and for his valued customers, who reap the shining benefits.