

Design and Model-Making Services

CAD/CAM service providers make it easy for retailers to offer private label products and supply custom jewelry on demand

BY MARK AND LAINIE MANN

FEATURING SKINNY DOG DESIGN GROUP INC., SCOTT AND JENNIFER JANIAC-ROSS, LONG BEACH, CA

Retailers seeking designers and model makers for fulfilling custom orders or for developing new designs exclusive to their inventories have a growing variety of options available to them. Companies providing these services through CAD/CAM are referred to as service bureaus.

Service bureaus primarily offer:

- ✓ Jewelry design for custom order.
- ✓ Jewelry design for private labels.
- ✓ Model making: milling of wax models and rapid prototyping.

In addition, many bureaus offer traditional jewelry making services such as:

- ✓ Mold making.
- ✓ Casting.
- ✓ Setting.
- ✓ Finishing.

With the rising availability and affordability of these services, retailers can offer custom orders or conceive of an assortment of private label jewelry with confidence. This month, we feature one successful service bureau and highlight its range of services to the industry.

Skinny Dog Design Group Inc.

Scott and Jennifer Janiak-Ross began their design studio in 1994. They've designed a variety of products for customers by focusing their combined talents in jewelry design and manufacturing.

The company specializes in 3-D CAD/CAM jewelry design, modeling and manufacturing. Jen is the design expert with more than 20 years of experience in professional computer graphics, 3-D and product design. Scott's been at the bench for over 10 years and is the in-house Revo



Scott and Jennifer Janiak-Ross with eleven-year-old Lizzie, the inspiration and namesake of their company, Skinny Dog Design Group Inc. In 1992 Scott and Jennifer founded the Greyhound Welfare League to alleviate the abuse suffered by racing dogs. The not-for-profit group of over 200 volunteers and eight veterinarians rescued and placed more than 500 animals (including Lizzie and her five adoptive siblings) in loving homes. Lizzie is the only survivor from those days, made the trek to California and now dutifully reports to work every day to render unselfish emotional support to her staff.

milling, rapid prototype and modeling expert.

Scott explains, "We are a digital job shop. We will do a part or all of our customers' design and manufacturing. Our business is to help our customers with their needs, even if they are currently involved with CAD/CAM or not." Their clients are retailers, designers and manufacturers.



The pendant, shown as a rendering and a finished piece, is a conceptual design of the Eiffel Tower featuring a well-cut kunzite as its center-piece. Gemvision's Matrix software was a natural tool for Jen to use, given her experience in graphic design. Because the program is written for jewelry designers, factors like calibrated or custom gemstone sizes are built in to make quick work of layout and setting. Their client, a gemstone dealer, liked the piece so much that Skinny Dog subsequently modified the design to accommodate various shapes of center stones to offer more options for his customers.

Using Matrix, Skinny Dog can take a photo or drawing of just about anything and turn it into a jewelry item (or line of jewelry). This photo is of an old bar and club called Pawley Pavilion in Pawley's Island, NC, a popular local hangout for generations. It was destroyed by a hurricane, but the community continues to hold an annual commemorative reunion. The image was provided by a Pawley's Island jeweler who commissioned Skinny Dog to create an entire line with the theme to include cufflinks, charms, a moneyclip and earrings.



Skinny Dog provided its customer with Gemvision Matrix renderings like these so that he may take orders for various pieces from the line designed for him. The manufacturing retailer owns a Gemvision Revo 540 mill but does not have or use Matrix design software. Upon approval of the designs, Skinny Dog delivered them as Matrix renderings and Revo 540 files (code for the mill) so the customer could do his own milling on demand.



Design ideas can come from nature, man-made things, or from other art forms. In this example, the sections of milled wax borrowed their intricate look from hand-carved floral patterns on folding screens. After interviewing the client, Jen photographed numerous examples



and gleaned from them the most attractive and intriguing carved elements. She then scanned them as 2-D images and transformed them into 3D forms to fit the shape and scale of the jewelry pieces.

These Art Nouveau-influenced earrings are examples of the graceful, organic forms that can be produced using Gemvision's Matrix software. This customer had acquired a Tahitian pearl pendant from Skinny Dog and wanted a pair of earrings to complement it. Jen, who is in the habit of doodling pages of fanciful shapes, discovered the perfect earring design among them. With only slight modifications and proportioning in Matrix, she produced this pair – to the customer's delight.





Licensing and Copyrights for Corporate and Trademark Jewelry

Preventing unauthorized copying is paramount

Skinny Dog Design Group Inc. of Long Beach, CA, also provides design and production of corporate and/or trademark jewelry. The pictured example is a licensed piece for The Walt Disney Co. Skinny Dog will neither produce unlicensed pieces nor alterations or interpretations of unlicensed pieces. The company asks clients for a copy of all licenses to keep on file (Skinny Dog does this for its own protection). Skinny Dog also willingly signs nondisclosure agreements with its customers.

Scott states affirmatively that any and all materials received from customers for use in production – files, images or samples – are returned to the clients upon completion of the job. Furthermore, Skinny Dog Design Group does not retain any rights to content.

The company also does specialty work for other CAD/CAM designers or service providers. When a job is completed, the clients receive tutorials so they will know the techniques that will enable them to do the work themselves in the future. The customers retain all rights to production.



An innovative new system called SensAble ClayTools™ has enabled Skinny Dog's creativity to soar, while saving time. ClayTools technology employs a 'haptic arm' device in conjunction with a keyboard, allowing the user to visually sculpt and manipulate models with tool in hand. The system is effective for jewelry work when used in tandem with Matrix software. In this example, a customer requested a pair of cuff links featuring the black bear shown in the photo.



Jen built the cuff links and basic structure of the bear in Matrix, creating a mesh bear to ClayTools, which converts the surface to a finer gauge digital "clay," and proceeded to methodically sculpt and detail the topography of the bear. When satisfied with the form, she was able to import and add "fur patterns" from various sources and file options.



After reducing the size of the file, she exported the bear back to Matrix, assembled the appropriate parts and prepared a Rev0540 file to send to mill master Scott for completion of the models.



Through 3-D jewelry design, Skinny Dog is capable of producing engraving that has a realistic hand-engraved appearance. This example is a Sheriff's badge commissioned by Kendall County's finest for an esteemed retiree.

Regardless of the request, 3-D design and manufacturing service bureaus work toward meeting your goals offering retailers, designers and manufacturers an array of options which are cost effective, labor efficient and profitable.

For more information about Skinny Dog Design Group Inc. contact Scott and Jennifer Janiak-Ross at (562) 436-7237 or waxgirl@skinydogdesign.com. You can see a range of their work at www.skinydogdesign.com.

For a directory of companies providing jewelry design and model making services using CAD/CAM to the trade, visit www.gemvision.com and click on "Service Bureau Listing."

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Dimensional, sculptural forms are a specialty of Skinny Dog, as shown in this Matrix rendering of a patterned gray-black pearl ring which they rebuilt for a customer. Skinny Dog has been called upon to build reproductions of customers' jewelry that's either so worn it's falling apart or to recreate lost items. In the case of loss, the work must be done from photographs to recreate the pieces. Unlike wax carving, where material is taken away, Jen builds components and assembles the models in Matrix. There have been countless clients for this unique service, including those seeking to replace one lost earring from a treasured pair or hoping to duplicate an heirloom of intrinsic value.

This installment of Design Focus was sponsored by Gemvision Corp. For more information related to Gemvision products and services, call (800) 357-6272, go to www.gemvision.com or e-mail info@gemvision.com.

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