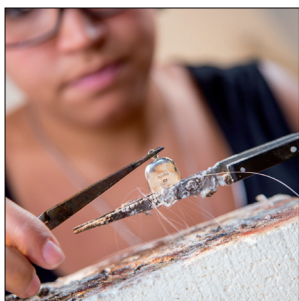
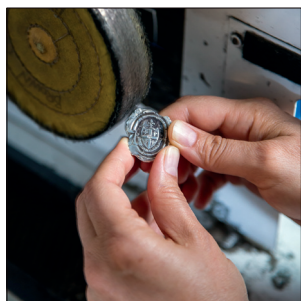


Danielle Wilmore and Wade Papin manage to juggle a happy home life (complete with a two-year-old daughter) and a thriving business





TOP TALISMANS

Imperfect by design? A Vancouver couple makes unique jewellery, their way **BY SHERI TADFORD + PHOTOS KK LAW**

Most designers craft their jewellery to look absolutely perfect. Not Wade Papin and Danielle Wilmore, the unorthodox duo behind Pyrrha. They have been breaking the rules pretty much from the moment they met, became a couple and started their business, about 20 years ago.

For one thing, neither had a background in jewellery. “We’re totally self-taught,” Papin says. That didn’t stop them from quitting their day jobs and plunging in. “It made it a must to succeed, not having any other means of support. I sold off a lot of my record collection to fund Pyrrha in the early days,” he says. “The rest of it we funded on credit cards. I wouldn’t suggest that to anyone.” In those early years, he explains, “we were doing soldering in our bedroom—very unhealthy stuff.” Now Papin and Wilmore have a separate design studio here in Vancouver, as well as a flagship store in Los Angeles.

Handcrafted using reclaimed sterling silver or bronze, Pyrrha’s talisman rings, necklaces, bracelets and earrings are based on 18th- and 19th-century wax seals. Each piece reflects the antique seals’ cracks and imperfections, and each carries a specific meaning. The Fidelity talisman, for example, shows a turtle dove on the tree of life, sym-

bolizing interconnectedness and unity, while the Power and Protection talisman features a crown with a dragon head coming out of it.

Hollywood has taken note of these eye-catching creations. Pyrrha boasts an enviable roster of celebrity fans, including Jennifer Lawrence, Jeremy Renner, Brad Pitt and Halle Berry. How do the stars stumble upon the brand? Papin explains with a laugh that their company is well situated, “between all the filming that goes on in Vancouver, and the fact that every third person who comes into our LA store is someone famous.” Pyrrha also recently launched a line of talismans in partnership with HBO’s *Game of Thrones*.

Papin and Wilmore are determined to resist the siren call of the US—or anywhere else, for that matter—and keep producing their jewellery here. “We love Vancouver, and we want to support it. We love to be part of an arts community that’s growing,” Papin says. “It’s always been our mandate, from the very beginning, to keep it local. There aren’t a lot of people doing that anymore.” Once again, breaking the rules. And once again, with great results.

Find Pyrrha jewellery at Barefoot Contessa (page 28) and BeautyMark (page 20), or shop online at www.pyrrha.com. **W**