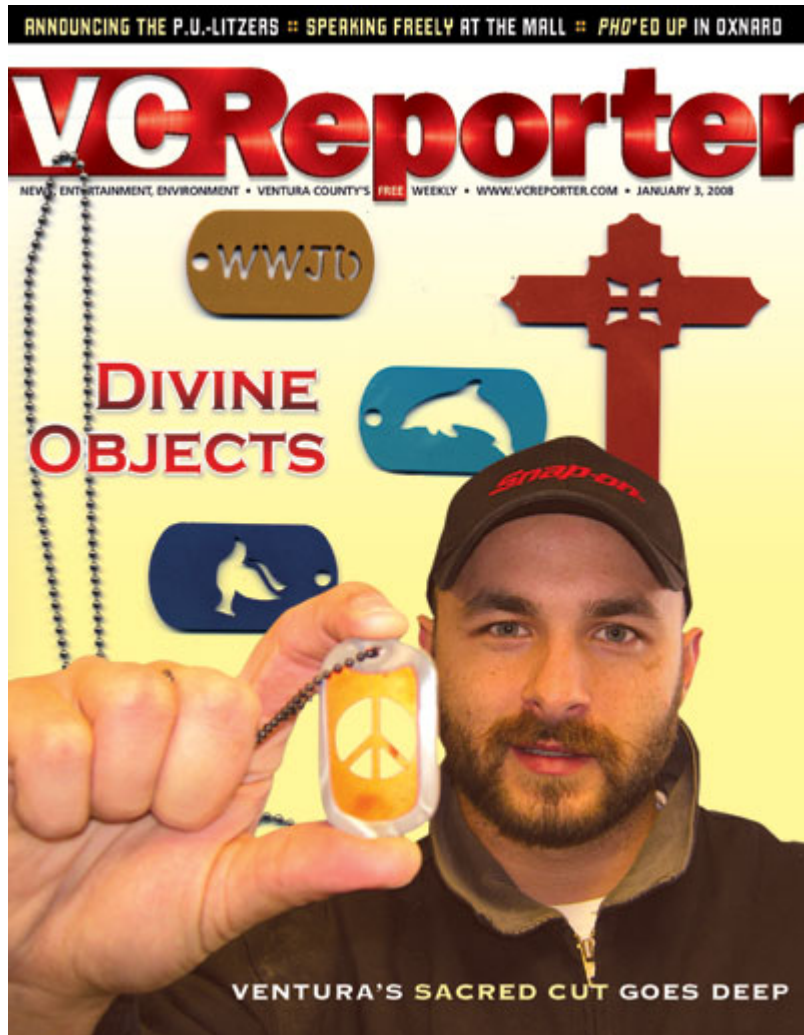


COVER STORY



On the cutting edge of sacred

Sacred Cut, a new company based in Ventura, uses holy water and sand to make jewelry

~ By HANNAH GUZIK ~



Shane Prukop, owner of Sacred Cut, holds up one of his creations.

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ingers beating a tattoo on the computer keys, Shane Prukop programmed the abrasive jet machine, stuck a piece of stainless steel under the diamond-tipped high-pressure water funnel and prepared to cut — sacred style.

“Here, put these on,” he said, handing over industrial goggles, his voice echoing in the Ventura warehouse at 4450-A Dupont Ct. “Now stand back over there for a second. This thing hasn’t been on yet today.”

Prukop flipped a switch and the giant computerized water saw came to life, humming over the sheet metal like a monk at prayer.

“See this?” Prukop said, stepping forward and lifting the covering around the cutting instrument. “It’s just water and sand coming out. That’s all we use to cut it.”

Holy water and sacred sand, that is, erupting out a three-hair-thick hole in the diamond with 52,000 pounds of pressure per square inch.

Exactly 2.8 minutes later, Prukop silenced the machine and popped a quarter-inch-thick sign out of the metal sheet that read VCREPORTER in perfect lettering.

Prukop’s process of making art is based, he says nonchalantly, on the Grand Canyon.

“We cut with water and sand. The Grand Canyon was formed from water and sand only. Our process is similar to the process Mother Nature has been using for millions of years.”

Prukop, who preened over his metal creations as owner of TruPart Manufacturing, a company that makes industrial parts for satellites, government organizations and private companies, decided a few months ago to integrate his artistic talent, engineering skill and spiritual beliefs to start a new venture.

The concept behind Sacred Cut is that customers can request that any refinable liquid, sand or herb that is meaningful to them be used to make their jewelry.

“We would like for Sacred Cut to help spread peace and goodwill,” said Ingrid Boehm, Prukop’s aunt and business partner. “We want it to really make a difference and it to be something that people will appreciate forever.”

Holy water, ocean water and water from a special place, like one’s hometown or favorite vacation spot, can all be used to cut aluminum, brass, copper, gold, pewter, silver and stainless steel. In the future, Prukop would also like to make jewelry from marble, glass and diamond.

“I highly recommend using dirt from outside [house](#) where you grew up, where maybe your family’s been living for 30 years, because that’s sacred for you,” he said.

By hand, Prukop creates and designs necklaces, bracelets, key chains and other jewelry, often writing the computer programs for the abrasive jet machine. He said he is the only person in the world to use the sacred cut system to cut metal exclusively using holy water and sand.

“We’re the only company that is cutting with sacred elements,” he said. “This is our idea.”

But the 28-year-old former college football player and two-time business owner is used to standing out. He has already obtained a copyright on his Web site and is working on securing a patent for his jewelry creation process.

On owning two businesses, Prukop said, “It’s hard sometimes, and I ask myself, ‘What am I doing and what are my goals?’ And when I ask myself, ‘What are my goals,’ it all makes perfect sense.”

Prukop began working for his grandfather’s 30-year-old metal spring and stamping business, Tricoss, and soon decided to strike out on his own, opening his own metal manufacturing business. But eight months ago, after a conversation with his grandmother, Prukop’s focus began to shift from business to spirituality to art and back again like a dharma wheel, one of the symbols he now uses in his jewelry.

“My grandmother had a friend of hers who wanted me to cut out some angels,” Prukop said. “We were all sitting around at the Thanksgiving table and we were talking about it. Then these ideas just came out, and I began to think about prototypes of angels and other spiritual things I could make.”

Raised Catholic, Prukop now describes himself as a spiritual person who is open to all sacred forms of expression, which is shown in the images of crosses, peace symbols, angles, doves, ohms, Christian fish, the Star of David, hearts and Reiki he uses in his jewelry. Many of his creations look like military-issued tags, except for their message.

“Dog tags are usually for [war](#), but we’re bold enough to make it about peace,” Prukop said, referring to the dove image he often cuts out on the tags.

Each piece of jewelry comes with a note card explaining the significance of the sacred symbol.

“Some of these religious signs we’re using, people don’t know what they are, or what the symbol means,” Prukop said, citing the dharma wheel as an example. A dharma wheel is a Hindu and Buddhist symbol representing the path to enlightenment.

As part of his business practice, which uses exclusively U.S.-made materials, he plans to give about 8 percent of Sacred Cut’s profits to a Ventura charity, or possibly start his own local nonprofit. He also hopes that local church groups and schools will use his jewelry for fundraisers. Most jewelry for sale or order must be bought wholesale from Sacred Cut, and is therefore very affordable. Fundraising groups can buy the jewelry at a discounted price and then sell it at whatever price they set, Prukop said.

“We’re that much closer to legacy,” he added, referring to his family’s longtime activism in local businesses, beginning with his grandfather Karl Schlosser, whose last name means “metal fabricator” in German.

“Customer service and the highest quality are the most important things in business to my dad,” Boehm said. “That’s why he’s done as well as he has and that’s the example Shane and I try to follow.”

Boehm said the jewelry has already touched lives. “I have a friend back east who bought necklaces for two twin girls in her family. One of the twins was just diagnosed with diabetes, and the other one was taking it really hard, so she got a ‘Fear Not’ necklace and the other one, the one who has diabetes, has a cross necklace.

“This is about being able to reach people and about how we can make a difference for people.”

Although Prukop still straddles two businesses, manufacturing metal and making jewelry, and takes care of his 15-month-old son, who Prukop calls his inspiration, he said the work is worth it.

“Being a business owner can be frustrating, but it also can be very rewarding,” Prukop added, pulling out a dharma wheel key chain from his pocket, which he carries around with him as his own “quality control.” “Now I can see someone on the street wearing our stuff instead of looking at a picture of a satellite and saying, ‘There’s my part.’ ” ★

Sacred Cut is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Prices range from \$3.90 to \$10.40 per piece. For more information, call (815) 550-8814 or visit www.sacredcuts.com.