

A stable business built on horse hair jewellery

BY ELAINE O'REGAN

Dublin's Gemosi launched last October with the novel idea of fashioning jewellery from horse hair for customers in Ireland and overseas. Horse owner Jenny Doran teamed up with jewellery maker Laura Whelan to design pieces for customers who provide hair from their own horse's tail.

The pair has since launched a range of eight ready-made necklaces and bracelets featuring woven horse-tail hair, sterling silver and Swarovski crystal details.

They are available to buy at gemosi.com, with prices starting from €79.

Doran, who has worked in the equestrian industry for a long time, described herself as a "passionate horse-lover".

GEMOSI

What it does: horse hair jewellery

Why it works: "Horse hair is actually a wonderful material to work with for jewellery. You can create a piece that will be a memento, either for a horse who is no longer with you - that you've had to sell or who has passed away - or that you might just like to feel connected to on a daily basis when you're not with them." - **Jenny Doran, founder, Gemosi**

"I know that - as horse-lovers - we get very attached to our animals and horse hair is actually a wonderful material to work with for jewellery.



Jenny Doran (left), founder of Gemosi, which specialises in making jewellery from horse hair, with designer Laura Whelan. Picture: Maura Hickey

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Gemosi has launched a new bracelet - Amor - for Valentine's Day, and also sells bracelets for men.

Doran came up with the idea for the venture after searching for a designer to fashion a piece of jewellery using her own horse's hair.

"I lost him about seven

years ago and I'd had him for 15 years and, even though he was 21, he died before he should have," she said. "I had his tail under my bed for seven years before I got around to doing anything with it.

"I was able to find a company to make a piece of jewellery using his hair, but in doing the research, I found that the services out there were either too expensive or too cheap.

"There wasn't really any company with a beautiful product at an affordable price, and I just felt there was an opportunity there."

To learn more about the design process, Doran took part in a jewellery crafting course run by Yellow Brick Road in Dublin.

"I never intended to make the pieces myself, but I felt I needed to know a little bit more about how pieces are crafted and the design process behind it. Laura was teaching the course. She's a horse-lover herself so that's how we got together."

In the future, Doran hopes to source horse hair for Gemosi's ready-made collection from animal charities which

will then receive a portion of the retail price.

"We're not quite there yet, as we have only just launched the collection and I don't work on Gemosi full-time," said Doran, who also runs Halcyon Days, a sales and marketing company for the equestrian industry.

"I am really enjoying Gemosi. Some hair arrived from Italy yesterday morning, a customer ordered two bracelets from Spain in the afternoon, and we've had enquiries from Australia and South Africa, so it's quite exciting."