

## Hal Bosco



Hal Bosco's artistic career began in the early seventies, when craft fairs were still a novelty. Inspiration came from the West Coast via "a remarkable fella from CA who made layered candles. He was everybody's idol, he had the longest hair, the best grass, and he was doing very very well as a hippie, (which was sort of an oxymoron). We started making candles with 30 layers of color. From a distance it looked like 3 colors, then if you got closer it looked like six, and so on, and we made a lot of money selling these. I got through college that way" explained Hal, who ended up with degrees in math and music as well as a PhD in Education during his years studying at UMass in Amherst.

The candle business was booming in those days. He would load up a Dodge Dart with 500 dollars worth of candles and sell out of them by mid afternoon. When one of his partners in wax began making sterling hoops and rings for sale, it didn't take long to realize the benefits of loading up the glove box with 500 dollars worth of silver items



instead of toting around the equivalent in heavy candles.

After 1973, Hal apprenticed with a silversmith from NY, Rubin Golder. "When I finished my education I was 31..that might have been '78 or so. At some point I stopped going to school. I thought, if I was to pass away today I would have nothing! so I started working, and I either taught or did the silver accordingly from then on."

Hal used to do quite a bit in gold, but now the work he makes for craft shows and sells in his online store is mostly silver, which has remained more affordable in price. A gold ring set with amethyst at \$145 used to be a money maker at craft fairs but that same ring would now retail at over \$600. "To say that you can't separate art from its

time, you might say in precious metals, I just do 'what's happening', and silver is having a real renaissance right now."

Hal works in upper rooms of his Greenfield home at a wooden tool bench he acquired in 1983. The tools he uses are the torch, the hammer, and the saw. "There's just five techniques we use: saw, hammer, form, file and finish." The marks of process, the heaviness of real silver and creative designs set hand crafted jewelry apart from machine made or assembled pieces. Hal also works with couples to make wedding and engagement bands. He can design new bands and set diamonds and other gems, as well re-size or re-configure heirloom sets. He enjoys the special customer relationships that grow out of custom work like this and at this point, Hal has worked on wedding bands for three generations of local families.



Hal's choice of craft is more than just what he does-- being a craftsman is a lifestyle. "I was a math major, a school teacher, a music teacher for ten years, but I am happiest being an artist, a craftsman...I am a fun loving guy, a laid back artist having a fun loving time--and I'm dead serious about this!" laughed Hal. "I think a holistic approach has worked for me. When I feel like doing something I just do it. Forget what day it is, what time it is, and just do those projects. I can make three or four kinds of earrings in two or three days that will last me for a year or so. Between the shows, the shops and the [Etsy](#) online store, I wake up every morning and go, Wow. I haven't been too much of a consumer. I haven't been too greedy about things. I've never had like a crisis with money. If I have enough dough to eat for a month, I'm



okay."

There's also music (Uncle Hal's Crabgrass Band) and athletic activities like kayaking that enrich his life, in between teaching at the Fletcher Farm School for the Arts in Ludlow, Vt and writing a book on Silversmithing. Hal says he enjoys working at the Shelburne Arts Co-op gallery and being part of the group for the past 5 years. "We're all doing the same thing, we want to sell our stuff, no big mystery! The co-op has benefitted from me and I have benefitted from them."