

# Fact Sheet 03: bench jeweller



## Introduction

A bench jeweller is the umbrella trade name for a highly skilled craftsman who can undertake the manufacture of jewellery. Bench jewellers may also have knowledge of several different skills as well as making, including stone setting or engraving and are highly regarded within the industry for their technical expertise, often having learned these through a traditional apprenticeship. A bench jeweller has the technical skill to take your design and turn it into a real piece of top quality jewellery. Bench jewellers are either employed in-house or are self-employed and undertake work for a variety of clients including Bond Street jewellers. Often the sort of work undertaken is short production, high value specialist pieces with diamonds or gemstones, and perhaps incorporating some other decorative work.

### **Bench jeweller:**

Bespoke jewellery maker  
Goldsmith  
**Master pattern maker**  
Diamond moulder  
Stone setter  
Polisher  
Specialist repairs  
and restoration

### **Jobbing jeweller:**

General production work  
Repairs  
Sizing  
Assembly

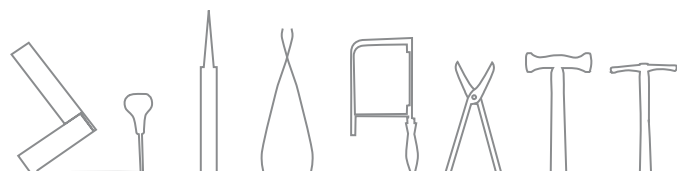
## Finding a bench jeweller

Bench jewellers are highly sought after craftsmen and don't all necessarily advertise their businesses, working quietly behind the scenes and getting work mainly via word of mouth. This is because their skills are very desirable in the industry and usually there is no shortage of work for them. So you will need to do some investigating – ask around and get recommendations. Go and visit the sort of suppliers that a bench jeweller might frequent like findings and tools shops in the jewellery centres and look on their notice boards. In London, the Assay Office notice boards in Greville Street and the Goldsmiths' Company are another good source of bench jewellers. Also check online trade databases.

## Preparing your design for a professional bench jeweller

As with the rest of your production, you can choose which aspect of the manufacture of your work you are interested in outsourcing. It could be that you just want the jeweller to add a joint or clasp to your work, or you may want to effectively hand over the entire design or assembly to them.

If you want them to do the latter, you need to supply as many details as you can about your design, including accurate measurements. Bench jewellers often use your drawing as a template for creating the piece so an accurately drawn to



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scale drawing is ideal. Make sure you indicate where stones will be placed and any findings. Be prepared for them to scrutinise your drawing so don't overcomplicate your design. Bench jewellers are very experienced and will be able to spot any potential issues and suggest alternative solutions. Remember to fill out a **purchase order form** and include a description of what you have given them, along with materials and your contact details.

## Costing and pricing

A bench jeweller usually charges by the hour or by the piece in the case of setting. They should be able to supply you with an estimate for how long the job will take up front so you have an idea. And there may be other costs such as materials, findings, VAT and shipping to consider. If you have a budget, don't forget to discuss this at this initial meeting.

## Bench jeweller FAQ

**Q: What is a bench jeweller – I keep hearing lots of terms about outworkers**

A: Quite simply, the word bench jeweller is an umbrella term for skilled craftsmen that work at the (jeweller's) bench and encompasses a wide variety of specialist skills.

**Q: How do I know if I am being quoted the going rate for the work I am commissioning?**

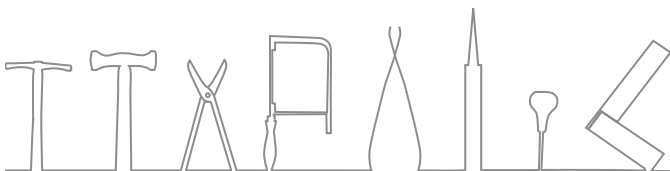
A: The jewellery industry is a very small, close knit community so you are not likely to be overcharged, but if you are concerned and want to make sure, you can get more than one quote and compare the difference.

**Q: How do I find a bench jeweller, they don't seem to advertise?**

A: Try asking other jewellers, look on tool shop noticeboards, trade databases, assay office noticeboards and business cards in findings shops.

**Q: If the bench jeweller loses or damages my work or that of my customer, who is liable?**

A: This depends on the trading terms and conditions of the jeweller you are working with. It is always best to find this out beforehand, particularly if you are dealing with high value goods. You can also take out 'entrustment cover' through your insurer. See **Fact Sheet 02: approaching a manufacturer**.



*“There are opportunities out there and I need to check my emails. Before I would just sit at the bench. I know now you have to get involved and the benefit is that you get to be seen. Share your knowledge, otherwise you sit on your own and no one knows you.”*

## Glossary

### **Assembly**

Fixing together by soldering or other means of multiple components to form a complete piece of jewellery

### **Diamond mounter**

The skilled craftsman who makes the framework of the piece of jewellery, ready to have stones set usually by hand

### **Master pattern**

A model of a piece of work that is to be put in to production – commonly made out of sterling silver or wax.

### **Sizing**

The process of reducing or increasing circumference of a ring to the correct size

## Databases of industry specific trade services

The following websites hold information about trade services, equipment suppliers, products and educational courses:

### **benchpeg: [www.benchpeg.com](http://www.benchpeg.com)**

The jewellery industry’s leading creative and digital communications network

### **British Jewellers’ Association Trade**

#### **Product Search: [www.bja.org.uk](http://www.bja.org.uk)**

A membership organisation that represents the jewellery industry

### **Ganoksin: [www.ganoksin.com](http://www.ganoksin.com)**

An international online resource for the jewellery industry

### **The Goldsmiths’ Company Technical Portal:**

#### **[www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk](http://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk)**

A supplier database of trade-to-trade services and suppliers

## Acknowledgements

Justin Wilson, Designer and Manufacturer

[www.jwjewellery.net](http://www.jwjewellery.net)

