

As seen in *Horological Times*

BY AMY DUNN

Modern Operation in Historic Setting Gives Business a Boost

A Passion for Horology

Whether it's on the phone or in person, the first time you hear David Berghold speak you'll recognize his passion for horology. The owner of The Last Wind-Up became fascinated with watch and clock repair while attending the South Kent School in Connecticut where an after-school club was offered. The club's volunteer teacher was Adolph Amend, Jr., one of the first members of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors.

Berghold says the deciding moment for his career came when Amend brought in a briefcase full of pocket watches. Berghold recalled, "We opened the backs, and we were all looking at them, and that was just it—I saw a treble hook set and I had to get one. I wanted to figure out how to take it apart and put it back together."

Berghold began to visit antique markets and flea markets with Amend on weekends. He'd pick up a

timepiece, take it back to Amend's place, and "do the clean and oil on it." He remembers the first one was an 1880s Hampden watch they didn't have time to get back together. So instead of cracking the books, that night in his dorm room, Berghold put the Hampden back together. "I showed it to Amend the next day and he comment was, 'You did good.' That started the addiction."

An important business lesson Berghold learned early on was from his father, however, who worked in the financial industry. He remembers excitedly telling his dad how he picked up a watch worth \$350 for just \$120. "The watch isn't worth \$350 until you sell it for \$350," replied his father. Lesson learned.

Taking the Passion on a Journey

Berghold also met Dana Blackwell, who left a lasting impression on him. Blackwell was curator of the American Clock and Watch Museum in Bristol, Connecticut. He also revitalized the E. Howard Clock Company as vice president, and rubbed elbows with Henry Fried. Berghold then took his passion to London where he apprenticed with an English watchmaker.



Chandelier, drop ceiling and upgraded display lighting create a warm and inviting showroom image.

Back in the United States in 1986, Berghold continued to pursue his career. He walked into Christies Auction House in New York and simply asked for a job. The director, Jonathon Snellenberg, offered to take him on as an intern. That was all he needed to hear as he launched into his newest position. Later, Berghold moved to Boston and completed his college degree in philosophy before setting up a small watch and clock repair business.

While visiting his parent's ranch near Bozeman, Montana, he was drawn to the store front of Bozeman Jewelry. Shortly thereafter, he decided to move west and The Last Wind-Up business was born.

Establishing Roots and Growing the Business

The move to Montana in 1990 seemed a formidable risk at the time. The combined rent for his new store front and a small apartment was nearly triple what he was spending in Boston. He worried if there would be enough repair work and retail business in Bozeman for him to make it fly. "It was a challenge," admitted



Jeana Kroes was the first CW21 watchmaker in Montana at the bench of The Last Wind-Up.

facture and sell complete watches. They co-founded a separate company called the Montana Watch company.

In 2009 Berghold brought in Jeana Kroes to put her Rolex USA experience and WOSTEP certification to work at The Last Wind-Up bench. Kroes was the first CW21 watchmaker in the state of Montana. Berghold continued to grow by attracting customers through his store front on East Main Street and through an effective website.

Streamlining the Repair and Restoration Operation

In 2010, Berghold realized his off-the-shelf envelope method for accepting and tracking repairs was antiquated and needed updating. Enlisting the help of a programmer, Dave made a small investment to put The Last Wind-Up repair form online. "This software has made it possible to accurately track all repairs, whether they come from walk-in customers or from any part of the country," Berghold said.



The Last Wind-Up owner, Dave Berghold, restoring and repairing watches.

Berghold. "It was one of those things where I said: 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained.' You have to take a risk."

By 1995 he had built a staff of three who shared his passion and dedication to the craft. But the limited space, combined with the work volume, created tight working quarters. "We were cramped," Berghold said. "The three of us were having lunch on one TV table." He expanded by building a separate garage with a work studio on top. And during these lunches, Dave and an employee came up with a concept to manu-

In a few clicks, customers input and obtain information on their repair:

1. From home page of www.lastwindup.com click Repair Form icon.
2. Input info and click Submit Request.
3. Receive e-mail confirmation and shipping instructions.
4. E-mail confirmation is sent upon arrival of timepiece for estimate/repair.
5. Watch repair technician sends detailed estimate of work and cost via e-mail.
Customers choose to accept or decline.
6. When work is complete, invoice is automatically e-mailed for payment.



Manager, Jill Yoder, easily tracks orders and repairs via computer.

Each e-mail communication contains useful information about the process and instructions on what customers should do next, or how the Last Wind-Up is handling orders. Once the invoice is sent via e-mail, the customer is also offered several payment choices including a secure online payment option. Order information is automatically entered into the database for easy tracking during the repair process and for future communications and marketing efforts.

An Organized Repair Process

During the repair process, all timepieces are kept in heavy-duty zip-lock bags with the repair form. Job number, customer name and contact information can be seen through the bag. All jobs have a plastic container that fits securely to a wall-mounted hanger keeping it simple to see and locate a job on a moment's notice.



Customer timepieces are kept in clear plastic bags and wall-mounted for easy tracking during repair process.

The plastic bins are also used to store other material, such as a compartmentalized movement tin, a new replacement bracelet or strap, or any additional parts. Different large bins are used for watches requiring estimates and watches ready for repair work.

The online web form is updated when a job is started. Watches are assigned to a specific bin through completion of the work. When the work is done and the job has been invoiced via the online form, the watch is kept in the safe while awaiting payment and pick-up by the customer. "The system makes it simple and quick to track or look up past repairs," Berghold said. "With a few strokes of the keyboard, repair information is available to any staff member, assuring transparency and fewer interruptions for our watchmakers and clockmakers."

New Operation with Historic Charm

After 20 years in the same location in Bozeman, Dave Berghold moved The Last Wind-Up down the street to the location of the old Bozeman Watch Company. The building was substantially more spacious with much of the infrastructure already in place. It houses his repairs and retail stock and provides plenty of



Wall cases display mantle clocks (opposing walls) and vintage grandfather clock (center). Antique display cases also serve as customer counter.

room for his staff of six.

"The traffic in our expanded location has been phenomenal," said Berghold. "Our store window is substantially bigger and our showroom has breadth to it." Berghold's renovations combined their modern processes within the historic setting. They brought their turn-of-the-century showcases with them and complemented the look with a brilliant chandelier.



The 1880s Tower Clock displayed in the southwest window of The Last Wind-Up often draws a crowd.

Berghold says people are commenting on the new showroom look. They're asking where he got the new showcases—they don't recognize them from the old location. Berghold believes the image in the showroom builds the customer's image of the business. He recently bought a tower clock to restore with plans to place it in the southwest corner window. It needs a fan, strike, levers, weights and a pendulum. He and a friend have already restored the 1880s tower clock in the front window. Berghold notes, "I just had the feeling that the mechanics of it, the proportions and the intrigue of it would be a customer magnet." More new lighting is scheduled to better display the mantle clocks. Antique floor cases will soon be outfitted with low-watt LED lighting to reduce heat buildup and lower their energy consumption.



Tidy work area.

In the watch repair rooms, stainless steel walls help reduce dust. Drop ceilings with good lighting and ventilation make them warm and inviting. Creating the same cleanliness and order in the workshop area was integral in the move to the new location. "If the business showroom is untidy and lacking order, then, in all likelihood, so is the repair facility," says Berghold. "In an effort to gain a greater respect from your

customers, the showroom should be as polished and orderly as the workspace for service."

The Last Wind-Up makes every effort to keep time with changes in the industry, from upgrading their timing machines and tooling to streamlining their organization of parts and material orders. They also believe a strong internet presence is key to future business success: It projects a positive message to the world while they enjoy the quality of life and work in a picturesque Montana town. ♦



Long-term staff contributes to the success of The Last Wind-Up (L-R: From left to right: Diana Weber-Bookkeeper, Lynda Livingston-Sales, Jim Arens-Clock Technician, Jill Yoder-Manager, Jeana Kroes-Watchmaker, Dave Berghold-Owner & Watchmaker).

A Fascinating Repair Request

One of the more interesting repair requests was for two 1850s watches recovered from the S.S. New York which was sunk in the Gulf of Mexico during the Mexican-American war. One watch was a Continental Fusee, the other was a gold-cased English Fusee. "One arrived in a Tupperware with saline solution," said Berghold. "It just fell apart. Every screw, hinge, mainspring or hairspring almost disintegrated upon contact."

Restoration wasn't financially feasible so he suggested cleaning things up to display in shadow boxes. During cleaning Berghold found the steel hands had left an imprint on the metal dial which coincided closely with the time the ship had sunk.

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