

90 YEARS YOUNG

A local icon with a historic family tradition, GEARYS celebrates nine decades in Beverly Hills.

OPEN THE CHAMPAGNE AND RAISE your glass! It's time for a toast—using only the finest crystal, of course—to the 90th anniversary of GEARYS Beverly Hills. The town's oldest family-owned business will be celebrating all year, says CEO and President Thomas J. Blumenthal. He points out, however, that the iconic shop known far and wide for its luxury merchandise had humble beginnings.

It was in 1930, the midst of the Depression, when H. L. Geary first opened the doors of his brick-front general store, which carried goods that ranged from cosmetics to hardware. "GEARYS grew up with Beverly Hills," says Blumenthal. The community embraced the business, and when Geary

passed away in the early 1950s, a few local families tried to run it. Enter the Meyer family, Blumenthal's grandparents, who took it on and made it a go.

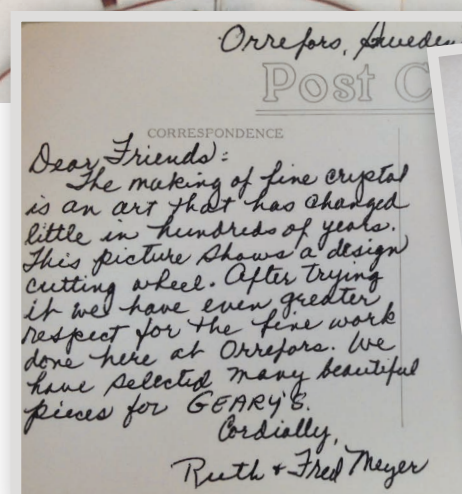
Fred Meyer, who held the housewares concessions in a couple of local department stores, always "looked for opportunities," says Bruce Meyer, Fred's son and CEO of



GEARYS from 1977 to 1997. When the Meyers bought GEARYS in 1953, the whole family became involved. "Father was the inside guy—finances and operations," says Bruce. "My mom, Ruth, was as active as my dad. She did public relations and merchandising and had a lot of opinions. She was a force of nature."

"My sister Susan and I were in high school and in the store after school and on weekends. There were years of hard work and fine tuning as we focused on prestige merchandise—brand names and great design."

The Meyers traveled the globe looking for the newest and the best, introducing now-familiar names like Baccarat, Lalique, Waterford, and Wedgwood to their tabletop



OPPOSITE PAGE (FROM LEFT): Jack Blumenthal, Susan Blumenthal, Thomas J. Blumenthal, Raylene Meyer, and Bruce Meyer at the GEARYS on Rodeo opening. THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): H. L. Geary storefront circa 1930; Ruth and Fred Meyer, with their son Bruce Meyer, seeking new products in Japan during the 1970s; the innovative "barricade art" installed during a GEARYS renovation in 1996; the Meyers experience crystal engraving at Orrefors glassworks in Sweden; postcard from Ruth and Fred Meyer to friends and clients from Orrefors, Sweden.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GEARYS storefront circa 1950; Thomas J. Blumenthal tries his hand with Jasperware at the Wedgwood factory in Stoke-on-Trent, England, as his brother Jim, grandparents Fred and Ruth Meyer, and Wedgwood Chief Potter Frank Brooks observe; Fred Meyer, Florence Venet, Lloyd Sorensen, and Bruce Meyer; sales associates gather for a meeting on GEARYS' iconic staircase.



lines. To help publicize the offerings, Ruth did about 50 speaking engagements a year, talking about trends and gifts to women's groups.

As Bruce Meyer gradually took more of a leadership role, GEARYS emphasized style and exclusivity and embraced a number of merchandising innovations. The company expanded its reach by initiating a robust mail-order business in the 1960s, organized

bridal fairs, and began its signature Gift Letter Registry, which added flexibility and ease to wedding preparations. The store's brick façade was replaced with its current classic look, while the interior was beautifully redesigned for the times.

Jewelry and watches like Rolex and Patek Philippe became an important part of the offerings after 1997. At that point Bruce Meyer was ready to retire, and GEARYS

was sold to Ross-Simons, an East Coast jewelry firm. The family connection continued, however, when the new owners hired Blumenthal as Senior Vice President and General Manager. Having started in the stockroom at age 13 and later turned to sales and marketing, he knew the business intimately. And in 2003, after Ross-Simons itself changed hands, Blumenthal reacquired GEARYS Beverly Hills.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Merchandise Manager Lloyd Sorensen, Stock Room Associate Henry Gisbrandt, and Bruce Meyer at GEARYS in the late 1980s; Rolex Boutique, Santa Monica Place ribbon cutting ceremony, attended by Thomas J. Blumenthal, store executives, city officials, and city leaders; Elizabeth Taylor with Thomas J. Blumenthal at the GEARYS launch of "House of Taylor" jewelry; GEARYS continues to innovate with inspiring lifestyle displays.

GEARYS has always been proud to call Beverly Hills its home. "Beverly Hills has made us what we are," says Blumenthal. "We've been committed to being community advocates and supporters."

In recent years the company has grown incrementally, opening multiple Rolex boutiques: one on Rodeo Drive, a second in the Westfield Century City mall, and the third—one of the largest Rolex boutiques in

the U.S.—in the Santa Monica Place mall. Blumenthal continues to travel the world, looking not only for the latest and greatest merchandise, but also for antiques and one-of-a-kind pieces. And though customers may tend to be a bit more casual than in the past, "in Los Angeles people still like to entertain on a grand scale," Blumenthal says.

Throughout the store's history, its storied location—coupled with a commitment to

impeccable service and discretion—has attracted the biggest names in Hollywood, as well as presidents and members of royal families. "Oh, if these walls could talk," says Blumenthal. "We've always had a celebrity connection. It goes with the way we treat them; we respect their wishes and privacy." He adds, "We never do things the standard way."

Happy anniversary, GEARYS—and here's to the next 90 years!