



Making Wins Memorable

Custom-designed Pieces a Labor of Love

When Judy Wagner of Montana Silversmiths has the privilege of presenting a championship buckle, she says it sends shivers down her spine.

“I can see in people’s eyes how much these buckles mean to them,” she says. “They are valued possessions. They epitomize hard work, dedication and passion. And they make a statement: ‘This is not for sale.’”

Wagner has many opportunities to present championship buckles to winning riders across the country as Montana Silversmiths’ artisans are behind the buckles awarded by multiple breed and discipline organizations. She sees a direct correlation between the buckle recipients and the designers.

“Our artisans are passionate about their work and strive to develop pieces that reflect that dedication. They are just as enthusiastic about their work as the competitors in the arena are about riding.” Over the years, Wagner has observed what she calls common “championship” characteristics among those to whom she has awarded buckles. Here’s her short list of what sets champions apart from others:

Champions:

- Believe in themselves and hold an unwavering belief that they will succeed.
- Visualize their successes.
- Surround themselves with positive people.
- Set measurable goals with deadlines.
- Are disciplined, persistent and consistent.
- Have a deep love and boundless enthusiasm for their sport.

Besides their trademark silver buckles, Montana Silversmiths also makes other custom awards, including trophies and spurs.

While Montana Silversmiths is the award provider for most Western disciplines, the Hodges Badge Company dominates the award market for most English disciplines. For more than 90 years, they have been manufacturing “badges,” the precursor to what we know today as award ribbons. In the early days, the satin badges were worn by members of various lodges and clubs popular at the time. Fast forward and when automobiles replaced horses, weekend shows became popular and the badges were transformed into award ribbons.

Today, the company is still family-owned and operated, and has expanded its product line to include everything from a \$2 rosette to \$700 hand-cut European lead crystal vases.

Whether it’s a buckle, saddle, rosette or vase, one thing is certain: You’ve won.

Wagner sums it up: “These things are not for sale; they are earned. They are badges of honor.”

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