

Transcript:

Isaac Gottesman Discusses The Principles of dimend SCAASI with Ida Hansson

Ida

Ladies and gentlemen, and fellow gemstone and jeweler-obsessed folks, for this interview today, we're joined by Isaac Gottesman, the founder of dimend SCAASI here in Chicago. A jeweler known for custom engagement rings, deeply personal craftsmanship, and impeccable diamonds. Isaac, welcome.

Isaac [00:22]

Thank you. Great to be here, Ida.

Ida [00:25]

For people who are meeting you for the first time, can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you found your way into the jewelry world?

Isaac [00:33]

Sure. I was born in Israel, and after moving to the U.S. in the early 90s, I found myself drawn into the diamond industry almost by accident. I began wholesaling diamonds in New York and later in Chicago. Pretty much what started as a way of making a living quickly became a passion. Not just for diamonds, but for the emotional moments tied to them. I just fell in love with it. By 1997, that passion evolved into dimend SCAASI. And I've spent the last three decades, just about, helping couples celebrate some of the happiest moments of their lives. It's really an honor.

Ida [01:07]

That's amazing. So, what inspired you to open your own jewelry business instead of working for a larger brand or retailer?

Isaac [01:15]

Well, you know, I've always been entrepreneurial, but more importantly, I wanted freedom to serve people the right way. In big retail environment, everything is about quotas and scripts and budgets and need to do. I wanted a place where couples could slow down, learn, ask questions and feel genuinely heard, not sold to. Opening my own store allowed me to build a business based on honesty, education, and craftsmanship rather than sales tactics, which was very important to me. And I still feel very strongly about it to date.

Ida [01:48]

Right. That's awesome. You've been in the jewelry industry for quite some time now.

Isaac [01:53]

Yes.

Ida [01:55]

How has that experience shaped the way you work with couples today?

Isaac [02:00]

You know, 30 years in this industry teaches you patience, empathy, and the understanding that every couple has a unique story. I'm not just showing diamonds. I'm guiding people through a moment they'll remember forever. And it's amazing because today we have people coming in, couples that got engaged 15, 20, 25 plus years ago, and they still have memories that they recite, they talk about. So, whether someone spends \$2,000 or \$200,000, I treat them the same. My experience helps me eliminate the stress, simplify the process, and make sure they walk out feeling confident and proud of their decision. And more importantly, know exactly what they got.

Ida [02:41]

That's awesome. That's so nice to hear. The engagement rings are often once-in-a-lifetime purchases, right? So, craftsmanship and quality really, really matter. What would you say makes your craftsmanship or design process different from what people typically experience elsewhere?

Isaac [03:01]

Well, we combine old world craftsmanship with modern digital precision. Every ring is designed in-house. Every diamond is handcrafted to the T and hand selected. And nothing leaves our workshop unless I would proudly give it to my own family. That's how I look at it. We don't mass produce. Everything is intentional, custom, and crafted to last generations. And as I said, today we have clients come in with rings that were crafted 25, 30 years ago, and they still look amazing, albeit need a little touch of, you know, a little TLC, but still look fantastic. And really, long after I'm gone, I want at some point somebody else to look at my ring 50, 80, 100 years from now and say, wow, that ring was made beautifully.

Ida [03:47]

Yeah, I'm sure they will.

Isaac [03:51]

I won't be around to know, but hopefully that'll be the legacy I leave behind.

Ida [03:55]

Yeah, I'm really curious to know also how to start creating a custom engagement ring because this is really exciting. And can you walk us through what it looks like to create a custom engagement ring with you from the first conversation to the finished piece?

Isaac [04:11]

Sure. Usually, it begins with a conversation. We like to understand personality, lifestyle, budget is important, and also feeling what they want, the couples want the ring to express. Then we move to design. Sketches, 3D CAD renderings, wax molds, clients can actually try on. They see the piece evolve in real time. Once the

design is approved, our craftsmen hand set the stones and finished setting the ring with meticulous attention to all the details that were intended.

Ida [04:40]

That's awesome. That's so exciting. I would love to do it myself.

Isaac [04:44]

Yeah, it is. I mean, it's like, you know, when you see it come to life, people are just blown away. In some cases, people choose a particular style that we make over and again. A lot of our rings are just classic and people like that. But in the case where somebody designs their own piece and they see it come to life, it's really priceless for them.

Ida [05:03]

Oh, yeah. Yeah, this is truly amazing. So cool. So how involved is the customer really in that journey? Like, are they there for every step of the way or?

Isaac [05:14]

You know, they're involved as they want to be. Some clients want full creative input. Others trust us completely. Both are great. We love it when clients really want to be involved in the process of design.

Ida [05:27]

Amazing. Yeah, cool. So, on average, like, I know it takes a different amount of time for every ring because they're unique. But on average, how long does it usually take to create a custom ring engagement ring with you?

Isaac [05:40]

You know, we could be anywhere around three, four weeks to six weeks, depending on the design itself, depending on also the time of year, how busy we are. For example, this time of year is really, really busy. So that really depends. But I would say that in some cases where we create a unique design, And the couple shop together because oftentimes the ladies are very involved because they know what they want. What we sometimes do, allowing the guys to surprise the ladies, is set the diamond that they chose in a temporary style while we craft the ring itself so that there could be a proposal, a surprise proposal while we craft the ring. And later on, when the ring is done, set the stone in that ring.

Ida [06:24]

Wow. Okay. That's awesome. That's good to know.

Isaac [06:26]

Yeah. So, all you guys out there who want to surprise the ladies, that's doable.

Ida [06:31]

Oh, cool. That's awesome.

Isaac [06:33]

Even if they know they're getting it, yep.

Ida [06:35]

Yeah. Nice. I mean, every jeweler has a unique style, right? So, are there any specific techniques or traditions or modern innovations that really define your work?

Isaac [06:49]

Yeah, we embrace modern 3D modeling and laser technologies while still relying on traditional hand settings and polishing. It's pretty much the best of both worlds. Technology for precision and craftsmanship for the soul. They work hand in hand together.

Ida [07:02]

Awesome. Wow. Oh, and also curious to know, do you tend to specialize in certain setting styles or stones or is everything truly like custom?

Isaac [07:14]

We really do everything from classic solitaires to modern bezels to highly intricate vintage inspired pieces, natural diamonds, lab grown diamonds, fancy shapes, gemstones. We custom build around the person, not the trends.

Ida [07:28]

Right. That's awesome. Do you have a favorite gemstone?

Isaac [07:34]

I personally love rubies. A really, really pretty ruby is just mesmerizing. There's a ton of great gemstones. And for those who shop for gemstones, the world is so vast and large. So, the pursuit of a particular gemstone, a customer favors, is really fascinating at times.

Ida [07:52]

Nice. Yeah, I've seen a lot on social media recently, actually, different cutting styles that looks like a little star in the middle. I think I saw someone call it star bright or something. It was so pretty. It's amazing. So, if someone has their own gemstone, can they come in with that? Or can you order for them?

Isaac [08:13]

Yeah, we can do both ways. At times, people travel around the world. They fall in love with the gemstone that comes from a particular region that they visit. And, of course, they come to us and they want to design a ring around that piece. And we love to do it for them.

Ida [08:28]

That's amazing. I've heard that you and dimend SCAASI are excellent when it comes to diamonds, specifically. Being a bit of a gemstone and jewelry obsessed myself, I still feel... feel nervous buying gems and crystals and precious stones because of all like scary stories and people ending up buying fake gems and being scammed and all that you know?

Isaac [08:50]

Oh my gosh, yes. Of course.

Ida [08:51]

How do you personally ensure the quality and authenticity of the diamonds materials you work with?

Isaac [08:59]

Well, first of all I'm a self-proclaimed diamond geek. What I know about diamonds is often - could be a little boring to some - the ins and outs of how diamonds should be proportioned and cut, its angles. But every diamond we sell is either GIA or IGI certified. And I personally vet stones before they go into our cases. We're very transparent with customers. We show the certificates. We also do light performance analysis for those who are interested, even videos under magnifications. Quality isn't really assumed. Yeah, we don't want anyone to assume anything. We prove the quality of the diamonds that we sell.

Ida [09:35]

That's so good to hear. Amazing. Because that can be scary sometimes when it comes to diamonds and expensive pieces, right?

Isaac [09:43]

Of course. And you know what? The diamonds that we sell are all laser inscribed with the certificate number on the girdle of those diamonds. So, at any given time, it's like a VIN number of a car. At any given time under magnification, you can see that number is still there. And in fact, when our rings come in for service, the first thing we do is locate the laser inscription number and make sure it matches our records before we perform any work.

Ida [10:07]

Right, right. And beyond the ring itself, I think the experience, like the experience matters just as much almost. Like, especially for some people, who feels like nervous or overwhelmed, like the whole process of buying an engagement ring can feel quite daunting at times, right? So, when people walk into your store or reaches out for the first time, like online or something, what kind of experience can they expect?

Isaac [10:35]

The experience begins as you take the elevator to the 17th floor where we were at. Coming out of the elevators to your left, you see glass doors with a welcoming picture and name of our business. And as you walk towards the door, you feel excited. But once you come in, you're met with a calm, welcoming environment. There's no pressure, no intimidations. We ask questions, we listen, and we educate. People walk in nervous and leave feeling empowered. And it's really fantastic to see.

Ida [11:08]

That's awesome. So, I know many people buying an engagement ring and don't

fully know what they want yet. So how would you help them feel confident and involved in the process?

Isaac [11:22]

It's true. Some clients take less than half an hour to figure what they want and others take two or three visits. But we guide. We guide clients by showing shapes, metal colors, proportions, lifestyle considerations. Somebody might be a bit more physical, or a lot of traveling could be hard on rings, things like that. But we listen, we educate. Many clients say that they learn what they want, you know, in a short time. But like I said, others need longer time. Either way, we're patient. We work with everyone. And the goal is to bring clients to the point that they tell us what they want rather than we tell them what they need.

Ida [12:00]

That's good. That's brilliant, actually. And about maintenance, what kind of support or aftercare do you provide once the ring is finished?

Isaac [12:09]

Well, you know, first of all, all of our rings carry a lifetime warranty against wear and tear, or defects. So, if anything happened to a ring that was not done by heavy damage, then we'll stand behind it to the point that we might even choose to remake a ring, at no expense to the client, if we deem that something was wrong with the manufacturing itself. People get busy. Life is busy. And not everyone thinks of bringing the ring in for checks. We really encourage clients to bring the rings in at least every two to three years for a cleanup, a checkup to make sure if there's any issues that we start seeing, we can fix them right there and then. Much like you won't drive a car for five years without servicing it. It's the same kind of thing. So, we encourage clients to bring rings in as often as they could - probably every two to three years.

Ida [13:00]

Awesome. That's really great to know. Because you don't think about that often with rings. But yeah, that makes total sense.

Isaac [13:06]

No, you don't. For sure.

Ida [13:09]

And I'm also really curious to know about redesigns. We talked about that a little bit before. But how do you handle redesigns? For example, when someone comes in with an heirloom ring or wanted to update like an older piece?

Isaac [13:24]

Well, very carefully to start with! I will say not every ring needs to be redesigned, generally speaking. There was a case of a ring that went through the Second World War, was smuggled outside of Europe and ended up in this client's hands. And it came to me and wanted to redesign it. And in that particular case, the ring was so beautiful, and it carried so much historical significance that I... personally

refused to redesign that particular stone. But otherwise, generally speaking, and that's an exception, of course, generally speaking, when a client comes in, they want to design a ring. We go through some of what we do. We'll listen to ideas that they may have and start sketching out a design and get corrections from the clients as we come along with some ideas. Typically, take no more than a visit or two to put that together.

Ida [14:14]

That's brilliant. So interesting. Okay, I've seen that you have a lot of excellent reviews. But what do customers most often tell you that after they come to the process with you?

Isaac [14:29]

Most what we hear is how easy and stress-free the process felt. How they felt they were not rushed into a decision. How we haven't tried to make someone spend more than they felt comfortable spending. Most of our reviews are very assuring. I will say, though, that happy customers don't write as many reviews as we want them to, but we have hundreds and hundreds of reviews, and it's always beautiful to hear. But reassurance, generally speaking, of the quality, and how pleased people were with the entire process.

Ida [15:02]

Yeah, well, you must have a truly amazing service, I'm sure. I've read some of your reviews. Yeah, there - It's just wonderful. And trust is huge when it comes to something this meaningful, right? Engagement rings, they carry a lot of emotional weight, right? So how do you help customers create something that truly reflects the relationship and feels just right?

Isaac [15:29]

First of all, by listening more than we talk. Every couple has a story. We listen to the story; we translate that into a design. The details mean something and we make sure they're presented in the ring itself. And that's truly the art and the essence of what we do best.

Ida [15:47]

That's wonderful. And I know for a fact that pricing and authenticity can be utterly intimidating for some buyers and arguably the most discussed topics, right? So how do you build trust around those concerns?

Isaac [16:05]

You know what? The first word that comes to mind is transparency. We explain the characteristics of each diamond, show side-by-side comparisons. Just the stats alone on diamonds do not always represent the entire picture. For example, some natural diamonds, besides the characteristics for colors and clarities, could have different ways that the actual crystal itself or the crystal presents itself. Some could be a little milky, a little hazy, a little cloudy. And of course, everything is

listed on the website. All of our prices are listed on our website. There's no guessing.

Ida [16:39]

That's just great. Transparency is like the most important thing, I think. So that's important to hear. I know you've been in this industry for a long time now. Thirty years, I heard, right?

Isaac [16:52]

Yep, just about.

Ida [16:54]

And I'd love to know your perspective on this. What do you think is the biggest misconception people have about buying from an independent jeweler versus a big name retailer?

Isaac [17:04]

People think independents are more expensive or less trustworthy, less knowledgeable. In reality, we offer better craftsmanship, better value, and truly personal service that big chains simply can't replicate because they rely on the numbers. We do not. We're very personal, and that would turn that into an advantage.

Ida [17:23]

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, totally makes sense. So, asking for a friend. If someone is choosing between multiple jewelers, what's the one reason, you believe, they should choose you?

Isaac [17:37]

Well, because we genuinely care. This isn't just a business. It's personal to us. We're known for honesty, craftsmanship, and an experience that leaves people feeling confident and cared for. At dimend SCAASI, you're not just a transaction. You're part of our story. And that's everything in a nutshell.

Ida [17:55]

Oh, yeah. Brilliant. Brilliant, I love it. So I got to ask, I've seen a lot happening in the jewelry industry recently, and I would love your opinion on this. How do you see the engagement ring and jewelry industry evolving in the next few years?

Isaac [18:11]

Well, I think customization is becoming the new standard. Couples want something meaningful, not mass produced. Lab-grown diamonds too will continue to rise. Digital design will accelerate and transparency will matter more than ever. Especially now, with access to all the information that's out there.

Ida [18:28]

Do you see any new trends evolving?

Isaac [18:30]

We're expanding our design capabilities. We're introducing new personalization tools and elevating the customer experience even further; both in-store and online. We also recently branched into a watch division, which is doing tremendous. But I guess that's a whole different topic for the next time you and I sit together.

Ida [18:48]

Cool. So we're heading into 2026. Is there anything new or exciting coming up at dimend SCAASI that you're especially proud of?

Isaac [18:57]

Well, I guess I touched on that. The whole idea of focusing on watches, which I've done watches for the longest time, of course, for my clients. But we feel that watches is a continuation of what the engagement rings are for the ladies. Guys buy the ring, purchase the wedding rings. And for the actual guys themselves, buying a watch as a part of the engagement process for the wedding or as a wedding gift becomes just as memorable as the engagement ring. And this is something that I'm especially proud of, launching our SCAASI Watches division, which we'll chat about that next time. There's a lot to talk about.

Ida [19:34]

Yeah, that's awesome. That's a good idea to have the... to get a watch for an engagement present. That's amazing. I can't wait to see the SCAASI watches there. They will be amazing. It's like this chat has been absolutely wonderful and eye-opening, I must say. Now, for the closing question. For anyone listening looking for a jeweler they can truly trust with an engagement ring, what would you like them to know?

Isaac [20:00]

Well, we're here for you. Every question, every draft, every detail, this is one of the biggest purchases and moments of your life. deserve honesty, expertise, and someone who genuinely cares. That is - and always will be - our promise to you.

Ida [20:16]

Nice. Do you have anything else that you would like to say before we wrap up here?

Isaac [20:22]

I think we pretty much touched on everything. I do look forward to answering any questions. I do look forward to meeting our new clients and those who actually listen or read through this interview, answer any questions they may have. I thank you so much.

Ida [20:37]

Amazing. Ladies and gents, I hope you've been taking notes. Isaac, thank you so much for sharing your story.

Isaac [20:45]

Of course. Thank you. Great to be here. Great to be with you.

Ida [20:48]

And for anyone in Chicago, or beyond, looking for a meaningful custom engagement ring, this man right here is the real deal and definitely someone worth speaking to. Thank you so much, Isaac. I truly appreciate you taking your time to join me here today.

Isaac [21:04]

My pleasure. Thank you, Ida. Thank you so much.

Ida [21:07]

No worries. Take care and stay safe out there, everyone. Bye for now.

Isaac [21:11]

Bye-bye.



Call **dimend SCAASI** today on [1-888-502-1700](tel:18885021700) for any assistance or advice you may be looking for – or [Book Your Free Appointment](#).

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