

CATTLE CULTURE

by Lindsay King, assistant editor

Silversmithing

Working as a silversmith is much like being an Angus breeder — it takes hard work, ingenuity, innovation and maybe just a little WD-40® on occasion. Amy Raymond is both of those things; but she's also a wife, mother, sister, mentor and a friend.

As a fifth-generation rancher at Raymond and Son in Helix, Ore., Amy Raymond and her husband, Ryan, are raising their boys to think outside the box. Raymond set the example as she struck out to become a silversmith in 2003.

"In 2005 I had our first son, so I was really learning for the first two years," Raymond says of her now-growing business. "It's been in last three years that I have been pushing myself as a silversmith."

To keep herself focused, Raymond treats silver-making like any other job. After the boys leave for school and the cattle are fed, Raymond is creating silver magic in her shop for the rest of the workday. It's not uncommon that Pacific time works in her favor and Raymond is making cattle calls to the Midwest before hitting the shop.

When Raymond was looking for a trade to pick up, she considered leather tooling and bronze sculpting.

"I kind of fell into this silver thing because not a lot of people do it anymore, and I've always enjoyed

working with my hands," she says. "I started cold-calling people and asking if I could go work with them."



Amy Raymond

She found a mentor in Montana — Diane Scalse — who taught Raymond everything she knows. Scalse also inspired Raymond to pass the trade on to the next generation.

"If I can teach people how to make silver items easier and cleaner, then

that's something I want to invest in," Raymond says. She was an exhibitor at the Art of the Cowgirl event last year, but 2020 will give Raymond the opportunity to put her teaching skills to the test.

How it's made

When you walk into your local farm store and see the Montana Silversmiths case, it's easy to think those items appear by magic. It's not exactly primitive, but being a silversmith requires some heavy-duty shop tools.

"We buy a flat piece of metal — in different gauge thickness just like

steel," Raymond says. "You just form things with it. You can solder things on it or hammer it."

Perhaps the drill press is the most surprising tool in Raymond's arsenal. The most useful one? Her determination.

"When someone tells me I can't do it, that makes me do it just because I am stubborn," Raymond says. "I used to show sheep dogs and one lady told me I couldn't make a dog whistle out of silver."

She now regularly sells the dog whistles through her online storefront — Raymond Silver Co.

Though Raymond is clearly an accomplished silversmith, her ability to engrave puts her in a category all her own when it comes to custom silver work.

"I think you can get to a point where you need to get out and show your work," Raymond says of her preparation for a booth at the National Finals Rodeo (NFR). "I am at that point now where I need to reintroduce my work to the public."

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