

SOUTHERN ROLLS ROYCE



Diamonds, cars and imported clothing ... here are the people who sell you your favourite indulgences

MAREK LETOWT (34)

General Manager,
Aston Martin/Rolls-Royce SA

I knew I loved Rolls-Royce when I was 11 years old and travelled to the factory in England with my mother.

The regular Rolls-Royce customer is a person of means.

If Rolls-Royce was a religion I'd fast be converting people. We sold 15 Rolls-Royces last year. That's double what is sold in Monaco and more than Germany.

The most important thing to remember in my job is to never judge a book by its cover.

The question I most often hear is 'What colour does it come in?'

The question I most often ask is 'How does that relate to what you expected?' (I usually ask this after a test drive).

The one thing I will never forget was when a gentleman arrived at our showroom in a Rose taxi and walked out two hours later as a Rolls-Royce owner.

The most outrageous thing that ever happened was when a client asked for a specific blue for his new car and we didn't have the sample colour he had in mind. He reached into our sweets bowl and grabbed a chocolate in a blue wrapper and said that was exactly the colour he wanted. We ate the chocolate and then sent the wrapper to the factory in England for colour matching.

The most eccentric customer I ever met was a gentleman who asked for a safe to be custom-fitted in his car boot.

The most popular car on the floor is the Aston Martin V8 Vantage.

The most glamorous car on the floor is the Rolls-Royce convertible. The waiting list is two years long.

Rolls-Royce/Aston Martin

☎ 011 301 7100

126 Rivonia Road (corner Linden), Sandton, Johannesburg

PROFILE

CHRIS GREIG (49)

Co-owner of Charles Greig Jewellers

The first Charles Greig store was opened by my great-grandfather in 1899.

The question I most often hear from clients is 'is this one of a kind?'

The question I most often ask is 'how do you see yourself wearing this piece?'

Something I've always coveted in this store is this eight-carat emerald-cut diamond ring. The stone was cut in New York and it is the finest diamond I've ever seen. I've had it in the store for three years with a price tag of R2.5 million.

In store, the one thing I will never forget was helping Tina Turner select pieces for her entire orchestra in the early Nineties.

The most challenging customer I've ever met asked me to open the store on Christmas day because she'd overlooked a few people's presents. I had to squeeze this in between the church service and Christmas lunch.

The most eccentric customer I met was a lady who removed her tartan skirt in the store when we mentioned we were looking for kilts to celebrate our sidewalk sale.

The most outrageous request I've ever heard was from a young man who wanted to purchase a diamond body piercing. He also took off all his clothes in store to show us his tattoos.

The most popular items in the store are ice-white diamonds set in platinum, as well as the new trend: rose-gold jewellery.

The most glamorous item in this store is a seven-strand dewdrop diamond necklace containing 31 carats of diamond.

Charles Greig

☎ 011 783 2714

Shop U25, Upper Level,
Sandton City, Johannesburg



FRAN SADLER (58)

Store Manager,
Shimansky Jewellery

One of the highlights of my career was becoming the personal shopper for celebrities at Harrods Luxury Jewellery in London. I assisted sheiks, princesses, Cilla Black, Posh and Becks and their kids. They would arrive through a side entrance after regular shopping hours and we would put their selection on trays as they walked past the counters. This would go on for hours. Sometimes I would leave the store at 2 am. We'd stay overnight at Mr Fayed's hotel and be at work again first thing the next day. **The trick to selling fine jewellery is** to keep a distance, make eye contact, smile and never intimidate. You need merchandise that says 'buy me' and you need to be 100% on top of your window displays. Customers love windows.

The question I most often hear is 'Can I see the Millennium Ring?'

The question I most often ask is 'Is there something special you'd like to see?'

My favourite customer was a silver-haired American gentleman who came in with his bodyguard to look for something unique for his wife. His choice was so considered, he had such a sharp eye and he was so polite. He really left an impression.

The one thing I have always coveted in the store is the eternity ring. It's made up of 54 diamonds.

The most popular item in the store is the Millennium Diamond Ring and the My Girl Ring which has a patented eight-sided cut diamond.

The most glamorous items in the store are any of the large stone items and the two-carat diamond earrings.

Shimansky

☎ 011 784 6388

*Shop U23, Upper Level,
Sandton City, Johannesburg*



PROFILE

PAUL O'DONNELL (38)

Store Manager, Paul Smith

The regular Paul Smith customer travels, appreciates quality, isn't into heavy branding and has an understated sense of style. He's also pretty easy-going.

The most important thing to remember in my job is that I need to think like a stylist not a shop assistant. We can't send two different people off to the same event with identical outfits!

The question I most often hear is 'Are you Paul Smith?' And then (because of my English accent) 'How long are you here for?' We're hoping the real Paul Smith will visit us next year.

Something I've always wanted to own in this store is the zipped Tuxedo Jacket. It's a slim-fit jacket from our catwalk range.

The most outrageous items in store are the Paul Smith dog accessories: dog collar (R500) and dog lead (R1 800). As well as the huge, white Smeg-fridge-style changerooms.

You know you're a landmark when people give directions using 'the pink building' as a reference.

The most popular items in the store are any of our men's shoes (canvas, leather, washed suede) because guys struggle to find good shoes in South Africa.

The most glamorous items in this store are the ladies' luxurious Gladstone handbags and the flapper-style dresses.

Paul Smith

☎ 011 447 1074

*Cnr 4th Ave and 7th Street,
Parkhurst, Johannesburg*



PROFILE

SUMESH LALLOO (37)

Store Manager, Hugo Boss

To do this job I travelled to Hugo Boss headquarters in Germany to learn about the perfect fit.

I've been working at the Hugo Boss store for eight years, although I've been in retail for 15.

The question I most often hear is 'Where is Hugo Boss from?'

The question I most often ask is 'What is the occasion?'

The most outrageous request I've ever heard was for a bright pink woven suit.

The most eccentric customer I ever served was a broker who shopped aggressively. He had a ritual of buying an item of clothing from every fixture in the store.

The one thing I will never forget was when Mark Shuttleworth flew into South Africa straight after his Russian space mission and needed to be dressed that same evening for a banquet with the President. I got the call in the morning, grabbed some items from the store and drove straight through. Luckily, he was a perfect 38.

The one thing I've always loved in this store is the Hugo Boss suit.

The most satisfying experience I had in store was when a gentleman from the Congo came in looking for a wedding suit. The one he really loved was just a touch too big and he was bitterly disappointed. I offered to tailor the suit to his needs, but he was sceptical. When he came in again to try on the altered suit he almost started crying with joy.

The most popular items in the store are the Hugo Boss jeans and suits.

The most glamorous items in this store are the leather jackets.

Our most famous customers are Thabo Mbeki, Graça Machel, Brian Baloyi, Sir Vivian Richards and Sachin Tendulkar. ■

Hugo Boss

☎ 011 884 1437

Shop U61B, Upper Level,
Sandton City, Johannesburg

