

Hats off to Barrington designer

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What is the connection between an archeologist, hats, and the movies? Before you answer Indiana Jones, let us add one last clue - Barrington.

Barrington resident Paul Siracusa began his career as an archeologist, which led to a fascination with hats. "As an archeologist, I always wore a hat, especially during those long digs in the sun," he explained.

According to Siracusa, a hat's style has long followed its function: low crown hats to keep heat in and high crown hats to keep heat out. Cowboy hats were designed to keep the wearer warm, fan a fire, and even serve as a water mug.

In 1975, Siracusa began making hats, elevating them from mere functionality to objets d'art.

People clamored to buy hats he had designed for himself. "I sold hats right off my head!" he stated. Cripple Creek Headwear, named after the famous Colorado town, was born.

Technically, Siracusa doesn't make hats, he designs and stylizes them. He begins with a new hat and completely retools it. He draws in the personality of the wearer by working with colors and textures, and has incorporated personal mementos. In addition to the classic cowboy hat, Siracusa uses Panamas, straw hats, fedoras and, most recently, baseball caps. Enhanced corporate- and sports- themed hats continue to be a popular line.

Cripple Creek creations have been featured in several concerts, magazines, movies and television shows. Celebrities such as Cher, Elton John, Micky Mantle, Willie Nelson and Ronald Reagan are just some of his satisfied customers.

Through word-of-mouth and increasing retail presence, Siracusa finds that demand for his hats outweighs production. Several hours may be spent perfecting a single hat. "Nothing gets by me that is not 100 percent perfect!" he pledged.

His Web site at, <http://www.cripplecreekhats.com>, is under construction. In the mean time, you may contact him at (847) 381- 9490 for information.

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