

Is There A Chanukah Tree?

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ish Quarter.

The new symbolism of the menorah begins to emerge in the third century. They are found in synagogues and on gravestones. They are seven-branched menorahs. It seems the menorah was a symbol of hope that the Temple would soon be rebuilt.

The false Jewish messiah, Shabtai Zvi, also adapted the menorah as an emblem because of its messianic connotations. This might have been in response to the heavy Christian use of symbols.

Of course, the clearest illustration of the menorah is found on the Arch of Titus in Rome. It is a part of a scene depicting the booty carried off after the Temple was destroyed in the year 70. It is a seven-branched candelabrum with a unique double-

stepped pedestal.

Golda Meir insisted on taking that menorah as the symbol of Israel, thus reversing the exile and marking the beginning of the third commonwealth in Israel.

In any event, the rabbis ruled that eight lights were to be kindled to commemorate the eight days of Chanukah. This gave rise to the menorah, or more correctly, the *Chanukiah*, as the only true religious symbol of the holiday. Moreover, it is suggested that the menorah be displayed in the window (publicly) for *pirsum hanes*, "the commemoration of the miracle".

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Houston Jewelry & Fine Gifts has dazzling new store

By **LISA GACHMAN**

Houston Jewelry & Fine Gifts had its grand opening, Saturday, Nov. 6, at 9523 Westheimer. The store, owned and operated by the Solomon family, opened Sept. 18 to crowds of enthusiastic customers.

The dazzling, unique store offers fine jewelry, china and crystal, designer fragrances, fashion jewelry, leather goods, writing instruments and famous gift lines. Some of the distinguished brand names include: Rolex, Tag Heur, Bulova, Lasalle, Seiko, Nancy & Risa, Sal Praschnik, Zina, Baccarat, Lalique Waterford, Mikasa, Portmariann, Royal Dalton, Lladro, Cartier, Chanel, Cross, Parker and Monte Blanc - names one finds in the finest boutiques and department stores. However, at Houston Jewelry, one finds these quality lines at discounted prices.

Houston Jewelry features a large selection of diamond, gold, designer sterling and fashion jewelry, dozens of fine watch lines as well as an impressive collection of loose diamonds. Fine jewelers since 1953, the store's owners have worked closely to establish international diamond connections. "We've directed our buyers to search the markets for the finest product lines and present them to our customers at our traditional discounted prices," said Andy Solomon, president.

In addition, Houston Jewelry offers estate jewelry, vintage watches, landscape and fine art photography, antique books and various *objets d'art* as well as a computerized bridal registry. Store receipts will show customers exactly how much money was saved from the retail price by making the purchase at Houston Jewelry.

The Solomon family has built a state-of-the-art jewelry manufacturing and

watch repair facility for fine, modern and vintage mechanical watches. The company watch and jewelry buyer, Sean MacNamara, is a graduate gemologist and a specialist in vintage watches.

This family business was founded 40 years ago as Houston Wholesale Jewelers by Abe "Honey" Donsky.

In response to the continued and constant demand from former customers, Honey's daughter Dana, son-in-law Andy and grandsons Rex and Keith Solomon decided to open the new Houston Jewelry - an elite and unique specialty store, one with a discount. "At Houston Jewelry, we will continue the tradition, begun in 1953, of offering only the best for less," said Andy Solomon. A board member of the Retail Merchants Association and the Anti-Defamation League, Solomon is an active supporter of Houston's charitable and cultural organizations.

A large number of employees has been with the company since its inception in the 1950s. Customers will see familiar faces such as Sidney Solinger, Sal Vasquez, Harriet Tucker and Hershel Rich. "You can see the warmth and comfort on customers' faces when they spot an employee who has helped them for years. In fact we have three generations of families who have shopped with us since the beginning," Solomon added.

Trunk shows by international jewelry designers such as Sal Praschnik, Rigaberto, Maslalani Pearls and others will be featured in the fall. In November, Houston Jewelry plans to mail a quarter of a million holiday books featuring gifts and jewelry to its extensive list of customers.

Walking into the new Houston Jewelry, is like shopping on Fifth Avenue or Rodeo Drive - with a discount.

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