



Sole by One Hip Chic features handmade shoes

colour for most people? I've nearly 20 coloured scarves that I use to demonstrate this for my customers."

With Tamra's fashion savvy, it was only a matter of time before her optical business evolved into another realm. "My customers often consult me about various style choices. I was recently asked to help design a dress for a formal event for one of my customers. Last week, another customer asked for hair colour advice. Based on this fashion aspect, opening a complementary business to One Hip Chic Optical felt right.

"So, last December, immediately following the renovation project of the new location, Sole by One Hip Chic was born. The second floor of the business location houses handmade shoes from around the world. The shoe business is very different from the optical business. The seasonality of shoes and the variety of sizes offer a challenge the optical business doesn't have, but it's a challenge I welcome," Tamra concludes.

### LUNETIER LUDOVIC, BRUSSELS

A stroll along the streets of the historic Sablon area of Brussels regales the visitor with tempting antique shops, vintage clothing and current designer labels, charming cafés and speciality food shops – and the distinctive



Lunetier Ludovic Boutique exterior (photo: Thomas Van Den Driesch)

and original bespoke eyewear boutique, Lunetier Ludovic. "The shop opened in 2015," reminisces optician and owner Ludovic Elens, "and we specialise in bespoke glasses; we do feature some brands, but I am an eyewear crafter. That is my passion."

Lunetier Ludovic is a bright and airy space over three levels: the street level displays frames and is where customers try on the designs; the lower level is Elens crafts shop; and the upper level houses the office. "It was very hard to find a location; every week we went to a different location. The Sablon area has many interesting shops – art, jewellery, chocolate and luxury products," says Ludovic.

The frames crafted at Lunetier Ludovic are truly works of art. Clients choose their



Handcrafted Buffalo horn design by Lunetier Ludovic



Streamlined shop interior

materials from the intriguing collection that Ludovic has acquired – including sheep and deer horns that he works in layers. "We never throw anything out," says Elens, "as you never know when a particular piece of acetate or horn might be useful."

It takes about two weeks to create a design – and then two to three months for the crafting of the frame. "I want to design the frame that the wearer wants to wear," Ludovic emphasises, "as we have many clients who are unable to wear a regular frame from a designer or manufacturer – perhaps due to an abnormal facial issue. However, that can be overcome with the correct design and bespoke fitting. There are details in the designs that you may not see, but the wearer can feel."

An international roster of clients – from two-and-a-half-years old to 81 years old – wear Ludovic designs. Some clients are very specific about what they want. "We had a client who was a Roy Orbison fan, and he wanted frames exactly like what Orbison wore, so that is what we created."

Taking a step into the unknown, or trying something new, could feel daunting. However, independent opticians can expand their horizons and move beyond perceived barriers to possibilities – as One Hip Chic Optical and Lunetier Ludovic have proven. With a New Year on the horizon, perhaps this is the time to step out and move forward to new, stimulating and fulfilling adventures.



Ludovic Elens: "I am an eyewear crafter, that is my passion" (photo: Thomas Van Den Driesch)



Vintage meets modern in Italian acetate with a matt finish by Ludovic Elens