

# Peer Insights

## R E P O R T

### Q&A with Joan Hornig

Founder of Joan Hornig Jewelry

#### Principle Series:

*Wall Street veteran and philanthropically minded entrepreneur Joan Hornig sits down with Family Office Insights to discuss her unique career path, her ever-expanding jewelry line and why she believes in the concept “philanthropy is beautiful.”*



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Family Office Insights is a voluntary, “opt-in” collaborative peer-to-peer community of single family offices, qualified investors and institutional investors.

*Learn more at:*  
[FamilyOfficeInsights.com](http://FamilyOfficeInsights.com)

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**Q:** What was the impetus for launching Joan Hornig Jewelry?

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**A:** Although I always designed jewelry for my own purpose, the idea for the line came after 9/11. It became quite clear that I had to do something to give back. My career in financial services had afforded me lots of benefits, but I recognized that I wanted to do something very focused on “paying it forward.” I decided to build upon the precedents I saw in combining commerce with charity, particularly those of Paul Newman and Oprah. They used their commercial platforms to effectuate change, and I knew that the women I had met through work, our children’s schools and community involvement were not only smart, lively, and beautifully dressed, but, most importantly, active volunteers and community leaders. We had all spent time, energy and money in support of the work of non-profits. We all loved jewelry, and we all noticed and talked about each other’s jewelry when we were together regardless of venue. Why not use fashion to focus the discussion on other things we cared about?

**Q:** How was your transition from finance to fashion?

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**A:** The transition was not easy. I was in uncharted territory. I was already in my late 40’s and while I did have an MBA from Columbia my focus had never been on designing, manufacturing or marketing anything like jewelry! I had to draw on some critical skills, support and work experience. I went back to the basics – what were my goals and what strategies and supporting tactics could I employ to meet my objective? Fortunately, I had support from my family and friends who gave me encouragement when I needed it most and who opened doors to contacts in world of retail. I credit my girlfriend who asked me about a necklace I wore and where I got it when we were at the Guggenheim Museum. When I told her I made it and had lots of samples and designs in Tupperware, she asked to see them. She picked up the phone in my kitchen and called a friend she had been in a mommy and me playgroup with over a decade earlier. That friend happened to be a Divisional Manager at Bergdorf Goodman. When I arrived for a meeting with a First Boston tote bag filled with jewelry, they were rather shocked at my presentation. They asked, “Where are your jewelry rolls?” I didn’t even know what they meant. But when they asked if I was a business, I replied, “I could be.”

**Q:** How did you decide to incorporate the philanthropic angle into your business?

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**A:** There was never any question in my mind about using Joan Hornig Jewelry for charitable purposes. The real question was how I was going to do it. What I wanted to do was clear to me. I wanted to support the charities and organizations women who bought my jewelry cared about. Bergdorf’s taught me that people only buy what they want and that the jewelry had to be consistently appealing and stand on its own merit, regardless of my mission to donate to non- profits. In the beginning I donated to the charities my friends sat on the boards of in a show of support. Later, after the sales became consistent and significant, I was able to approach Bergdorf Goodman with the idea of allowing me to donate to the charity of each customer’s choosing. It is this mode along with the 100% of profit donation that has been the most novel in the field of social enterprise in the luxury space.

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## Q: What's next for you, your business and beyond?

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A: After 14 years in the business, I have watched a lot of changes occur in marketing and outlet opportunities for jewelry sales and other luxury products. Technology has accelerated the ability to broadcast one's message and showcase one's products. I have not leveraged it as of yet, but hope to in the near future. This means I have to do several things. My web presence must grow and be sophisticated and consumer friendly. My brand needs more name recognition so that Joan Hornig / Philanthropy is Beautiful® can be licensed to access a broader audience than jewelry. My dream would be to have a "Philanthropy Begins at Home" line, a "Philanthropy Lingers" fragrance line, and an office/desktop product line, "Philanthropy Begins at Work."

My business has enabled me to travel the world and meet people working tirelessly to make things better for the less fortunate. While I've been recognized as a philanthropist and social entrepreneur, it is I who have received so much knowledge, inspiration, unexpected friendships and encouragement to keep this giving model going and growing.

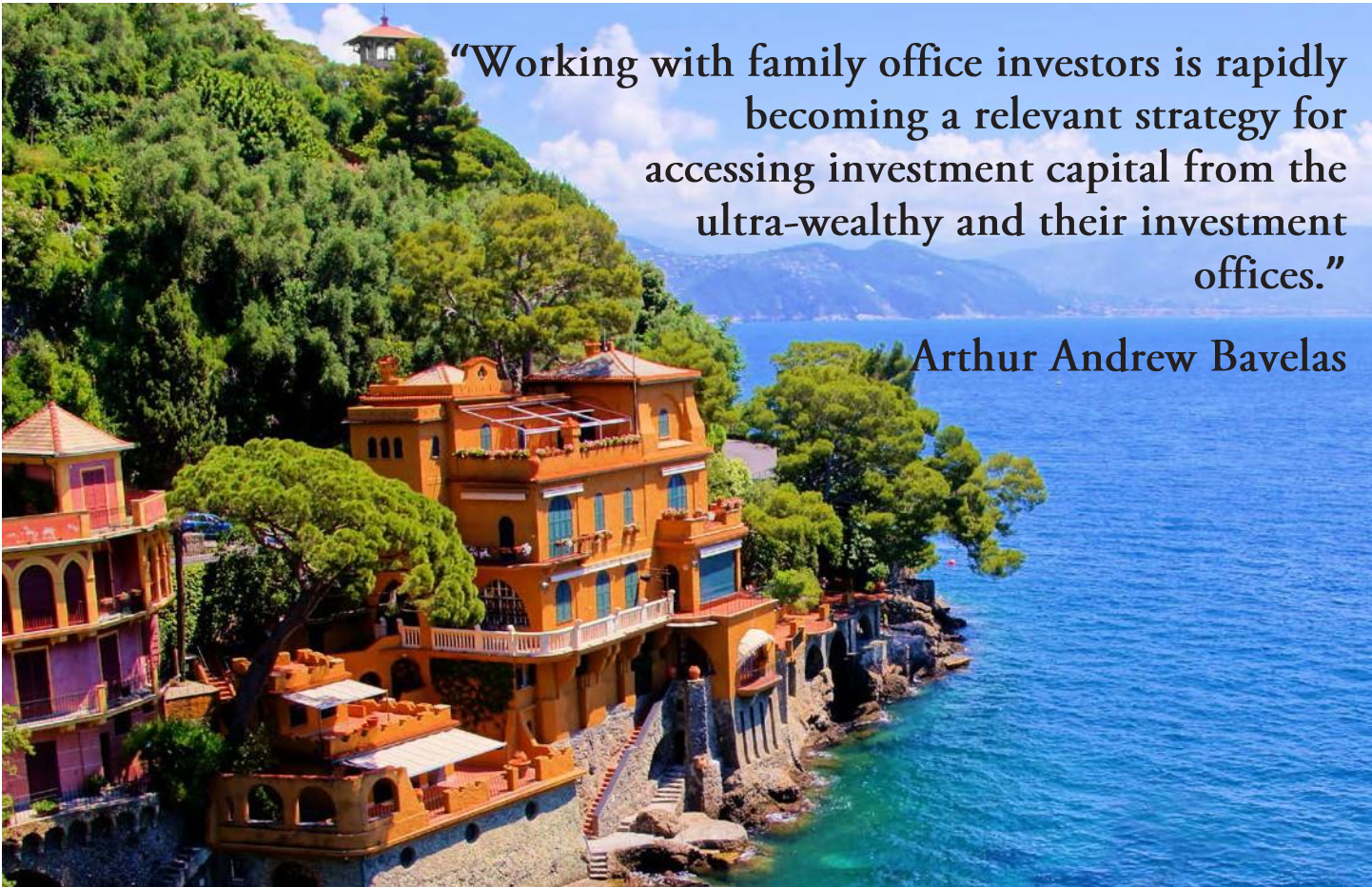
I want to continue to work with women who ultimately control so much of the wealth. My hope is that I can help them build effective philanthropic actions into their lifestyle and legacies. In the meantime, stay tuned for a coffee table book about ethical jewelry and keep me on the list of speakers at events!



### **Joan Hornig**

*Joan Hornig began her career in educational administration after briefly teaching art to elementary school children. In the late 1970s, she worked as a capital campaign fundraiser, resident freshmen proctor and academic adviser at Harvard. Her career in the non-profit/higher education sector continued through the mid-1980s. Hornig served as the Director of Corporate Relations and External Affairs at Columbia Business School prior to going to Wall Street in 1985. Her 20+ years of experience in the finance sector encompasses management, operations, administration, private equity, Hedge funds, marketing and consulting. Throughout her extensive career, Hornig created jewelry as a hobby inspired by her knowledge of art history and the decorative arts. In 2003, Hornig founded Joan Hornig Jewelry, transitioning fully from a career in finance to arts and philanthropy. For more information, please go to <https://www.joanhornig.com/> or visit Bergdorf Goodman to see the full collection.*

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**“Working with family office investors is rapidly becoming a relevant strategy for accessing investment capital from the ultra-wealthy and their investment offices.”**

**Arthur Andrew Bavelas**