**Hal Martin's (hal martin's) n: man, brand, team, destination**

**The Man: First and foremost, Hal Martin is most definitely a real person with a real interest and long history in the business of timepieces. As a young man Hal Martin became interested in collecting watches as a hobby when his father gave him his first** [**Rolex**](http://www.halmartins.com/rolex_watch.html) **upon his graduation from high school in 1964. Armed with his first symbol of status, a fascination with vintage and high-grade timepieces and a proclivity for business and design, he negotiated and closed his first "deal" in the watch business: he made a $200 profit off his first** [**Rolex**](http://www.halmartins.com/rolex_watch.html) **sale while still in college.**

**In true entrepreneurial spirit, Hal next combined his love of scuba diving and his growing knowledge of the watch industry by trading** [**sport and dive watches**](http://www.halmartins.com/)**, all the while continuing to amass** [**Swiss timepieces**](http://www.halmartins.com/)**. He quickly realized that if he was to be successful, he would have to shift his perspective from that of a collector to a dealer, or at least find more balance. As Hal puts it, "Dealers make money; collectors don't."**

**For ten years he balanced his watch trading with his collecting hobby as a side business to his other money making ventures. In 1990, however, he had an epiphany. When he realized that 75 percent of his income was coming from his "side" watch business, he and his partner, Suzanne, used a cash advanced and a maxed out credit card to open** [**Hal Martin's Watch and Jewelry Company**](http://www.halmartins.com/) **(1-800-536-4608), which he first opened from his home.**

**The Brand: Hal Martin is also an extremely unique brand. With the opening of the first showroom in 1993 on San Felipe Drive in Houston, Hal's reputation for industry knowledge, customer service and quality merchandise became solidified as a pure Houston brand.**

**When asked what that brand looked like, Hal and his employees agree, "We look like our customers; we look like Houston!" And they do. They are as diverse and down home as the Bayou City itself. Most says, customers find Hal and his staff casually attired and entirely approachable, yet carefully attending to every aesthetic detail in the comfortably laid out showroom. Hal says he treats his watches as children that must be carefully and mindfully attended. He even walks the floor of the store every morning looking at the display cases from the customer's side of the counter. But don't be fooled by Hal's relaxed attitude. Customers say he is a walking encyclopedia of facts about watches of all makes and models. From trendy to classic to custom designed, whatever your desire, requirements, parameters or questions may be, feel free to lay it on the line. Everyone at Hal Martin's is a real person who makes it their business to understand the customers.**

**When asked about the brand slogan, Hal responds without hesitation, "It's All Good!" part of the Hal Martin brand is the eternally optimistic outlook of Hal and his entire staff. Customers agree. Search online reviews and you'll run across words and phrases like "Above and beyond the call of duty," "friendly attitude," and "great shopping experience." The Underground Shopper rates Hal Martin's in Houston's Top 100 Shopping Destination, and on CitySearch.com Hal Martin's is the only non-sponsored jewelry store that receives 5 stars. The Hal Martin brand is unmistakably Houston, high quality, and most certainly all good.**

**The Team: Hal Martin is also most certainly a team. In 2006, Hal Martin's moved into its newest location, a free-standing store at 6266 Westheimer in Houston, Texas, reflective of Hal's savvy in recognizing the wants of a diverse, growing Houston. As his business and brand continue to evolve, he credits the growth and success of the Hal Martin brand to the team of his experts that comprise his staff. He learned the valuable lesson "To be great, surround yourself with greatness" the hard way. Because of mistakes he made in his business decisions and associations, Hal understands the importance of instilling honesty and accountability in his employees, as well as fostering the atmosphere of family. Suzanne, Hal's partner, is also his ex-wife. Amanda, Hal's niece, runs the repair department. Long-time friend, Barbara, is his executive assistant. The diamond guy, Tarang Patel, with 18 years in the business, joined the "family" in 2005. Whether it's for a special occasion or just a form of fashionable expression, choosing the perfect piece of** [**diamond jewelry**](http://www.selladiamondonline.com/) **can be a daunting task. Tarang can help you in your search. You'll even find mascots as part of the team. Shorty, Izzy, and Possum, the showrooms dogs, greet customers from behind the counters like salespeople and are integral parts of the family atmosphere. Together they all create a synergy Hal likens to a professional auto racing team. He explains, "To be first and win in a major car race, all members of the team from the driver to the pit crew must be performing at 100 percent. A break down of one person will cost valuable time and not only lose the race, maybe not even place." Hal believes that as the "driver," he is only as good as his pit crew and mechanics.**

**The Destination: Finally, Hal Martin's is a destination. Because of the atmosphere created by the team approach, strangers who enter the store soon become customers and even friends for life. Hal Martin's Watch and Jewelry Company becomes THE destination for fine, quality merchandise no matter the occasion or event. As one of the Southwest's largest watch trading companies, Hal Martin's houses Houston's largest selection of** [**pre-owned Rolex watches**](http://www.halmartins.com/rolex_watch.html)**, and Hal continues to drive the racecar. You'll find him at trade shows, running ads in off the beaten path periodicals and negotiating with dealers and collectors world-wide in his quest to bring the most rare, hardest to find watches to his Houston clientele. If you already have a great timepiece, Mickey and James in the** [**watch repair and restoration**](http://www.halmartins.com/) **department will perform warranty and repair work in-house, or even upgrade you with a new bezel or dial in your old favorite. If you want to spark some romance, Tarang's expertise in the** [**Diamond**](http://www.selladiamondonline.com/) **Room fuses your vision with his creativity to choose the** [**perfect diamond, reset an old stone**](http://www.selladiamondonline.com/)**, trade-in an unloved gem, or even come up with something original just for you and yours. Barbara and Amanda will greet you at the counter to assist you in selecting the perfect girt for graduation or promotion, saving you $100 to $1000s on** [**Pre-owned and new Swiss watches**](http://www.halmartins.com/) **from** [**Rolex**](http://www.halmartins.com/rolex_watch.html)**,** [**Cartier**](http://www.halmartins.com/watch/cartier/cat_31.html)**,** [**Panerai**](http://www.halmartins.com/watch/panerai/cat_38.html)**,** [**Patek Philippe**](http://www.halmartins.com/watch/patek-philippe/cat_21.html) **and** [**Omega**](http://www.halmartins.com/watch/omega/cat_46.html)**, to name a few. Whatever your reason,** [**Hal Martin's Watch and Jewelry Company**](http://www.halmartins.com/) **is your destination for Houston's finest in watches and jewelry.**

**~ by Elizabeth Anthony (Houston Lifestyles & Homes / Oct. 2007)**