

New York Piccolo Day

by Caroline Cline-Corbett

My trip really started last year when I realized it was time to replace my 28-year-old Gemeinhardt wood piccolo. So I started my piccolo savings account and embarked on the journey. Through many hours of research, interviews and demonstrations, I narrowed down my choices. The top three contenders were Powell, Haynes and Burkart. Then I ran across a name new to me: the JB Weissman Music Company. The President, Jeffrey Weissman, is a New York piccolo maker known for his signature use of exotic woods and custom crowns. My challenge was that I really wanted to try as many different makes as possible side by side instead of one at a time via FedEx. During my search, I emailed the Weissman Company for more information and they extended me an offer I could not refuse. They would pay half of my airfare if I would travel to NYC and make my purchase from their company. The exciting part was the wide range of piccolos they have in stock: Powell (grenadilla and kingwood), Haynes, Burkart, Hammig, Keefe, etc., and of course, Weissman piccolos . . . all to compare and try side by side!

March 9th, 2002: New York Piccolo Day! The taxi took me through the Queens Midtown Tunnel to Fresh Meadows, NY to meet Jeff Weissman for my private appointment to try out piccolos. Upon arrival, Jeff and his piccolo specialist, David Samperi, welcomed me. They had prepared dozens of piccolos for me to audition to my heart's content. I tried Powell grenadilla, Powell kingwood with gold keys, Haynes, Burkart, Keefe, etc. They were all wonderful piccolos.

They they started showing me the Weissman Piccolos. They are all handmade on a custom basis with a wide selection of different exotic woods. Some of the woods Mr. Weissman uses are: bocote, cocobolo, cocuswood, leadwood, morado, pink ivory, rosewood, satine, verawood and ironwood. Many of the Weissman piccolo head joints are made with different combinations of these woods to make unique inlay patterns that are absolutely gorgeous. Each crown is custom made, often with inlays of mother-of-pearl or abalone. The embouchure holes can be made with custom sterling silver or gold inlays or wings as well. There are many model choices for straight joint or cork joint piccolo head joints and their bodies.

Much to my amazement, after hours of trying out all of these wonderful piccolos, I kept coming back to one particular piccolo. Over and over again, my sound on one piccolo was very distinguished. Compared to all the other superb instruments, this one piccolo was so centered, with a unique timbre, depth of tone, warmth, color, consistency, clarity, character and heart. For me, this piccolo was the one that had my name written all over it!

I am now the proud new owner of a Weissman Piccolo. My piccolo has a cocobolo wood cork head joint and a grenadilla body. The crown has an inlay of abalone

with a little lightning bolt through it. I had some custom adjustments made for my hands also. To my delight, the technicians worked very hard, and my piccolo was ready for me to take home that day.

The Weissman Music Company is very proud to be the largest and most-respected flute shop in the United States. They stock literally hundreds of flute and piccolo head joints and therefore offer the most varied selection of head joint styles available today. I was blown away by the selection of instruments. Also impressive was the attention to detail and meticulous quality of work by all of the technicians.

Little did I know that my journey would take me on a trip of a lifetime. Not only did I experience the most incredible piccolos and flutes in the world, I experienced meeting the nicest people who went way beyond my wildest expectations of customer service and hospitality.