

SOLITAIRE

INTERNATIONAL
FEBRUARY 2022



IIJS

SIGNATURE
SPECIAL



FEATURING

COVER FEATURE | IIJS TRENDS | FASHION FORWARD | DESIGN | VIEWPOINT

STRENGTHENING CONFIDENCE IN THE DIAMOND INDUSTRY

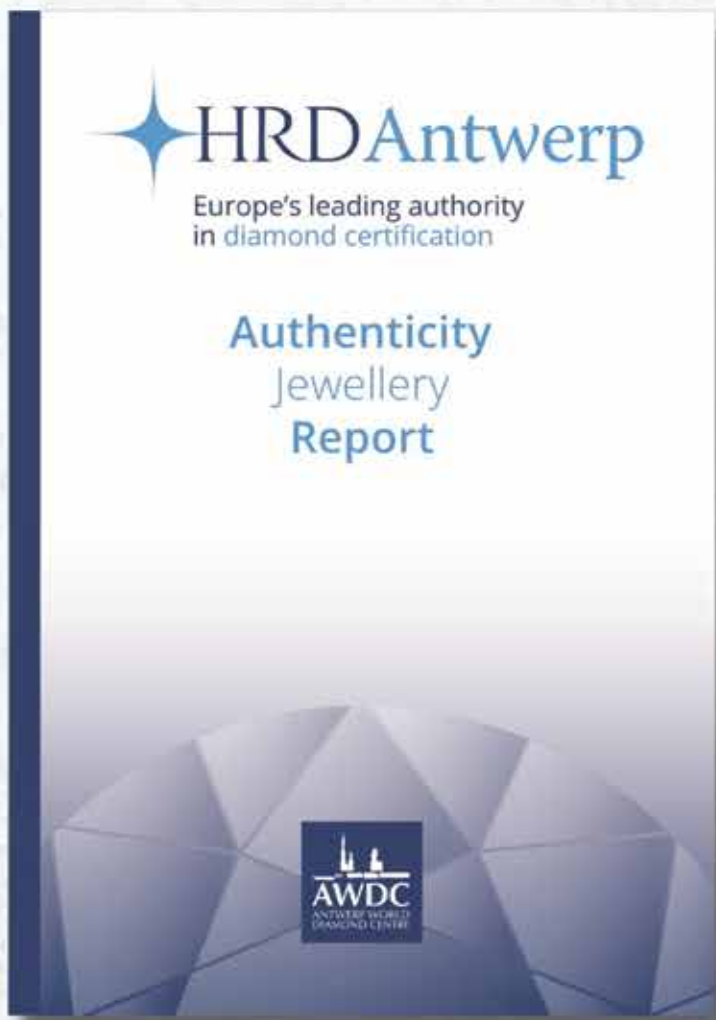
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COLIN SHAH
Chairman, GJEPC

India's metamorphosis into a source for high-quality jewellery has been breathtakingly sudden, and yet somehow 5,000 years in the making.

By positioning India as a comprehensive gem and jewellery sourcing hub, we're poised to capitalise handsomely on the thriving global demand for fine jewellery. And we continue to broaden our horizons by striving to create value throughout the supply chain. Stronger and wiser, we're far better equipped today to ride out shocks like Covid going into the future.

The post-pandemic new world order still requires manufacturers to focus on getting the basics right: i.e. acquiring the right quality of gold and precious stones at the right price, manufacturing the jewellery with all the necessary quality control, and ensuring timely delivery to the customer. And perhaps most importantly, running lean operations and resisting the urge to increase bank borrowings.

Every IIJS shapes the narrative of the industry. It acts as a barometer that reveals the state of the Indian industry and the global markets. Likewise, IIJS Premiere 2021 held in Bengaluru was a game changer that injected a positive lifeforce into the entire industry, the benefits of which we continue to reap to this day.

I'm sure that IIJS Signature 2022 will carry forward the same upbeat sentiment through the first half of the year.

Apart from its iconic IIJS trade shows, GJEPC's arsenal of initiatives has laid a solid foundation for building future growth. Although 2020-21 will be viewed as something of a pivot point by future generations, we're still not done searching for newer, better opportunities. We're not done dreaming...



VIPUL SHAH
Vice Chairman, GJEPC

2021 was a stellar year for the Indian gem and jewellery industry. We were not only able to recover, but have registered growth in exports, capitalising on the huge demand from key overseas markets as the economies gradually revived from the pandemic. I express my gratitude to Government for supporting the industry with timely relief measures throughout the pandemic.

Our industry, which currently accounts for \$40 billion annually, has the potential to achieve \$75 billion in exports during the coming years with conducive trade policies and support from the Government. GJEPC, on its part, has been taking a holistic approach for the growth of the gem and jewellery industry – from training, infrastructure and labs to promotion, etc. – it has all areas covered.

One of its ambitious projects is the setting up of the Jewellery Park in Mumbai, which would really help in building capacity and increasing exports. This world-class Jewellery Park will enhance India's global competitiveness and contribute to economic development of Maharashtra and India by attracting investments of over ₹14,000 crore and creating new employment opportunities for over 1 lakh workers.



SHAILESH SANGANI
Convener, National Exhibitions,
GJEPC

Buoyed by the release of pent-up jewellery demand and increased participation, I welcome you on behalf of GJEPC to the 14th edition of India's premium jewellery sourcing event – IIJS Signature 2022.

First, I want to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation to you for remaining a part of the IIJS family. I attribute much of the success of IIJS Premiere 2021 in Bengaluru to the stringent covid safety protocols set, and I'm certain that we will see the same kind of cooperation and support at IIJS Signature 2022.

IIJS Signature stands tall for its eclectic mix of high-design jewellery to cater to a multitude of individual requirements. The first show of the calendar year is perfectly timed to replenish inventory for the upcoming jewellery-buying occasions and festivals and the summer wedding season.

IIJS Signature provides a snapshot of the diverse Indian market and the variety of style and demand trends. For retailers and manufacturers, there is no better way to know what is selling across the country than at a show like IIJS Signature. It is an excellent platform to help you discover new vendors, expand your networking opportunities, and grow your business. But more than that, it's a concerted industry-wide effort to overcome the problems and challenges of today's rapidly changing times.

Prelude



MILAN CHOKSHI
Convener, PM & BD, GJEPC

Change is a constant. And facing life's curveballs gives us the strength to overcome greater challenges and above all, think laterally.

The pandemic lockdowns impelled us to transition our three decade-old official magazine, Solitaire International, to a digital avatar. The e-magazine continues to be an authoritative voice of the industry's thought leaders. As our reach grows exponentially thanks to the various media and channels that are available to us, it made us think about the diversity in our readership.

As the industry powers ahead as a design and manufacturing centre, it's also important to start looking at marketing, merchandising and storytelling as key pillars of value addition.

In this issue of Solitaire, we present a well-curated compendium of jewellery ranging from high-end couture diamond jewellery in the Cover Feature, shot by India's top lensman Rid Burman, to minimalist gold and standout silver pieces in our specially stylised product shoots.

We have also featured a photo essay of the Bengaluru edition of IIJS Premiere shot by the renowned photojournalist, Avani Rai.

Putting this issue together was a fun endeavour and we hope you enjoy going through the content, just as much as we enjoyed bringing it all together for you.



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FEBRUARY 2022

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EMERALD



नृत्य

Dance is a kind of fever chart and a graph of the heart. Classical dance is just not a form of art but, it is beauty and power of the culture, also a prayer, meditation, happiness and peace of mind. We have tried to manifest the elegance and grace of Classical Dance through the handcrafted jewellery in Natya Collection by incorporating different Classical dance postures.


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ON THE COVER | **BEFORE SUNSET** The stunning white gold necklace is composed of curved overlapping leaves encrusted with 1,281 white diamonds. By **BR DESIGNS**
Gown: **RUDRAKSH DWIVEDI**

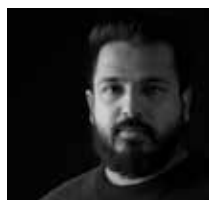
FACING PAGE | The tapering rose gold shoulder dusters feature undulating waves sparkling with diamonds. By **GEHNA**
Waistcoat & Trousers: Deme By **GABRIELLA** 



RID BURMAN

Ace lensman Rid Burman, who spends time between Mumbai and Paris, notes, “The shoot for *Solitaire* was an interaction between art and commerce, to bring in high jewellery into an easy and non-assuming environment.”

In this issue: Rid Burman shot the Cover Feature with famous model Archana Akil Kumar with a story board that begins in the boudoir and ends with her in an evening gown ready to step out in style. Burman also interspersed the model shoot with still life diamond jewellery pictures that echo the work of photographer Irving Penn.



GEORGY

“The *Solitaire* team has been amazing to work with and it was fun creating the images with the editorial team and Ashti. As a photographer who specialises in still life and jewellery shoots, I enjoy collaborative work, as I believe it is the coming together of various perspectives and ideas that makes a shot interesting and dynamic. I believe this can be seen in the output of such shoots.”

In this issue: Noted jewellery photographer Georgy captures the beauty of each jewellery piece through his creative eye in IIJS Trends - Gold Expressions and Silver Lining.



ASHTI

“Planning the shoot was quite interesting and working with the *Solitaire* team was a delightful experience. Georgy and I wanted to create a unique story for the two different shoots and keep it minimal in terms of props. Since the jewellery was so detailed, we wanted the pieces to stand out.”

In this issue: Product stylist Ashti used two different mood boards for IIJS Trends Gold Expressions and Silver Lining; while one had luxurious props to highlight trendy, lightweight gold jewellery, the other showcased silver jewellery against a rugged backdrop.



PRIYANKA KAPADIA

“It was such a refreshing shoot to be a part of. We played with diamonds and modern silhouettes to create beautiful imagery for the woman of today! Diamonds are not only for special occasions – but they are also to be enjoyed every day. Wear them with your everyday denim and your power suit with equal ease.”

In this issue: A former fashion director at Vogue India, Priyanka styled our cover girl, model Archana Akil Kumar, in outfits ranging from loungewear to power suits and finally a glittering gown to step out for glamorous evening gala.



MITESH RAJANI

“The mood board demanded that I give the cover girl Archana a natural look that would enhance her features.”

In this issue: Mitesh Rajani, a make-up artist known for his impressive repertoire of work in the world of fashion editorials and commercials, wielded his brush to give our cover girl Archana Akil Kumar a smooth and dewy skin tone.

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Natural Diamond Council



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Image: Dharmanandan Diamonds Pvt. Ltd.

THE JOURNEY OF *WINNING* 510 MILLION HEARTS IN INDIA

A product of our passion, the Natural Diamond Council (NDC) was established as a medium to dive deeper into the world of natural diamonds.

From educating our consumers about the world's most famous natural diamonds to becoming the destination for diamond trends and styles, we have come a long way in the span of a year.

And our retail partners and collaborators provided us the light of support to make this journey memorable.



Spectacular *Moments* of 2021:

The year started on a monumental note for us, as we put a spotlight on 2021's diamond trends at the Lakmé Fashion Week with our first ever Trend Report. Our style collective featuring editors, stylists, designers, celebrities, and industry insiders, added extra spark to the report with their precious insights.



NATURAL
DIAMOND
COUNCIL

When August came by, we presented to the world the first-of-its-kind virtual diamond festival in collaboration with Vogue India. Experts, industry insiders, and connoisseurs united to revel in the brilliant knowledge of real diamonds.



Our love for diamonds did not just stop there. We featured our global ambassador, the Bond Girl, Ana de Armas in a campaign that celebrated the joy of reconnecting with loved ones and living each moment to the fullest. She adorned natural diamond jewellery, inspired by the latest trends, and exclusively crafted by EDDI winner and designer Malyia McNaughton.

As we set the stage with these one-of-a-kind initiatives, we also took the opportunity to collaborate with ace designers like Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Viren Bhagat, Bibhu Mohapatra, Gaurav Gupta, and Raghavendra Rathore to highlight their inspiring journey with natural diamonds.

COMING UP IN 2022: *Our Industry Initiatives* An ode to the Diamond Industry

The diamond industry is actively working towards making the world a better place with its philanthropic initiatives. So, when you buy a natural diamond, you contribute towards this cause. We launched Thank You, By The Way with the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, an initiative to celebrate your natural diamond purchases that benefit millions of people around the world.



Quality, ASSURED

In order to ensure that the diamonds you purchase are exactly what they claim to be, we launched ASSURE, a certification program to test diamond verification instruments. Through this program, we conduct a third party, unbiased evaluation of diamond testing machines to check their accuracy in differentiating lab-grown diamonds from natural diamonds.

2021 was a glorious year for us.

We look forward to making 2022 and the years to come ever more so.

All our innovations and initiatives paid off when we saw the immense love and appreciation that you showered on us.

45 Mn

Website visits

306+ Mn

Social impression

210 Mn

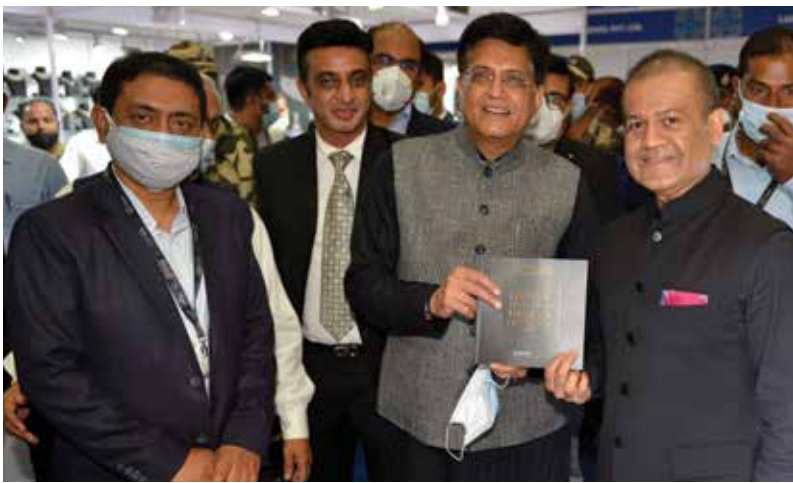
Youtube views

464

Brand Collaborations

IIJS Signature

SET TO RING IN GOOD FORTUNE



Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, seen along with Colin Shah, Chairman, GJEPC and Sabyasachi Ray, Executive Director, GJEPC, at The Artisan Award booth at IIJS Premiere 2021.



Posing for the cameras on the opening day of IIJS Premiere were dignitaries including Shri Murugesh Nirani (fourth from right), Hon'ble Minister of Large and Medium Industries, Govt. of Karnataka; Colin Shah (centre), Chairman, GJEPC; Shailesh Sangani (fourth from left), National Exhibitions - Convener, GJEPC, and others.

Welcome to the 14th edition of the show starting from today till the 21st of February at the Bombay Exhibition Centre (BEC), NESCO, Mumbai.

More than 800 exhibitors, of which there are 200 new entrants, spread across 1,400-plus booths are eagerly awaiting the second IIJS physical show being held by the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC)!

Over 14,000 trade visitors from 325 cities have pre-registered for the show and are eager to personally check a varied display of loose diamonds and gemstones and innovative jewellery creations.

The well-demarcated halls at BEC will have different sections for Gold & Gold CZ Studded Jewellery; Diamond, Gemstone & Other Studded Jewellery; Loose Stones; Silver Jewellery, Artifacts & Gifting Items; and Laboratory & Education.

Riding high on the back of the successful conclusion of IIJS Premiere, many exhibitors whom Solitaire International spoke to prior to the show said that in the last six months demand in the domestic as well as international markets had risen, and they were confident that retailers from across India would visit the show to replenish their stocks for the upcoming jewellery-buying festivals and summer weddings.

Shailesh Sangani, Convener, National Exhibitions of the Council, stated, "IIJS Signature was planned in early January, but due to the third pandemic wave that hit us, the show had to be postponed. Now, as the Covid cases are receding across India and circumstances seem favourable, we are all geared up to organise the show from 18th to 21st February at BEC, NESCO, Mumbai. We are fortunate to have the support of our exhibitors and visitors, whose participation makes this show a grand success every year."

GJEPC will leave no stone unturned to ensure the safety of its participants and visitors, just as it did at IIJS Premiere in Bengaluru. While double vaccination is mandatory to gain entry at the show, strict vigilance will ensure that all attendees are safe; they will be provided a safety kit, including masks and sanitisers, so that the show is a bio-secure bubble.



Scenes from the IIJS Premiere 2021 held in Bengaluru. Photos: Avani Rai

LIVING THE DIAMOND DREAM

♪♪ *Diamonds are forever, they are all I need to please me*
They can stimulate and tease me
They won't leave in the night
I've no fear that they might desert me ... ♪♪

– Shirley Bassey



*The diva loves to indulge in the finer things of life.
A die-hard aficionado of diamonds, she writes her own
fashion rules... From boudoir to bathtub to lounging
about in her luxurious suite, she flaunts diamond
jewellery fit for an heiress!*

Photographer **Rid Burman** | Styling **Priyanka Kapadia** | Hair & Make-up **Mitesh Rajani**
Product Stylist **Nikita Rao**

LOST IN THOUGHT

It's floral all the way ... the gold necklace composed of florets speckled with diamonds suspends a large circular flower pendant shimmering with diamonds.

BY DHARMANANDAN DIAMONDS

The dressy, openwork rose gold ring is patterned with fancy-cut diamonds.

BY GEHNA





**WISTFUL
MUSINGS**

Gold necklace
**BY DHARMANANDAN
DIAMONDS**

Rose gold ring
BY GEHNA





DELECTABLE ENTREES

On the breakfast tray:
The latticed yellow gold bracelet partially adorned with polkis is centred on a geometric motif dotted with bezel-set diamonds and set with an emerald.

**BY DHARMANANDAN
DIAMONDS**

A dainty petalled floret articulated with diamonds sits atop the trellised disc ring crafted in 18-karat rose gold.

BY GEHNA





IN HER UNIVERSE

A stunning assemblage of fancy colour yellow diamonds of various shapes adorn the broad gold bracelet interjected with drop-shaped white diamond motifs. A slim white gold bracelet carpeted with yellow fancy-cut diamonds is fringed with scalloped edging of white diamonds.

BY P. HIRANI EXPORTS

The two-tone double loop gold earrings lined with diamonds suspend from floral diamond posts. Delicate diamond-studded half-flower motifs add a feminine charm to the danglers.

BY A'STAR JEWELLERY



TASTEFUL INDULGENCE

Tear-drop white diamond ear studs decorated with petals made of fancy colour yellow diamonds.

BY PEACEMOON COLLECTION

A layered 18-karat white and rose gold necklace bedecked with diamonds and a tiered rose gold bow ring studded with diamonds, add an extra sparkle to her treasure trove.

BY GEHNA





IRRESISTIBLE FARE

Stylised floral ear tops in white gold patterned with fancy-cut diamonds, and a sleek station bracelet featuring elongated octagon motifs, each studded with fancy-shaped diamonds, and topped with an emerald.

BY MOKSH FINE UNSEEN JEWELS
(TANVIRKUMAR & CO)





FIRE & ICE

A statement floral white gold bib festooned with multi-row diamond-lined layers bearing intermittent florets.

BY A'STAR JEWELLERY

The white gold ribbed ring is embellished with a motley of fancy-cut diamonds.

BY MOKSH FINE UNSEEN JEWELS
(TANVIRKUMAR & CO)

Stripe shirt & Jeans: Zara





A SCRUMPTIOUS FEAST!

The rose gold openwork floral ring is encrusted with diamonds.

BY ROMIL JEWELRY

The chand balis with floral posts suspend multi-hoops, decorated with rose cuts, baguettes and faceted rubies and ruby beads; The broad bracelet is woven with emeralds and diamonds.

BY MOKSH FINE UNSEEN JEWELS
(TANVIRKUMAR & CO)

The statement rose gold choker is fashioned with drop-shaped motifs illuminated with diamonds.

BY PEACEMOON COLLECTION

A showstopper ring crafted in white gold is adorned with white diamonds and fancy colour yellow diamonds.

BY P. HIRANI EXPORTS

The openwork honeycomb gold bracelet is partially covered with diamonds.

BY GEHNA

FLORAL CRUSH

An extremely rare 3-carat Fancy Vivid Orange Yellow pear-shaped diamond floating among layers of rose cut marquise diamonds; The 10-carat radiant-cut fancy yellow diamond is the hero of this classic three-stone diamond ring, flanked by trapeze-cut diamonds on either side.

BY P. HIRANI EXPORTS



PENSIVE RUMINATIONS

The triangular multi-colour chandelier earrings realised in white gold are patterned with a combination of pink, blue, green, yellow, and orange fancy colour diamonds interspersed with white diamonds; three-stone yellow diamond ring.

BY P. HIRANI EXPORTS

Turtle neck top & Pants: Zara;
Blazer: Ura





WRAPPED UP

The slick stick white gold earrings are set with fancy-cut diamonds and channel-set emerald discs suspending pearls; the broad three-row emerald bracelet in white gold is spiced up with diamond motifs.

BY MOKSH FINE UNSEEN JEWELS (TANVIRKUMAR & CO)

Black chainlink: Zara



LAVISH FEAST

The three-row twisted gold bangle features finials decorated with different diamond-studded motifs.

BY GEHNA

Earrings shaped as organic white gold blooms shimmer with rubies, diamonds and pearls.

BR DESIGNS

The gold ring shaped as a full bloom rose decorated with diamonds.

BY A'STAR JEWELLERY





**BEFORE
SUNSET**

The stunning white gold necklace is composed of curved overlapping leaves encrusted with 1,281 white diamonds.

BY BR DESIGNS





THE JEWELLERY MANUFACTURING COMPANY

We are pleased to invite you to visit us at IIJS signature 2022



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GOLD

Expressions

The age of minimalism is here! Wiry gold chains, slim and sleek designer rings, gossamer pendants, and diaphanous earrings are the desired choice of today's youth.

Solitaire International curated hot and trending designs in gold from top IJJS Signature exhibitors to highlight jewels that spell understated elegance.



Photographer | Georgy
 Agency | DEU: Creative Management
 Product Stylist | Ashti Kothari
 Photo Assistant | Jeet Ram Kumhar
 Production | Dandelion Pictures



Left | The lightweight fretwork ring shaped like a full bloom is adorned with vividly represented upturned petals.

By Emerald Jewel Industry India Ltd.

Left | The open bangle crafted with just two grams of gold sits lightly like a feather on the wrist. The finials are decorated with diamond-studded pear drops.

By Chain N Chains Jewels Ltd.

Right | The open collar necklace realised in dual-tone gold underscores sophistication. The elegant curvy stems are accented with buds and textured leaves at its finials.

By Chain N Chains Jewels Ltd.

Left | Up your style quotient with this 15-strand featherweight gold necklace embellished with pastel-coloured beads.

By Sangam Chains

Right | A potpourri of two-toned gold chains beautified with textured geometric motifs. Wear them layered or single to be ahead of the fashion curve!

By Royal Chains





Left | The 22-karat floral pendant earrings enhanced with mesh-like patterns are dotted with laser-cut shiny beads that add a dash of feminine charm to them.

By Krown Jewels

Above | The Dancing bangle is a mix of several bangles clasped together with a common hinge. The multiple bangles shimmer and shake with the body movement. The dainty butterfly pendant held by two textured gold orbs is suspended from a slender gold chain.

By Sangam Chains

A gilded assortment of slender gold bangles in 18-karat gold - the geometric butterfly cuff, the slender unfussy plain bangle, the broad crisscross gold bangle, and the slim bangle with textured orbs at the finials - promise to add a playful edge to any outfit.


By Royal Chains





An arresting textured and tapering floral motif of gold sits on a silicon wristband with gold clasps. Complementing it is a floral gold ring with trellised hollow leaves carved of rose wood. Here's a new way to redefine minimalism.

By Anand Shah



Top | The twisted gold bangle that can be worn in two different ways is beautified with floral motifs sprinkled with diamonds. The bangle slides open partially to reveal a personal message chosen by the wearer.

By Chain N Chains Jewels Ltd.

Right | The striking openwork 22-karat gold dangle earrings made by hand feature circular posts with terminals shaped like a honey dipper lending it a modern twist.

By Krown Jewels

Bottom | Perfect for daily wear, the sleek yellow gold ring is topped off with floral finials.

By Emerald Jewel Industry India Ltd.

IIJS INDIA
INTERNATIONAL
JEWELLERY SHOW

SIGNATURE 2022

18th - 21st FEBRUARY

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A two-row statement necklace in silver is fringed with discs featuring paintings of Lord Ganesha in different forms.

By Silver Emporium

The intricately designed openable kada is dotted with turquoise and a pear-shaped ruby; and the broad cuff with a central deity motif bears florets and scrolls set with polkis.

By Sangeeta Boochra

Photographer | **Georgy**
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SILVER LINING

Silver jewellery is on the crest of a wave! The grey metallic tones sure exude a charm of their own. Unusual constructs, alluring two-tone contrasts, oxidised and bold patterns... there are a plethora of flattering choices that will help you add a new spin to your boho-chic look.

Here's our edit of the earthy yet modern-day silver jewels available at IIJS Signature presented on a stylised platter.



The broad handcrafted stippled silver kada is interjected with five cluster of bells at intervals.

By Silver Emporium

The pear-shaped oxidised adjustable silver ring is enhanced with a stylised gold-plated scroll; the tear drop ring is adorned with a gem-set floral motif; and the tiered floral silver ring features with textured petals.

By Sangeeta Boochra



The striking silver necklace is inspired by nature - the animal forms plated with 24-karat gold are interspersed with Lord Krishna's motifs, and the two stylised peacocks come together as the main motif prettified with turquoise and rubies. The necklace is aesthetically dotted with carved quartz.

By Nine Sil Jewelry

Woven tear-drop silver earrings; an oxidised bold geometric ring.

By Sangeeta Boochra



An intricately carved belt buckle in silver is dotted with red gemstones and a cabochon turquoise.

By Sangeeta Boochra

Organic, gold-plated silver earrings featuring textured leaf motifs; and abstract half face earrings in silver.

By Nine Sil Jewelry





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Ura

Studded Precious Stones Collections

Here's a dekho at what some top exhibitors at IIJS Signature are unveiling ...

◆ **ANAND SHAH**

High Drama

The versatile 22-karat bridal lines by renowned gold jewellery designer Anand Shah makes a lifestyle statement. The designer's collections use various elements such as glass, rose wood, pearls, uncut diamonds, enamel to complement baroque gold motifs that fuse contemporary and traditional aesthetics effortlessly. Shah employs ancient jewellery making crafts such as filigree, beadwork, varied textures, and fretwork to replicate nature's wonders in the yellow metal. These beauties are absolute showstoppers!

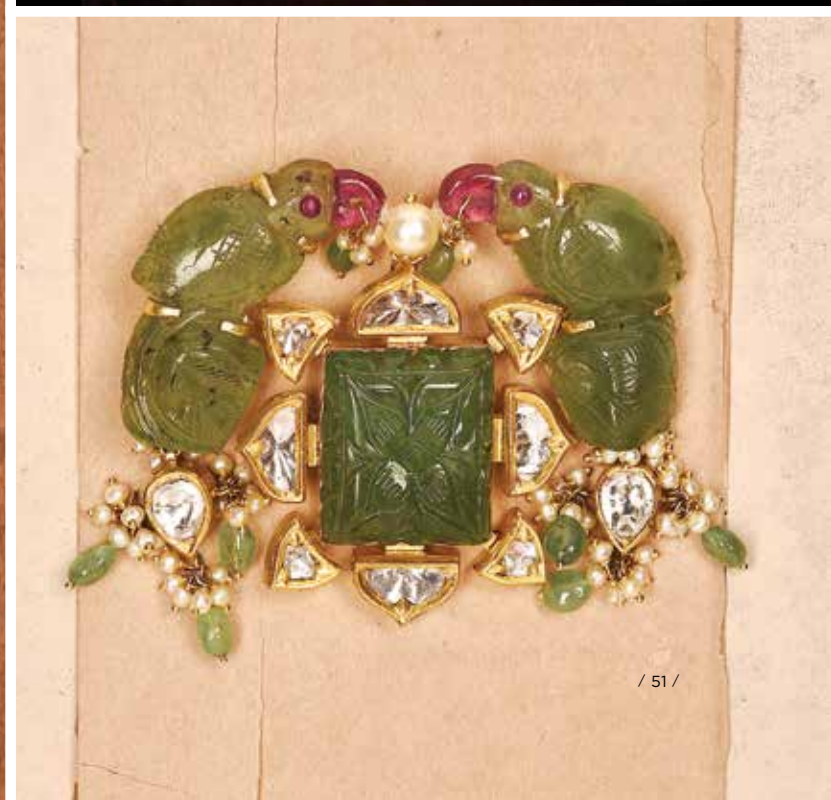




◆ **HARITSONS DESIGNS**
Go Maximal

Oversized rings, standout bracelets and brooches, and necklaces worthy of red-carpet appearances are on display at Haritsons Designs Pvt. Ltd., Jaipur.

Fluted gemstones, precious beads, carved stones converge with uncut diamonds and pearls to create splendiferous visuals in 22-karat gold. These jewels are bound to jazz up your silhouettes.

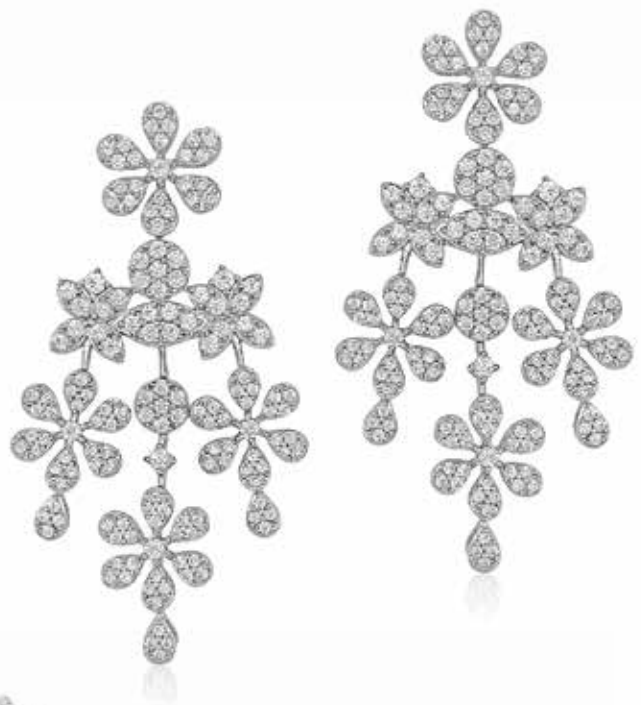




◆ **KAMA-SCHACHTER JEWELLERY**

Stay Stylish

Kama-Schachter Jewellery Pvt. Ltd. introduces an array of lines that are inspired by Mother Nature, the favourite muse of many. Girandole diamond-studded earrings bearing tiny florets complement the openwork necklace and bracelet patterned with tiny florets which are juxtaposed with slender leaves. The feminine jewels make you look every inch a princess.





◆ **SANSKRITI JEWELS**
Rainbow Jewels

An explosion of colours greets you at Sanskriti Jewels as the designer brand flexes its design prowess to present yet another collection that is imbued with candy hues. Icy blue tanzanites, bubble gum pink tourmalines and sapphires, cool green emeralds, sorbet red rubies are assembled in eye-popping ear studs, long necklaces, chokers, OTT rings and bracelets... the jewels call for zealous admiration.

◆ **DASSANI BROTHERS**

Chromatic Charisma

Dassani Brothers is one of India's finest designer jewellery brands that specializes in semi-contemporary jadau heirlooms. Adding bright colour to celebrate the winter season, the collection is carpeted with delicious shades of emeralds, rubies, tanzanite, uncut diamonds, and pearls. The attention-seizing jewellery, which is handcrafted to perfection, invokes romance and a certain sense of headiness. The collection is bound to win the hearts of brides-to-be.





◆ **SHAKTI GOLD**

New-age Lines

Shakti Gold is synonymous with luxury in the gold jewellery segment. Known for introducing modern contours for the youth of today, the company specialises in antique and fancy rhodium-plated jewellery. They are presenting a collection of lightweight and gauzy gold necklaces and broad cuffs bearing different textures and tones, thus taking gold jewellery into an altogether different territory.



◆ **ZUNDA**

Cool Vibes

Fluid lines greet you in the collection consisting of elegant white gold earrings that are embellished with diamonds. The lines created by Zundaa for IJJS Signature are subtly luxurious. The other collection of pendant necklaces, rings and bracelets belongs to an altogether different genre - structured patterns grace tiny pendants suspended from slim necklaces offering the wearer an opportunity to layer them with jewels of their choice. The rings and pendants, too, can be slipped on singly or stacked.



◆ **KALAJEE JEWELLERY**

Gem Talk

Kalajee Jewellery, known for its beautiful line-up of trendsetting earrings, unveils Navratna, the collection that features nine different gemstones, each associated with a celestial body. Uncut diamonds and pearls add more drama to each pair of earrings.

The collection also highlights what Kalajee does best, the confluence of modern designing with traditional techniques of jewellery making.

The line consists of ear studs, chand baalis, jhumkis, geometric baalis, and more and range from Rs.1 lakh to Rs. 3 lakh. Earrings are surely taking over!





◆ **A'STAR JEWELLERY**

Bond of love

Inspired by the intricacies of relationships, the collection by A'Star Jewellery expresses the sentiment that important connections should be cherished and held on to forever. The design style uses delicate links embellished with subtle cream enamel to symbolise the strong yet elusive bond of love. The links are featured in various shapes to portray the infinite forms of affection. A scalloped rim in gold adds pizzazz to the link design.

Available in two shades of gold – yellow and pink, in 9-karat to 18-karat, the diamond-encrusted collection offers an eclectic selection of pendant sets, necklace sets and oval bracelets. The designs are a balance of contemporary and fusion styles, offering the wearer the choice to accessorise her everyday ensemble according to her individual style or mood.



◆ **GEETA SHYAM JEWELLERS**

Ravishing Reds

Geeta Shyam Jewellers presents an array of kundan-meena bridal sets including chokers and earrings, complementary kadas and long necklaces. What stands out though is the brand's line-up of ruby sets.

Detailed gold chokers get amplified by rubies in various shapes accompanied by lustrous pearl beads and polkis in kundan-setting.

The ruby sets are sure to add a glamorous punch to one's ensembles.

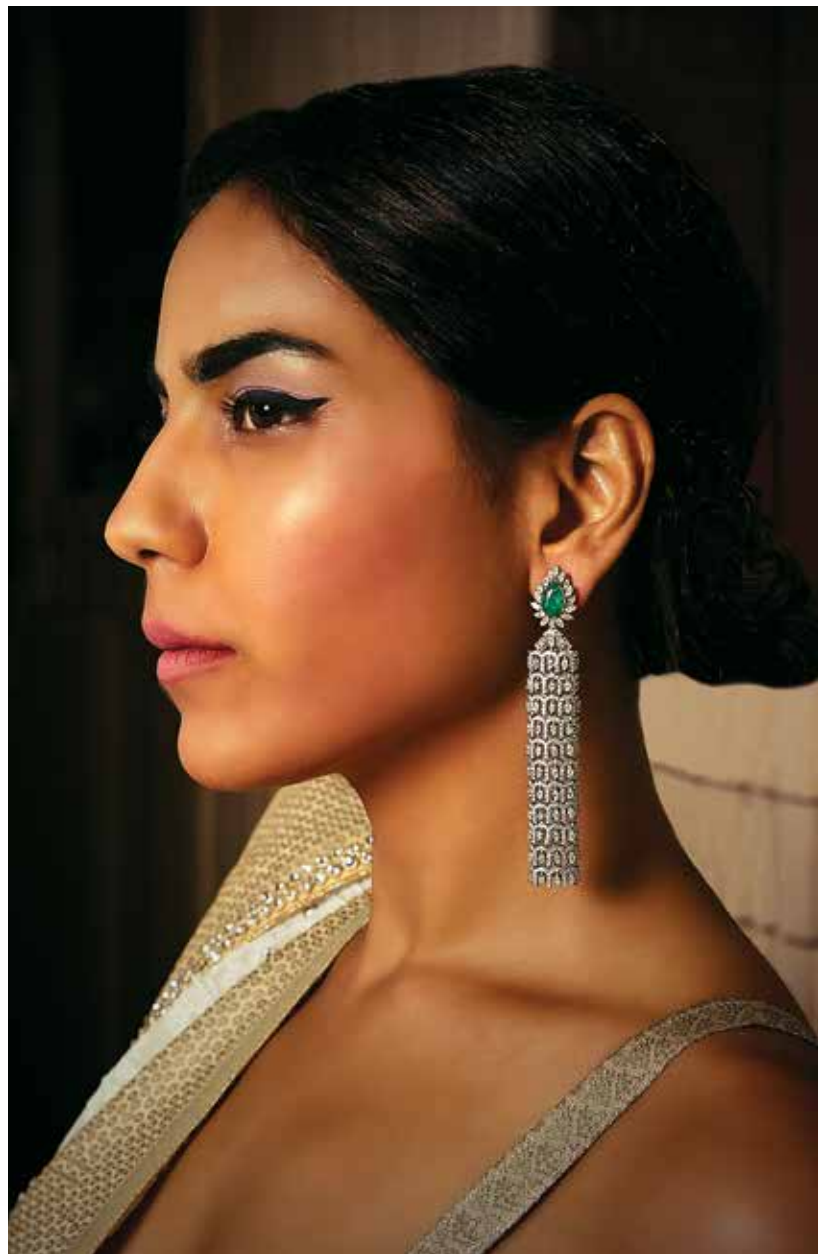




◆ ROSENTIQUES

For The Love Of Emeralds

Rosentiques unveils a collection that pays tribute to the evergreen gemstone, the emerald. The focus this time is on adorning the ears - chandeliers with emerald posts, double-drop emerald earrings lined with a curve of fancy-shaped diamonds, shoulder dusters draped with emeralds and diamonds. Flamboyant and flattering, these earrings make for perfect winter style.





◆ **KULTHIAA JEWEL PVT. LTD.**

Enticing Rings

Featured here are eye-catching OTT rose gold rings dressed in edgy accents set with fancy-shaped diamonds by Kulthiaa Jewel Pvt. Ltd. Inspired by nature, the rings take on complex forms contrasting fluidity and structured details easily. The statement rings can be conversation starters at glittering soirees.

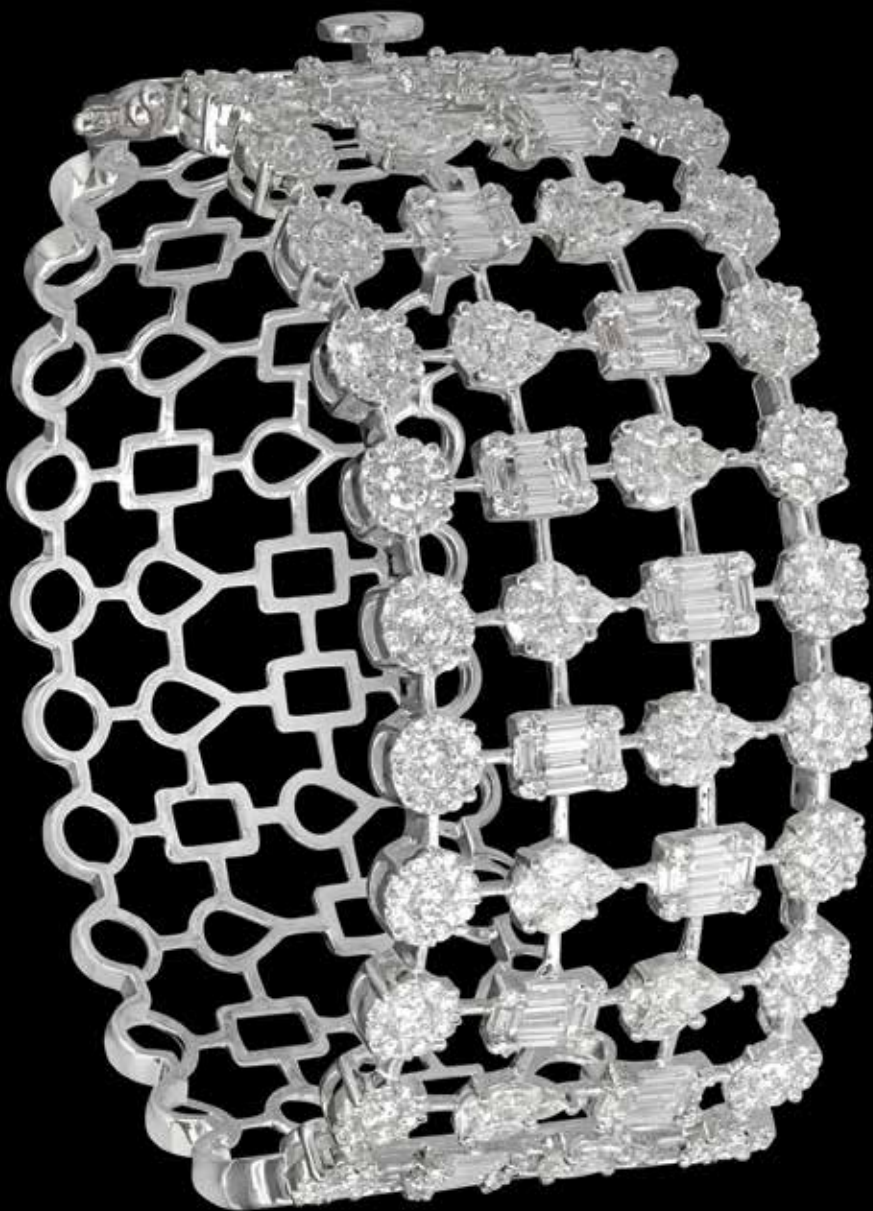


◆ JP GEMS AND JEWELS

Tempting Lines

J P Gems and Jewels, manufacturer and wholesaler of diamond jewellery is known for producing a range of handcrafted lines - from simple classic nose rings to high-end wedding jewellery - that has global appeal. The designer jewellery collections are inspired by nature and are populated with fancy-cut diamonds. The bold yet feminine lines are crafted with care and high precision.





◆ **KOSHA FINE JEWELLERY**
Party Rockers

The all-diamond collections consisting of rings, bracelets, necklaces and earrings unveiled by Kosha Fine Jewels underscores impeccable craftsmanship. The pieces that are either fluid and feminine or structured and bold come to life with a motley of fancy-cut diamonds such as pears, baguettes, rounds, ovals and more set in white gold.



◆ VASUPATI JEWELLERS

Royal Elegance

The gem-infused jadtar collection unveiled by Vasupati Jewellers is an ideal choice for the bride of today. The handcrafted vintage lines are attractive and exude classic sophistication. The grand designs are embellished with polkis and other precious and semi-precious gemstones. High on style and design, these remarkable jewels are bound to attract envious glances.





◆ **JEWELS OF JAIPUR**

Vintage Magic

Jewels of Jaipur presents an eye-watering collection of statement necklaces – from single line neckwear laced with pendants to sat lada haars and grand chokers – fit for the bride of today. Suffused with polkis large and small, lucent pearls, handcarved and fancy cut gemstones, the necklaces highlighting strong colour contrasts are bound to evoke admiration. It doesn't get more classic than this!



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Get Party Ready!

Standalone studs and danglers with colourful twists are on everyone's style radar. Here are our picks of high-end luxe jewels at IJS Signature that will help you to up your fashion game effortlessly. The looks have been put together by brand and fashion PR consultant Dipika Israni Panjabi of DI Public Relations.



18-karat rose gold drop dangles beautified with opals, rose cuts, diamonds and pink sapphires.

BY WONDERCUTS FINE JEWELLERY



COOL CHIC

One-shoulder dress with a balloon sleeve and frilled hemline.

BY AND

Check weave shoulder bag in bronze.

BY DEVINA JUNEJA



White and tan Paris sandals.

BY JUNIPERO



The spiked and organic rose gold ear studs are fashioned with cabochon tanzanites as centre stones and bordered with white diamonds. The carved coral tulips topped with emerald beads are interjected with tanzanite beads and marquise diamonds.

BY SANSKRITI

BABY BLUE

Navy self-design fit and flare gown.

BY AND



Navy blue Clique Of Circle satchel.

BY DEVINA JUNEJA

Black pearlescent heels.

BY JUNIPERO



GOLDEN HOUR



The triple-drop yellow gold dangles are set with three floral motifs studded with yellow sapphires, diamonds, and emerald florets.

BY ROSENTIQUES FINE JEWELLERY



Light gold embellished Kiara heels.

BY JUNIPERO

One-shoulder handkerchief dress with kaftan sleeves.

PRINTS BY RADHIKA



Leaf handle clutch in gold.

BY DEVINA JUNEJA



The flaming rose gold ear studs fashioned like blooms feature organic diamond-studded leaves wrapping a clutch of coral buds accented with diamonds.

BY SAVIO JEWELLERY

FREE SPIRIT

Black embellished slip-on flats.

BY ANCHAL SAYAL



Flowers In Bloom Cape with a black slip.

BY DEVINA JUNEJA

Silver-black circle weave potli.

BY DEVINA JUNEJA



ORIENTAL SPIN



Embroidered handkerchief dress.

BY PRINTS BY RADHIKA

Golden-brown clutch.

BY DEVINA JUNEJA



The arresting gold studs turn tradition on its head. The earrings are augmented with navratna gems and polkis.

BY KALAJEE JEWELLERY



Beige and peach Venice heels.

BY JUNIPERO



GJEPC's flagship event IJS Premiere is the largest gem and jewellery trade show in India.





A **GLIMPSE OF IIJS PREMIERE**
2021 HELD IN BENGALURU, SEEN
THROUGH THE EYES
OF ESTABLISHED FILMMAKER
AND PHOTOGRAPHER,
AVANI RAI.

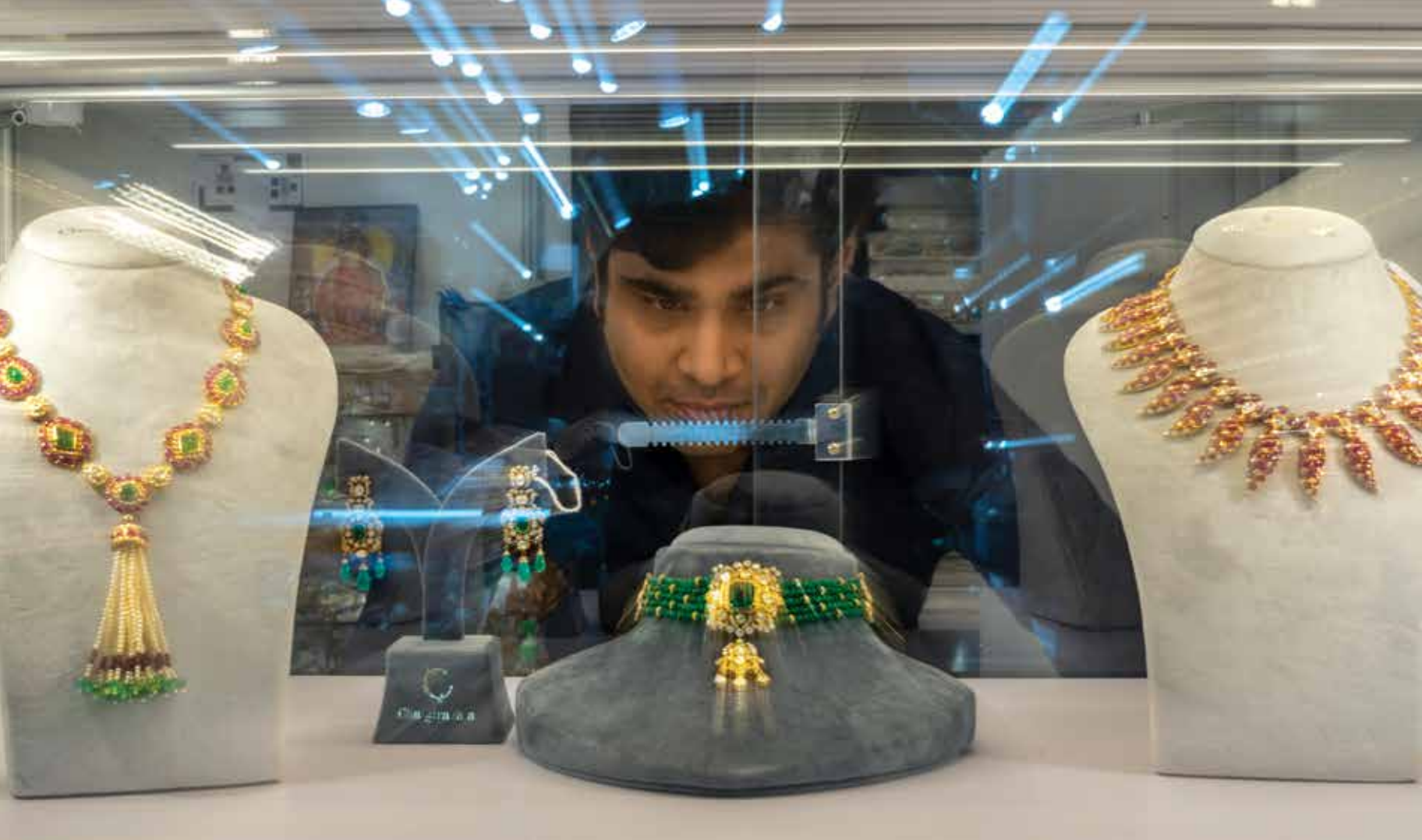


IIJS Premiere pulls in 40,000-plus trade visitors from over 80 countries and 800 towns across India.









IIJS Premiere debuted in September 1985 as a fledgling exhibition called Jewel Yatra with 25 exhibitors. Today it typically hosts over 1,300 exhibitors accommodated in over 2,500 stalls.



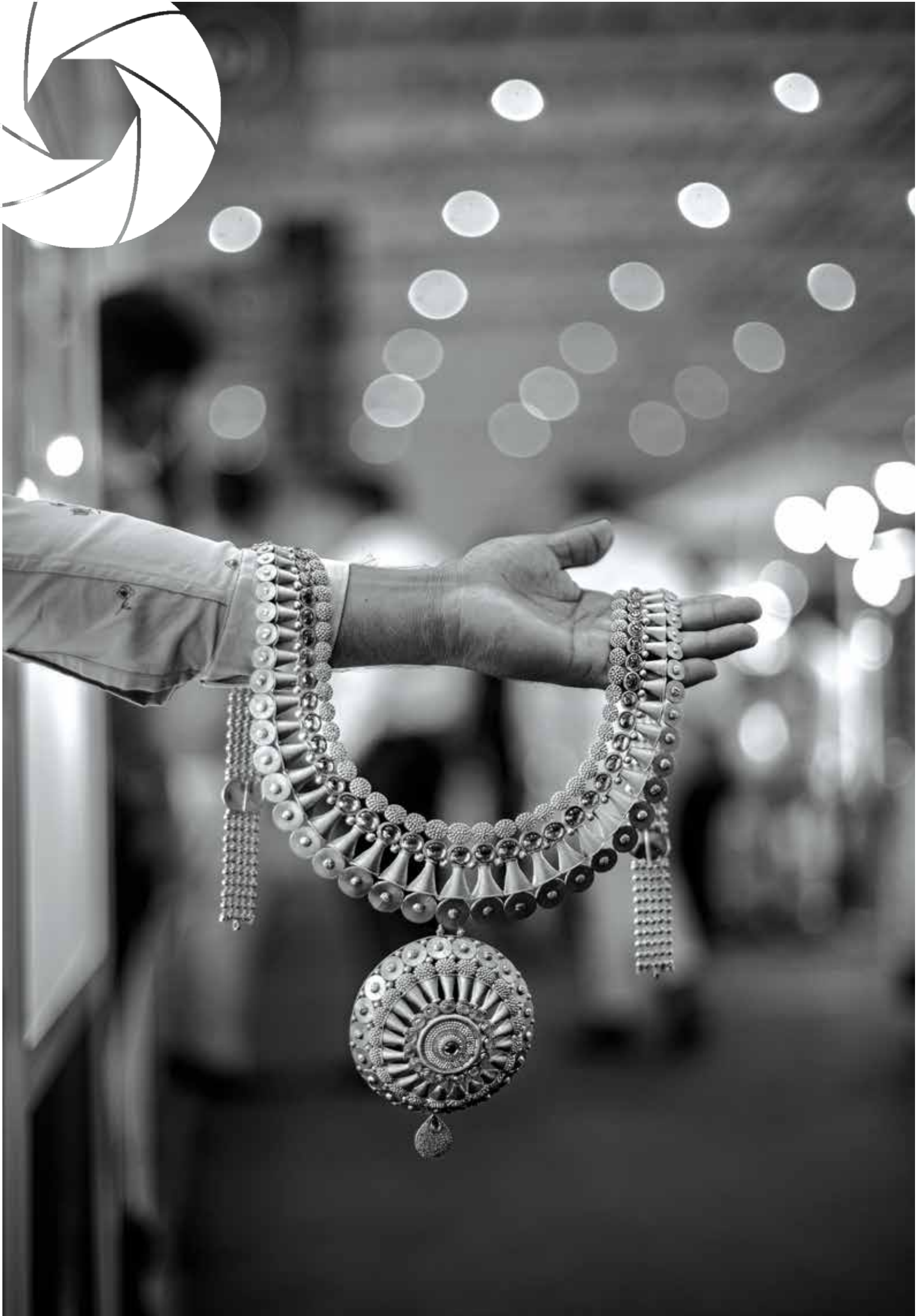






Deals worth several millions of dollars are transacted at IIJS Premiere each year.







MEN UP THEIR GAME WITH BEJEWELLED ACCESSORIES

Men's jewellery is a small but fast-growing segment.

– Aliya Ladhahoy



*Lady Bird enamelled
cufflinks. By Jaipur Jewels
by Vaibhav Dhadha*

World over, more and more men are embracing jewellery as part of their sartorial attire. At top international fashion shows for spring/summer 2022, many of the male models sported rings, necklaces, bracelets, and the like. Perhaps this is just the beginning, but it is likely that the trend will soon trickle down to the masses.

In India, there are a few players who have recognised the growing demand for men's accessories and are catering to the niche category.

Strong Demand

“The market for men's jewellery is booming because urban men want to stand out in the crowd, and they are spending much more time grooming themselves,” informs Vaibhav Dhadha of Jaipur Jewels by Vaibhav



*An ornate gem-studded brooch.
By Golecha's*

Dhaddha. "Women are known to be particular about what they want but we have noticed of late that men, too, have a discerning taste. With the ongoing wedding season, we are seeing increased budgets for men's jewellery as well," adds Dhaddha.

"We have been experiencing high demand first-hand for men's jewellery. In today's time, the fashion sensibilities of men have evolved, and they are more inclined to opt for brooches, cufflinks, bracelets, chunky rings, studs, etc. than ever before, as they now view these accessories as a requisite for a suave look. Catering to the changing trends influenced by social media, jewellery brands in India are also incorporating precious gemstones in men's jewellery and offering a plethora of subtle and stylish options for men," informs Manju Kothari, Creative Director, Entice by KGK.

"In the past four to five years, we have noticed a consistent spike in interest for men's jewellery. Earlier, this segment witnessed a significant demand in the gold category from markets in South India. Of late, it has become popular in other parts of the country as well," explains Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director, Kalyan Jewellers.

Giftng & Investment Options

While the category is still niche, it is fast-growing. "The men's jewellery segment is a robust category. It may not be very big, but you can go deep," shares Milan Chokshi of Moksh – Unseen Fine Jewels. "There are not many players in India who make well-designed, well-executed cufflinks. It makes for a great gift apart from watches. Men who are earning well want to invest in precious,

diamond cufflinks,” adds the retailer well-known for his micro pearl and diamond creations.

Accessories like brooches, buttons, cufflinks, badges, and lapel pins offer value for money and are wearable. They are gift options especially for weddings.

Beyond The Metros

The demand is not just limited to men from metro cities but also tier-II and tier III cities. Symetree, one of the key players in the men’s jewellery segment has clientele from Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad as well as smaller cities like Nagpur, Raipur and Indore, informs Abhishek Haritwal, Founder of the brand.

“Men’s jewellery doesn’t account for more than 15% of our total sales but we have the maximum interface that anybody could create for the segment,” shares Haritwal. They not only have a wide variety of categories such as bracelets, cufflinks, brooches, buttons, badges, and chatelaines, but several designs that run into triple digits within each category, inform: Haritwal, who has been betting on the segment for several years now.

“If we had invested the same amount in bridal jewellery, it would have done 10 rotations by now but, we invested in the segment at the cost of profiteering,” shares Haritwal.

“We introduced chatelaines eight years ago in India after studying vintage pieces at top museums across the world,” noted Haritwal. Initially worn by women in the 10th-11th century, it became a unisex piece of ornamentation in the later centuries. The ornament is fastened to a belt or a pocket with chains bearing hooks to hang small articles like watches, keys, etc.

“We have Forbes 100 of the country as well as Bollywood celebrities like Amitabh Bachchan and Ranveer Singh as clients. Since then, many jewellery and fashion brands have piggybacked on the trend,” he adds.

What’s In Demand

“Categories such as diamond studs, cuff-links, diamond bracelets and diamond rings are a major hit among men and will continue to be in the coming times. Since men are more experimental with their personal style than ever, chunky dual metal rings featuring precious gemstones and classic chains are a rage in the men’s jewellery category,” shares Kothari. She adds that there is a growing trend for grooms to go beyond the traditional engagement and wedding rings.

At Kalyan Jewellers, pearl and kundan multi-layer necklaces are in demand for wedding functions. They have expanded their Mahurat wedding jewellery collection to cater to the demand. Kalyanaraman adds that platinum jewellery has become quite popular amongst urban male audiences. Even rose gold and white gold jewellery with matte finish are in demand.



*Gold cufflinks with horse cameos.
By Jaipur Jewels by
Vaibhav Dhadda*

Individual Expression

When it comes to men’s accessories, cufflinks rule the roost. “While we sell lapel pins, money clips, buttons and cufflinks, the latter is the most popular category. We sell one set of buttons for every five cufflinks. While our cufflinks start from Rs.4,000 and go up to Rs.200,000, the sweet spot is between Rs.50,000 and Rs.60,000,” informs Dhaddha, adding, “Internationally, our cameo cufflinks which offer different kinds of imagery are a popular way for men to express their personality.”

Chokshi also shares that the popular price point for Moksh’s cufflinks is below Rs.100,000. “We have diamond and precious stone cufflinks set in gold as well as ones set in silver with black diamonds. We have also made cufflinks using our signature micro-pearl technique for occasion wear on request,” he elaborates.

Haritwal introduced 5-day week cufflinks offering more formal variants for Monday to Thursday and quirky concepts for Friday's casual dressing which worked well for them. Even their bracelets which are crafted with different evil eye charms of Rajasthan are bestsellers. The unisex piece of jewellery is sold in silver as well as gold. They have also extended the concept to cufflinks.

Dhaddha notes that the pandemic has attracted customers to shop online for accessories, a plus for brands with an online presence.

Most of the purchases are still driven by weddings and retailers agree that it is a task to get men to become ornamental. Vijay Golecha of Golecha's Jewels shares that a large segment of men doesn't wear jewellery although there is an awareness in the market. He suggests that jewellers themselves should wear their designs so that other men can realise what a difference a jewelled accessory can make to the overall look. "I always wear some accessory or the other," adds Golecha, noting that one can be innovative within the category using semi-precious and precious stones depending on each one's budget.

Currently, men's jewellery accounts for a minor share of the overall industry. "We believe it is a segment worth tapping into. If we put in more efforts to build this category, this will be extremely beneficial for the industry in the years to come," concludes Kalyanaraman. ■



*Yellow gold men's bracelet accented
with diamonds.
By Entice by KGK*



The India Link To Place Vendôme

*India's maharajas add glittering history to refurbished Place Vendôme,
the epicentre of the French high-jewellery world.*

– Liza Foreman

Place Vendôme, the epicentre of the French high-jewellery world, has recently undergone a multi-billion-euro makeover that has restored its elegant facades into objects of beauty. Adorned in sparkling Christmas trees for the holiday season, these exteriors all but match the exquisite jewellery that is handmade in France and sold inside its luxury boutiques.

Where tourists now potter about, taking photographs of these beautiful structures, the Maharajas once came with trunks of gemstones to be fashioned by the high jewellery houses in residence on the square. They were welcomed into beautiful salons kept under wraps, like its jewels, for select clients. Today, too, high-end industrialists from India shop here for luxury pieces.

The results of this two-way attraction include some stand-out jewellery designs like Cartier's Tutti Frutti collection with its maharaja necklace, which was worn by celebrities from Ms. Cole Porter to Lady Mountbatten.

"It was a great wave of cross-pollination for Indian gemstones, with Indian styles redesigned by the West, and according to their senses, what they perceive India to be," says Tarang Arora, CEO and Creative Designer at Amrapali Jewels in Jaipur. "It really

changed how Western jewellery design for Indians started, and we can see it emerging a lot more again today. A movement of an Indian aesthetic but in a very contemporary international way is becoming more and more important."

Fabulous tales and photographs of India's maharajas adorn the walls of historic jewellery houses, like Boucheron, which had a strong relationship with India's elite from the beginning.

Boucheron, Chaumet, Dior, Chanel, and Cartier are among those that call Place Vendôme home today, not to mention fashion houses like Schiaparelli and The Ritz where some of this Indian royalty would stay.

"Place Vendôme and the boutiques of the great jewellery firms symbolise French jewellery and the French 'savoir-faire' because all the jewels sold there are made in workshops in Paris or in France," explains Évelyne Possémé, Chief Curator of Ancient and Modern jewellery at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. The museum is currently exhibiting some of this history in its "Cartier and Islam," exhibition which shows how Cartier courted the Maharajas to do business with his house in the 1910s.



*The Tutti Frutti necklace;
Nick Welsh, Collection
Cartier © Cartier*



Pair of Tutti Frutti clip brooches; Nick Welsh, Cartier Collection © Cartier



“Jacques Cartier was in India for the Durbar of the King and the Queen of England in December 1911, so he could meet all the Maharajas in Delhi. The Maharajas came to Paris and London after the First World War, in the Art Deco period,” adds Posseme. “At the same time, in the 1920-1930, the maharajas were also clients of Boucheron and the Van Cleef & Arpels firm.”

Jewellery historians note that this interaction began before. “The Maharajas started travelling to England and Europe in the late 19th century, while European jewel merchants and gem dealers were already visiting India from as early as the 16th century, much before Cartier's arrival in India,” says Dr. Usha R Balakrishnan, the leading Indian jewellery historian and curator.

At Les Arts Décoratifs, some pieces from the Cartier period can be seen currently. Others were on display as early as the late 19th century, she notes.

“Interestingly, the renowned Parisian jeweller Oscar Massin executed a magnificent commission, a diamond studded belt, for Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad with gemstones supplied by the Nizam. The belt was exhibited in the Paris Exposition of 1878,” adds Balakrishnan.

Cartier's fascination with India was broad. “Prompted by Europe's fascination with the Orient

and the International exhibitions held in Paris and London, jewellers ventured to India, where there was a lucrative market for watches, gems and jewels,” says Balakrishnan. “Cartier's exploration was not confined to Islamic design, but to Indian design architecture, motifs, colour palette and, importantly, fabulous Indian gemstones. The maharajas succumbed to the lure of avant-garde designs, Art Deco forms, the muted elegance of platinum, French design sensibility and modern settings.”

On Place Vendome, the Maharajas were entertained in some of the exquisite secret salons above the shop floors. At Boucheron, panels of historic photographs attest to this history. Staff keep the maharaja stories alive by sharing tales of them arriving with trunks of stones with journalists and visiting guests.

“The maharajas were taking that leap to going to international jewellers and design houses at Place Vendome, and also opening up their wealth, their gemstones and diamond treasures,” says Arora. “It was like Pandora's box. When one maharaja went, followed by the second and the third, others, too, got more and more confident in giving these top French jewellers bespoke commissions. To this day, I have clients that are big industrialists and travellers and they wish to buy a piece from Place Vendome.”

The refashioning of these gemstones was and still

is discussed inside some of these resplendent salons. Several of these boutiques, including Boucheron, Chumet, and Chanel, have been undergoing restoration, making these interiors even more beautiful.

Chaumet's Salle Chopin, and its surrounding rooms, have been repainted in exquisite Chaumet blue, making its museum of tiaras, reserved for special guests, sparkle all the more brightly. Chaumet's storied rooms include the Salon des Joyaux. Here high jewellery pieces are presented, and special orders are designed with its in-house team.

"In natural shades or tinted Chaumet blue, the straw marquetry radiating across the walls was created especially for the Maison by the Jallu Straw workshop," according to a press note by the house.

The Salon Chopin is classified as an historic monument. In 1779, artisans favoured by King Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette gave it its resplendent look.

In the Salon des Diadèmes hundreds of tiaras are displayed, and many crafted in nickel silver are displayed against a blue background.

At Boucheron, India is intertwined into many of its collections. Two examples are the Bleu de Jodhpur and Art Deco high jewellery collections. The Bleu de Jodhpur collection is a romantic interpretation of

the Blue City with Art Deco inspired features. The collection was the result of a collaboration between Boucheron's creative director Claire Choisne and the Maharaja of Jodhpur.

"Following his Majesty's wishes, the high jewellery collection comprises an array of unorthodox materials, such as sand and marble that are blended in style with pearls, diamonds and sapphires for the ultimate celebration of flamboyance and luxurious indulgence," the Boucheron house noted.

The Art Deco collection features a necklace that connects Boucheron's historical ties with India. The emerald, diamond and onyx necklace inspired by the house was created for the Maharaja of Patalia in 1928. Featuring 220 emerald beads weighing an incredible 1,071.97 carats, the necklace was based on an archival image of the Maharaja's commission. The design is the largest special order created by Boucheron for the Indian royal.

"The Maharaja was in the Ritz just near Boucheron and he went through the Place Vendome with six Sikh guards carrying cases of stones and we designed 149 pieces for him," says Choisne. "They were huge pieces full of emeralds, diamonds and tourmalines. They were really spectacular."



The Tiger ring set with rubies and sapphires from the Bleu de Jodhpur collection, Boucheron.



*Bleu de Jodhpur Parroquet
agate bracelet set with
diamonds and sapphires,
Boucheron.*

The Maharajas were patrons of Chaumet, Mauboussin, Van Cleef & Arpels, Mellerio, and Boucheron. They all produced fabulous items for their royal clients, notes one auction house.

The first to open a boutique at 12 Place Vendome was Chaumet. Boucheron opened their boutique in 1858 and Cartier France's headquarter was established at 13 Rue de la Paix, just off Place Vendome in 1899. JAR established his atelier at Place Vendome Nr 7, l'Hotel le Bas de Montargis in the late 1970s.

"Boucheron was the first address for the Maharajas in the 1920s when they came to Place Vendome. They were looking to reset their jewels into more modern designs of the time," added the spokesperson from an auction house speaking anonymously. "Cartier played a big role when in 1928 the house reset the Maharaja of Patiala's jewels. And obviously their multiple visits to India played a role too."

"The Tutti Frutti design by Cartier is certainly a benefit from the Maharajas bringing their gemstones to Paris, which were cut in such different ways to the European stones and a new design had to be created to



*Art Deco-inspired white
gold and platinum pendant
earrings set with emeralds,
diamonds, and onyx,
Boucheron.*



Chaumet's Salon des Diadèmes with tiaras displayed against the walls.

use these stones to underline their beauty and rarity,” she adds.

The tradition continues. “Magnificent gemstones from India, formerly in the collection of the Maharajas and noblemen, still find their way to jewellers at Place Vendôme,” notes Balakrishnan. “Jacques Cartier travelled to India in 1911 to attend the Delhi Durbar, a grand event that was held to mark the accession of King George V of England as Emperor of India. It was Cartier's first encounter with the Maharajas, an encounter that was to develop into an extremely deep relationship across the leading courts of India resulting in the production of magnificent jewels to this day.”

Squared off

The history of the square itself spans Louis, the Sun King to the French Revolution. The square's name was taken from a royal love child, the Duke of Vendôme, who owned a building that once stood on the site of the square.

The duke was the offspring of a French beauty, Gabrielle d'Estrée, who was known as the 'blond

Venus' and the 'almost queen', and King Henri IV.

Louis XIV abandoned plans to transform the square to focus on Versailles. The unfinished square was offered to the city of Paris instead. Key scenes in the French Revolution took place here. A bust of Necker, a French minister who was detested, was smashed at the foot of a statue of Louis XIV on the square. Now atop the column from 1810 that is the focal point of the square, it's Napoleon's bust that presides over the coming and goings at the heart of French luxury. ■

ZEEMOU ZENG

The Conjuror



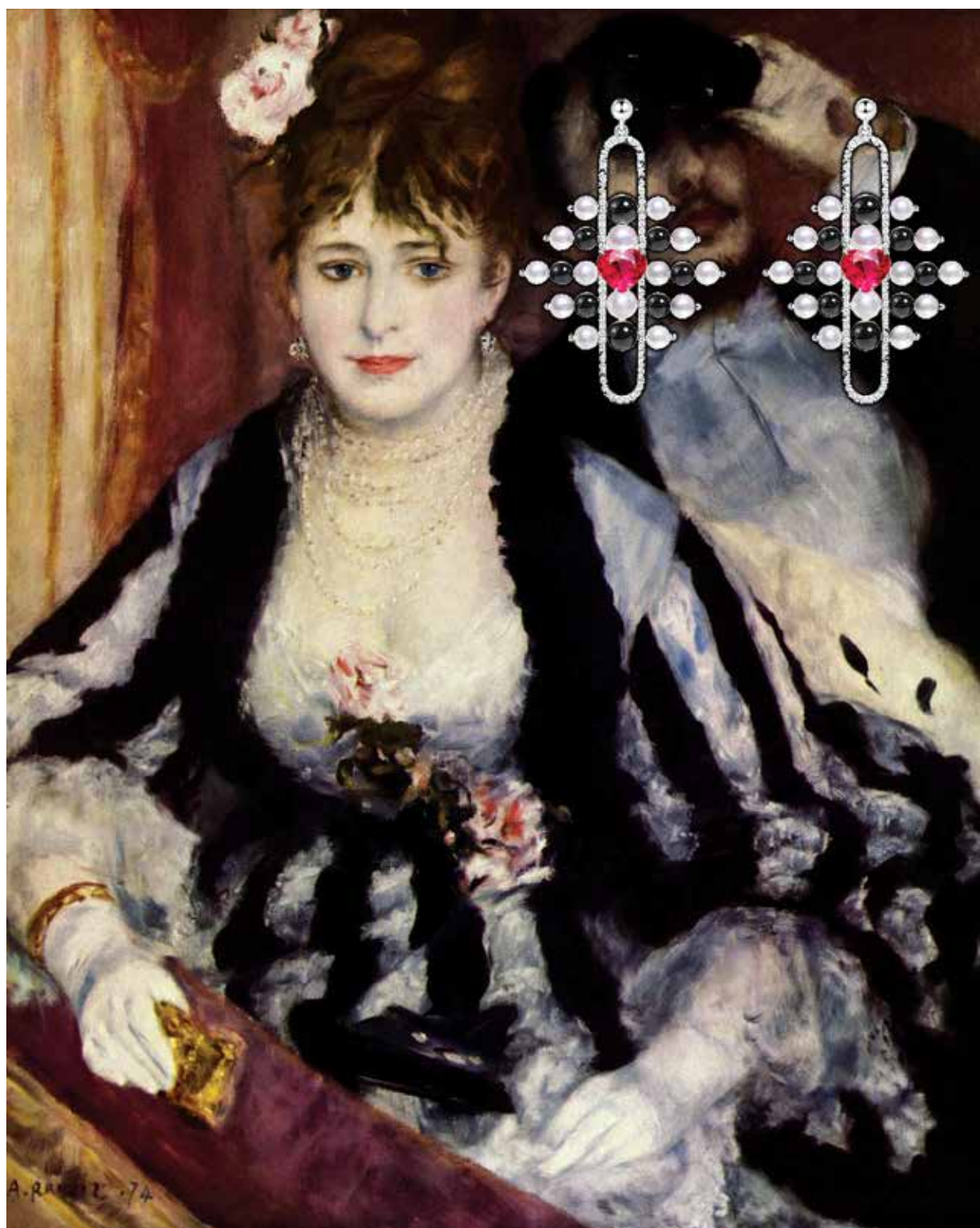
Zeemou Zeng

Solitaire International *tries to get into the mind of this bright young designer in an exclusive interview.*

Zeemou Zeng is the master of his world. The exciting kinetic works of art designed by the award-winning UK-based jewellery artist are not confined to the boundaries of conventional jewellery making. Art and high-tech mechanisms – the edifice on which his brand is built – converge to generate seemingly simple but challenging pieces of his groundbreaking engineered marvels.

Zeemou's distinctiveness lies in presenting abstract or allegorical representations through his bejewelled creations. He consciously moves away from presenting starkly realistic motifs and reimagines the concepts through a play of colour! His signature? The carefully chosen gemstones move and slide in a way to generate a new colour combination each time it is worn.

Zeemou's Impressionists collection is inspired by the famous paintings of Monet, Renoir, Seurat and Manet, who used bold brushstrokes and colours to capture the movement and transient effect of sunlight and colour, which was a clear departure from depicting realism. Zeemou's genius shines through in this line fashioned with white and yellow gold that features gems set with geometric precision – and of course,



The Alizarin earrings (inset) from the Impressionists collection are inspired by Pierre-Auguste Renoir's painting, the Theatre Box. The 18-karat white gold dangles are set with pave diamonds, rubellite, Akoya pearls and black onyx. By Zeemou Zeng

the signature of Zeemou Movement. As the beautiful stones shift and slide, they mimic the fleeting movement of light, colour and texture, similar to the paintings.

All of his collections are infused with a playful element. The Melody collection produces 'tunes' when the gems roll within the framework of a gem-set piece, and the Eye collection's main gemstone swivels from front to back to showcase a different gem on the other side.

– Shanoo Bijlani

| Tell us about your early years... the turning point that made you take on jewellery designing?

I originally studied interior and architecture design in China, followed by an MA course in Designer Making at the University of the Arts London. I have always, since I was very young, been passionate about art and designing. I think I made a wise decision to come to London and living and studying here has really helped me find myself and enabled me to follow my heart.

| You are a whiz kid, and an iconic artist!

In my early career, I have been lucky enough to have won several awards, including "Bright Young Gems" by International Jewellery London, two Gold Awards at the Goldsmiths' Craft & Design Awards, known as the UK 'Jewellery Oscars', as well as named "Young



Jewellery Designer of the Year 2020" at the UK Jewellery Awards. I feel very lucky and honoured to gain recognition and praise from the jewellery industry.

| You established your namesake brand in 2017. How has the journey been so far?

Running my jewellery brand for the past few years has not been easy, but it has been a very enjoyable journey. I think everything is on the right track now. We are looking to expand our sales channels and grow our distribution. We as a team will work harder and always try our best to deliver even more beautiful pieces to our customers.

| Your lines are based on diverse inspirations like melody, travel, Impressionist painters and more. We'd like to know the process from concept to creation ... Do you work around a gemstone, or do you think of a theme and then go about sourcing the relevant gems?

Both ways work for me as a jewellery designer. So far, we've launched four collections, all created by me based on different themes. Once the idea takes root, I source the relevant gemstones for each piece. I love mixing different colour gemstones in my creations.

| To convert a concept like travel or melody or even Impressionism into a piece of wearable art, is a challenging proposition. How do you translate an abstract thought into a concrete idea?

I usually don't take forms or shapes directly from nature – be it animals, flowers, or plants.

The 18-karat yellow gold Impressionists ring titled Cobalt Black III is set with black onyx. The ring is inspired by Luncheon in the Studio, a painting by Édouard Manet (pictured above).
By Zeemou Zeng





Kyanite and diamond
Eye brooch. By
Zeemou Zeng

Melody cocktail ring
crafted in 18-karat
white gold set with
pave diamonds and
green chalcedony.
By Zeemou Zeng



As a contemporary fine jewellery designer, I love to express my feelings, thoughts, and personal experiences through my jewellery creations. I see jewellery as contemporary art. I like to push the creative boundaries in my designs, resulting in innovative and often surprising design solutions, as can be seen in both the Melody and Eye collections, as well as the latest, The Heart collection.

From the time you began to until now, how have you evolved as an artist?

I've been always interested in art. I started professional training in drawing from an early age. Later, I got more and more fascinated by working with different materials to create art works, metal, porcelain, and crystal glass, which is my most favourite.

The postgraduate course in Designer Making at University of the Arts London allows artists to re-assert the position of craft examined within the context of

contemporary design discourse, society, and humanity, to develop a project from a proposal to the final exhibit, by exploring new and existing materials and processes.

You have an amazing hold over technical aspects of jewellery making ... Most of your pieces are kinetic. How important it is for a jewellery artist to balance the act between being a designer and a metalsmith?

It is very important. A good designer should not only be able to create beautiful designs, but also understand different jewellery-making techniques and have in-depth knowledge about gemstones.

My philosophy is to create unique designs which possess both functionality and beauty. I always trying to balance art and wearability in my pieces.

How long does it take for each piece to come to life?

We only launch one new collection every year, as I'm aiming to present unique designs rather than creating



The Art of Travel hoop earrings titled Gem In Handbag are articulated with 18-karat yellow gold and set with Fuli Gemstones peridot. By Zeemou Zeng



something that's similar or already available in the jewellery market.

I usually spend a lot of my time on researching and designing. My designs are technically challenging and are much more complicated than they appear. To achieve our signature movement, I work with highly skilled people to hand-polish each element, making sure the final piece is perfect.

| Peridots seem to be your fave gemstones?

Peridot is one of my most favourite gemstones, and I love its incredible lime-green hue. Peridot is known as the 'gem of the sun' with healing powers that can ward off fear, insecurity, and anxiety, and the colour green symbolises hope and rebirth.

I think peridot is the perfect gemstone for the collection, as The Art of Travel collection is meant to motivate us to pursue our dreams, to inspire freedom and evoke happiness.

| You also have an affinity towards crystalware?

I think it is because of my interior design background that I love homewares and decorative arts. I created the first crystal tumbler collection inspired by precious gemstone cutting. It is a collection combining traditional crafts and contemporary design perfectly blending quality and aesthetics.

| Where does one buy your jewellery?

Our jewellery is available on the Zeemou Zeng website,

as well as on international luxury online marketplaces, such as 1stDibs, Farfetch, and URSA London.

| Your favourite jewellery designers ...

I admire jewellery designer Aldo Cipullo. I like jewellery pieces that make a statement but can be worn every day. Both functionality and beauty are cornerstones of my design philosophy. Cipullo, too, was a designer who balanced both functionality and beauty perfectly, as seen in the iconic Love bracelet he designed for Cartier. Few other jewellery designers that I really like are Fulco di Verdura, Suzanne Belperron and Fawaz Gruosi ... their passion and imagination is very inspiring and motivates me to try something new.

| Did you expect your rise to stardom in the world of jewellery would be so quick? How does it feel to become the cynosure of everyone's eyes? Is fame intimidating?

I feel very lucky and honoured to gain recognition and praise from the jewellery industry. But for me, the most important thing is not fame, it is about enjoying my job as a jewellery designer. I can create something I truly love by following my heart ... and the fact that I can devote myself to jewellery design with passion, and follow my vision.

| What is a day in the life of Zeemou Zeng like?

My schedule varies widely every day because my role as founder and designer includes both creative designing

A collection of Eye rings, pendant and brooch in white and yellow gold. By Zeemou Zeng



and methodical overseeing of production.

I spend most of my time at my work desk, dealing with daily emails, completing paperwork, researching, and drawing sketches. As a designer, I always have a sketch book by my side, so if any new ideas come to mind, I can quickly draw them and make some notes – it's very helpful to keep these ideas for later.

Sitting in front of my desk with a pen and sketch book is one of the most enjoyable times of my day. I really enjoy the creative processes, breaking rules and taking risks. Often aided by a cup of coffee or tea!

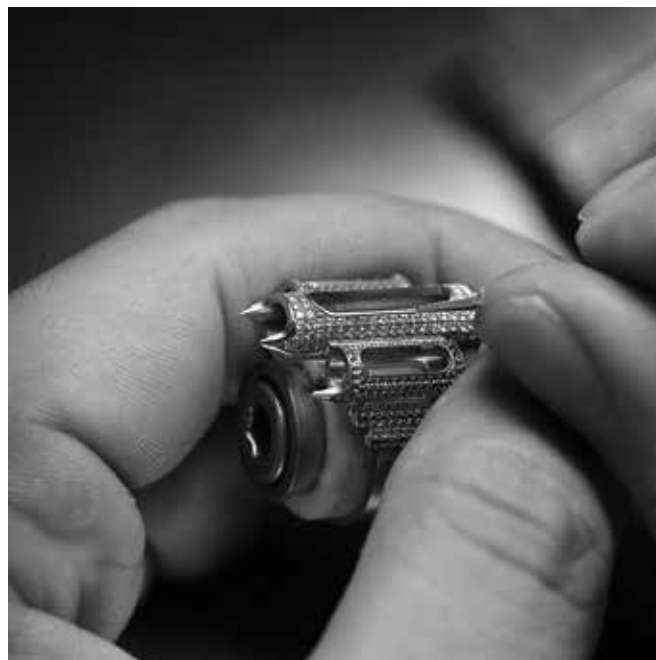
| What are your hobbies?

Other than designing jewellery, travelling is one of my main hobbies, although I didn't travel for a long time due to the pandemic.

I love sunny destinations with rich cultures. For me, the most magical places on earth are destinations that are by the seaside or the desert areas. The feeling is pure and powerful. Whenever I'm close to either I feel I'm free—it brings me joy and triggers my imagination.

| If you were not a jewellery designer, what would you be?

I love most things about jewellery and decorative arts design. But if I were to try something else in the industry, I would like to learn how to become a gemstone cutter. For me, it is a very exciting and magical process, seeing a rough stone turn into sparkling and beautiful gemstone!



Checking the settings at the workbench.
© Zeemou Zeng

| Do you follow any Indian designers? Would you wish to visit India, post Covid, of course!?

I do follow some Indian jewellery brands or designers, such as Moksh, Vishal Anil Kothari (VAK), Sajil Shah, and London-based designer Akansha Sethi. India is one of my dream destinations to visit; I'm always curious about its rich culture, the long history of jewellery-making, and of course, the food! ■

Sotheby's Diamonds Offers Avant-Garde Diamond Jewellery

Sotheby's Diamonds offers cutting-edge designs in high-end diamond jewellery for sophisticated collectors at its standalone boutique in London.

– David Brough



The Honeycomb ring designed by Lily Gabriella exclusively for Sotheby's Diamonds is patterned with a pear-shaped 6.12-carat Fancy Intense Yellow diamond.



The Pink Pastille ring features an oval-cut 2.06-carat Fancy Vivid Purplish Pink diamond.



The Circe Ring spotlights on a cushion-cut 3.27-carat Fancy Vivid Blue Internally Flawless, with a border of diamonds and grey chalcedony.



The Reishi Disk Ring is set with an emerald-cut 5.01-carat GVS1.

Sotheby's Diamonds' boutique, located by the main entrance of Sotheby's New Bond Street headquarters in London, showcases an array of daring designs in platinum or 18-karat gold jewellery set with extremely high quality natural diamonds and sometimes combined with unusual materials.

The pieces on display during a recent visit included a fabulous 5.01-carat G VS1 diamond ring with ebony set in platinum, designed exclusively for Sotheby's Diamonds by Hong Kong-based Nicholas Lieou; and a remarkable 2.06-carat fancy vivid purplish pink diamond ring, set in 18-karat white gold.

“The designs of Sotheby’s Diamonds jewellery tend to be more extravagant and distinctive, more niche,” Alessandro Borruso, Deputy Director of Sotheby’s Diamonds Europe, told Solitaire International at the boutique.

“These are one-off pieces with stones of really high quality. The designers work around the stones, which are the main focus, to create modern masterpieces.”

Sotheby’s Diamonds was founded by Patti Wong, Chairman, Sotheby’s Asia, in 2005, as a private sales arm for the auction house.

“Sotheby’s Diamonds was conceived as a way of meeting the requirements of under-bidders in the auctions, who are left with the desire for something special – those who missed out on winning a lot,” Alessandro said.

“Our clients also include new, high-net-worth collectors.”

The diamonds are supplied to Sotheby’s Diamonds by manufacturer and partner in this joint venture with Sotheby’s, Diacore, a De Beers sightholder, which has a reputation as a master cutter of highly valuable stones.

All of the jewels are hand engraved “Sotheby’s Diamonds”, with a serial number, and have a GIA certificate to instil full confidence in the buyer and providing the detailed specifications of the stone.

Sotheby’s Diamonds has regular collaborations with highly skilled jewellery designers, who are asked to work with a stone that resonates with them and to create a design around it.

In December, the London boutique hosted some intricate lightweight diamond jewellery masterpieces from Paris-based designer Tatiana Verstraeten, who appeals to a younger clientele.

Alessandro said he had identified a clear trend by collectors to seek out the highest quality diamonds, rather than mid-quality stones, as well as a greater appreciation of craftsmanship.

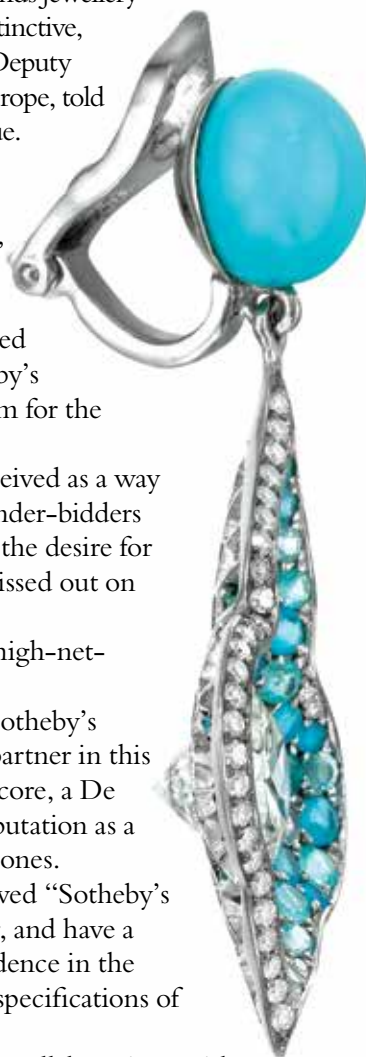
Popular colours of diamonds sought by collectors include pinks and blues, as well as colourless stones, with round, brilliant-cut shapes strongly in demand.

Pinks are increasingly sought-after for their beauty and rarity, following the recent closure of the Argyle mine in Australia, which was a major origin of this colour of diamond.

Collectors can visit the Sotheby’s Diamonds boutiques in London and Hong Kong by appointment or use Sotheby’s “Buy Now” platform.

“In-person” enquiries have picked up since the darkest days of the lockdowns, with luxury shoppers now travelling to London again.

Many of Sotheby’s Diamonds’ customers are high-net-worth collectors from the UK.



The Sleeping Beauty Principessa earrings are studded with 1.53 carats of round brilliant I VVS2 and 1.51 carats of round brilliant I VS2, suspended from a turquoise button and surrounded by Paraibas, Swiss blue topaz and neon apatite.

Customers typically are aged at least 40, as they have already amassed a fortune that will allow them to spend perhaps upwards of \$1 million on an extraordinary piece of diamond jewellery.

During the lockdowns, a number of customers were resident in London from the Middle East but unable to leave the UK at the time because of travel restrictions.

Alessandro said the customer base would increasingly comprise women going forward, many of whom had achieved success in business.

“Many women are in charge of luxury spending in their families, including for diamond jewellery,” Alessandro said. ■

Evgeny Agureev: Overall Industry Is In Good Financial & Operational Health

From output forecasts, financial health, midstream stock levels and more, **EVGENY AGUREEV**, Deputy CEO of Alrosa, shares his views on all this and more.



Evgeny Agureev

With retail jewellery demand showing no signs of slowing down and midstream stocks at historic lows, diamond miners are in an enviable position today. How do you envision this scenario (in terms of rough pricing, production, inventory, etc.) playing out through 2022-23?

Our outlook for the diamond jewellery market remains very positive. Of course, there was an effect of pent-up demand especially in the first half of this year. Diamond jewellery sales in 2021 are expected to hit an all-time high of over \$90 billion, close to 20% growth vs 2020, and over 5% vs pre-Covid levels. The largest driver was the USA where demand was over 50% vs pre-Covid levels. Prospects of personal luxury goods and jewellery sales in particular look good on the back of the growth

in savings from lower spending on experiential luxury and the significant increase in a number of high-net-worth individuals, specifically in USA and Asia. The Asian factor, and Chinese in particular, should not be downplayed as these regions demonstrate a quick growth in the middle class and disposable income as well as adopts diamond jewellery gifting culture. We see hundreds of the shops are being opened in the Mainland China, and this growth is far from saturation. We are also excited to see young consumers joining the jewellery consumers' pool and retailers increasing their marketing budgets.

On the other hand, inventories of both rough and polished goods along the value chain are reportedly low. We hear from the market players that the midstream sold out even least liquid, so called "dead" stocks. What is essential, the overall industry is in a good financial and operational health, pursuing balanced approach to borrowing and focusing on catering real demand for polished diamonds.

Alrosa's own inventories declined to record low level by the mid-2021, and since then we sell everything we produce.

Moreover, mid-term growth potential for rough diamond production is restrained. Global rough diamond capacity structurally decreased. Starting 2021 and onwards global production is estimated to stand at around 110-120 million carats per year as compared to 140-150 million carats prior to 2019.

We believe that these factors, jewellery demand reaching an all-time high level, lean stocks, limited rough diamonds supply – will offer a good support to retain and grow the value of our market both in the short and long term.

Please provide details about Alrosa's capital investment in mines to secure future diamond supplies.



The Arkhangelsky open pit.

Alrosa pays great attention to securing future production. Our mid-term target is to recover our production to 35–36 million carats by 2025–2026 from 32.5 million carats in 2021. This means close to 10% growth, but still 3–5% lower vs our previous peaks of 2018.

Our official production target for 2022 currently stands at 33–34 million carats. However, there might be some upside potential of up to 1 million carats a year. But we do not think we can return back to 37–38 million carats per year. Though we explore all existing opportunities to satisfy end demand, we should be realistic about our ability to increase production.

The increase in production anticipated in 2022 will be mostly due to the ramp-up of the Udachny underground mine that was commissioned in 2015, and the resumption of production at the Ebelyakh alluvial deposit of our Almazy Anabara subsidiary. Ebelyakh couldn't be revamped in 2021 due to its remoteness and sophisticated logistics.

As for the longer term, we expect the Alrosa Supervisory Board to consider the Mir mine restoration early next year. Once we receive a formal Board approval, we will launch this project, with an active investment phase starting 2025 and the construction taking 6–7 years. After 2030, Mir can contribute 3 million carats of output of high quality rough with a double-digit price premium versus our standard mix. But one should remember that some other assets are exhausting, and these potential 3 million carats per annum will just help us to keep a stable production after 2030s.

Tell us more about the way forward for polished diamond auctions. Does Alrosa guarantee minimum

supply of rough to its Cutting & Polishing Division? If yes, in what sizes and categories?

Alrosa Cutting and Polishing Division includes two famous facilities with highly skilled craftsmen and state-of-the-art equipment in Moscow and Smolensk. We are focusing on the upper price range goods, including fancy coloured. Such rough diamonds are scarce by their nature. We draft our production plans based on the market situation, available rough supply and other factors.

In 2021, we hosted five polished auctions instead

of initially planned four. For 2022, we have already planned five international online polished tenders with physical viewings in Ramat Gan, New York and Dubai. As in previous years, we will auction regular diamonds 5.00 carats up and fancy coloured diamonds, as well as regular and coloured sets assembled for using in jewellery.

How did Alrosa manage the wellbeing of communities living near mining sites in remote regions during Covid?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Alrosa has allocated more than \$14 million to combat the spread of the coronavirus in Yakutia, where 90% of the company's operations are located. The company provides financial assistance and medical supplies and equipment to hospitals. Alrosa equips hospitals with medicines, bactericidal units, consumable medical materials, artificial lung ventilators, bedside monitors, oxygen concentrators, ultraviolet units, oxygenators, disinfection equipment, personal pros, equipment and supplies for Covid testing, X-ray machines, etc.

What are some tough decisions that lie ahead you?

As I have already said, we do not anticipate a dramatic increase in rough diamond production in the years to come. With inventories and consumer demand at their current levels, managing the limited supply would be hard work. We highly value all our clients, focusing on additional value creation and satisfying the real-backed demand first. ■

Jim Vimadalal: Alrosa Is Constantly Increasing Direct Cooperation With Our Indian Partners And With GJEPC

As Alrosa's country head, **JIM VIMADALAL** has played a key role in building bridges and strengthening ties between the mining company and Indian diamondaires. He discusses at length the long-term outlook for India.



Jim Vimadalal

Tell us about the Alrosa Representative Office's journey in India so far.

Alrosa had opened its Representative Office in India in early 2018. The office does not conduct any trading activity and remains concentrated on strengthening Alrosa ties with Indian market. As the Director, I work on promoting Alrosa's brand on the local market and helping existing clients. The office is responsible for interaction with India's diamond industry organisations in various directions, such as opportunities for business development and studying consumer demand trends, as India not just plays a huge role in the global polishing business, but is also a promising diamond jewellery consumer market.

Since the opening of the representative office, Alrosa's share of direct sales to India has grown by 1/3. Today

each of the Indian origin customers whether from India, Antwerp, Dubai, etc. has developed a deeper and closer understanding with Alrosa. Continuous communication with each of our customers and regular interaction has strengthened the bonds of our partnership. As the global cutting and polishing centre, India processes more than 90% of all diamonds in the world, including Alrosa and we are constantly increasing our direct cooperation with all our Indian partners and also with GJEPC.

Alrosa's new long-term Indian client list appears shorter than before. Does that affect Alrosa's plans for growth in the country?

One of Alrosa's main long-standing partners is India's cutting and polishing industry. Many customers of the Alrosa Alliance community are companies based or founded in India.

We retain our commitment to developing our cooperation further. The year 2021 was difficult in terms of the supply. We believe that next year we will be able to make more offers to spot market clients, including those from India. Finally, we should stress that the current list of long-term clients is not a 'closed club' and there is plenty of opportunity for new clients to be added.

How did the Indian industry react to the flexibility in rough buying obligations by Alrosa throughout the pandemic?

Today, flexibility means efficiency. It is true for all parts of the global diamond value chain. I am delighted to say that most of Alrosa clients from India went through the difficulties together with the company and successfully switched to a more flexible model while being able to adjust to the changing environment. We are sad to



Rough diamonds being prepped for the polishing process.

note that in 2020 we had to terminate several long-term contracts with companies that did not meet their obligations.

I should stress that Alrosa highly values all its clients and we shall continue working together at spot and competitive sales.

Can we get an update on GJEPC's request to supply rough diamonds directly to the Indian MSME sector?

Alrosa trades natural diamonds under the set of regulations, approved at the corporate and state level, adhering to an equal approach to all counterparties. Under these rules, the company must meet a number of criteria to become a client, therefore Alrosa is not able to work directly with small-sized enterprises. However, we are always open for new opportunities. We are in a constant dialogue with our Indian partners. After this request from GJEPC we shall look for solutions that would be beneficial for the entire diamond value chain.

What is Alrosa's long-term outlook for India?

Currently, we note that the Indian midstream sector is at an optimal level, as rough diamond consumption and polished output have managed to recover and even exceed 2017–2018 levels in just over a year. A number of factors have created a solid basis for the consistent and continued success of the diamond sector's development in the coming year. We appreciate that one of these factors is, that our partners have completely adjusted to working in the difficult pandemic environment, still fulfilling all their obligations. Moreover, polished inventories have declined to optimal levels, and the industry has also started to rely more on its own revenue rather than bank loans. We believe that the strong demand for diamond jewellery alongside a limited rough diamond supply will help increase the price of polished diamonds further. ■

WGC's Big 10-Year Plan For Gold

David Tait, Global CEO, World Gold Council, reflects on the progress achieved in 2021, deliberates on the potential future threat posed by regulated cryptocurrencies, and outlines his vision for gold over the next decade, in an exclusive year-end round-up with *Solitaire International*.

– Regan Luis



David Tait

What is the WGC's global roadmap over the next 10 years?

We have a 10-year programme called Gold 24/7 that's seeking to solve accessibility to gold. It will make gold accessible to literally anyone, all the time, in any form. The second thing it's hoping to do is solve gold supply integrity – by that I mean the provenance and chain of custody of gold from the mine site right the way through to the ring on your finger.

And the last thing it's seeking to do is create completely fungible markets. Fungible is a strange word, but basically meaning that gold produced in China or India can be sold and traded and used by markets in the United States, UK, Australia, etc. And in doing so, if we manage to join these markets up, I believe we'll virtually create a new asset class, almost akin to gold's Big Bang; and gold will be used for financing, collateralisation, and many other uses, which I believe we've not even thought of yet. So that's the big 10-year plan for the overall gold market. That's our big objective.

How much industry support has WGC received worldwide (and from India) for its Retail Gold Investment Principles (RGIPs)?

The short answer is surprisingly, high amount. I have to say the whole notion was born in India when I first visited the country. India has taken the lead in this respect. Using your example, to be honest, we've extended that across Germany, it's going into the UK, the Italian jewellery market, and most recently, the US. We're bringing together all the industry associations in the United States, which is very fragmented, and as far as Mexico. So, the short answer is the industry seems to be crying out for some form of coordination, some way of raising trust, transparency, and participation. So, it seems to me that it's manna from heaven to this industry.

What is the outlook for gold consumption going into 2022?

Gold consumption is well placed to continue higher. Covid has kept a suppressing hand on the economies of the world, but we've all been surprised by how quickly they have bounced back, and how much latent demand there is in the system waiting to be used. Second to that, I think the geo-economic and geopolitical landscapes support gold enormously. You've got inflation; it looks like the UK has just produced record high numbers. Now will the authorities respond appropriately and in line with those inflation expectations? I think there's a very good chance they'll either lag behind or do too much. Both those scenarios are particularly good for gold. And then geopolitically? Well, you only have to look around the world to see all these areas of tension, which I think will support gold into 2022. So I'm positive.



Gold bars stored in vaulted secure storage. © World Gold Council

What are the WGC's biggest challenges in expanding the gold market in India?

We need to be able to impress upon the authorities that regulation and the lowering of taxes will be beneficial to the overall market. I think the introduction of the domestic spot exchange, and SEBI, whose effort to regulate the market we applaud enormously, will do great things towards improving the trust and transparency of participation that is so needed. So I applaud these efforts, and I would like to see more.

From a purely cultural perspective, I think expanding gold attraction as both an investment product and as a modern form of expression, call it jewellery ... all things are going to work to expand the market in India, and we've been doing a lot in that regard with our millennial campaign to get people in tune with a modern form of gold.

And secondarily, as I've tried to explain, trying to work with the authorities to get gold more regulated, do away with nefarious practice as best we possibly can, and give people the confidence at all levels of society in India, that gold is not only a beautiful piece of jewellery, but it also sustains and protects your wealth, hedges against inflation, and is a worthwhile investment product as well. So the prospects are great. We

just need to work harder to get in front of more people and explain what we call the case for gold.

How is the promotion of "digital gold" in India going to affect the physical gold market?

We only support digital gold when it is fully gold-backed. And the gold receipts idea promoted by SEBI is a good one. I think its intentions are sound in trying to squeeze out any forms of nefarious schemes that are in the market, which only do the gold market damage. But I do believe that if a gold receipt programme is accepted, as long as it is fully physically backed, I don't think it's going to affect gold demand at all.

In fact, quite contrary, I think it should encourage demand, because there's less risk, as it's on exchanges, regulated authorities, there is a sense of security you get when you know, you're buying investment gold and you're absolutely certain where it has come from the fact that it is vaulted correctly, and you can account for it.

That is my goal: to remove the (doubt) from people's minds, such that more people invest and hold gold over time. What I don't like to see is pop-up small businesses that can't prove the gold is there, and many, many times

rip people off. The time has come to put an end to that. I want people to be secure and confident when they buy gold that it is what it is, and it is where it is.

Do you envision “sustainably mined” or “green” gold becoming a niche category that will command a premium at the retail level?

Logically you could see a situation where that could happen. But I think if you take into account things like our Responsible Gold Mining Principles, across our participating WGC member miners, that standard is much higher, frankly. And I think all across our industry, that the standard of gold produced by the World Gold Council’s member companies is high enough such that there shouldn’t be really a distinction between gold across the world. I’m hoping that the standards are so high that we don’t form a bifurcated market. I expect all the miners to adopt these policies so fast that it doesn’t bifurcate.

Today what are the main investment avenues competing with gold?

There’s lots of discussion about Bitcoin and whether it is a competitor to gold. I think currently Bitcoin and

other cryptocurrencies are great speculative tools, but are they a competitor to gold at the moment? I don’t really believe so.

But I also don’t think crypto is going away at all, and I’ve got nothing against it. I do think at some point, when the regulators across the globe regulate Bitcoin enormously, it will become a systemic threat at some point. When they regulate that asset class, then crypto could become a competitive threat to gold. Because many people who buy cryptocurrencies do so because it’s a currency debasement hedge. So is gold. But gold has far more broad qualities than crypto. At that point when it becomes regulated and becomes more of an investment, as I expect it will, I believe it’ll take some people from gold perhaps.

The other way of looking at this, if you don’t mind me saying, is if you have cryptocurrencies as part of a portfolio, logically, you must have gold if you didn’t have it before, as a hedge. So you can see there are two sides of the same gold coin, and it could add as an enhancement to demand more than anything else.

This year the WGC launched ‘You are Gold’, its first consumer-centric campaign in India, after several years. Are we likely to see more such direct consumer outreach initiatives by WGC in 2022 as well?



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© World Gold Council

Absolutely! I think there's a very good case for doing this. I desperately want to make gold relevant as an investment asset. That is my global plan, to make people aware of the benefits it brings to your portfolio. That's clearly an untapped resource, in India and elsewhere. But from a retail jewellery perspective — we want to make gold relevant to a whole new generation. We want people to understand that responsibly sourced gold is a fantastic thing, and something that people should own for hundreds of reasons.

Going into the future, we aim to be doing far more of the outreach that we have done this year. I've been very pleased with what we've managed to achieve, and I think it's getting great traction.

Any other message for India's gem and jewellery exporters?

Yes, I'm hugely pleased and proud of the Retail Gold Investment Principles and guidance. According to our research and numbers, 50% of people don't trust gold and 60% don't really understand it too much. The more people adopt the principles and understand the guidance, the more people will come to their market. And essentially, if they can only think of it as growing the pie, the more people will participate, and the pie will grow. And I think that's the most important thing people need to remember. Trust is everything. Participation is everything. ■

the
COLLECTORS

The Artisan 2022 Concludes First Judging Round

The Artisan Awards' theme 'The Collectors' was demanding, but the submissions by participants were equally challenging to choose from for the eminent jury. Here's an overview.



Sriram Natarajan, Arundhati De, Nisha Jhangiani, Gayatri Rangachari Shah, and Vishal Kothari.

GJEPC held the first round of judging of the 5th Edition The Artisan Awards 2022, at Four Seasons, Worli, Mumbai, in December 2021.

The design competition themed 'The Collectors' focussed on three iconic women, Elizabeth Taylor, Barbara Hutton, and Wallis Simpson, and attracted over 570 sketch entries from across the country and various parts of the world. The participants were expected to visualise these divas in their prime – the way they dressed then, their personal style, the kind of jewellery they wore, the attitude they projected – and create a bejewelled accessory that would go with their persona and aesthetic.

An eminent panel of judges shortlisted 30 entries from the three categories based on the versatility, technicality, and adaptability of classic curations in today's time. The jury included Gayatri Rangachari Shah, journalist, author, and jewellery enthusiast; Arundhati De, bespoke jewellery consultant; Vishal Kothari, founder and creative head, VAK Jewels; Sriram Natarajan, Managing Director, GIA India; Reena Ahluwalia, jewellery designer, professor, and painter; and David Bennett, former Worldwide Chairman of Sotheby's Jewellery Division. Joining them was Nisha Jhangiani, curator of Artisan Awards.

The winners will be declared based on the finished pieces that will be judged in March 2022.

Colin Shah, Chairman, GJEPC, said, "I'd like to extend my gratitude to the esteemed jury for their time and valuable inputs to judge the first round of The Artisan Awards 2022. We received an overwhelming response despite the tough theme. The participants had to use their imagination to style the three famous celebrities whose jewellery collections were unparalleled. Their legacies continue to live on even today and through The Artisan we decided to tackle a bold new idea and push the design envelope."

Milan Chokshi, Convener, Promotions, Marketing & Business Development, GJEPC commented, "The Collectors is a theme that dares designers to think out of the box. Styling the icons of yore is not an easy task, especially since the divas were jewellery connoisseurs and collectors with an exceptional eye for design and detail. The Artisan Awards is the only platform in the country which allows young talent to unleash their creative ambitions in their chosen field. Year after year, we have witnessed extraordinary designs that are relevant to the challenging themes that we put up. And each time, we have been surprised by the entries that surpass our expectations, thus underscoring the level of talent this industry possesses."



David Bennett

David Bennett, former Worldwide Chairman of Sotheby's Jewellery Division, noted, "I was delighted to have been invited to judge the first round of GJEPC's Artisan Awards 2022. The theme of The Collectors was clearly inspirational as we saw an incredibly wide range of highly imaginative and original pieces in precious and

semi-precious materials. I was intrigued to see the life, style and character of each collector represented in these contemporary jewels. GJEPC should be applauded for their work in nurturing and promoting a new generation of jewellery designers and makers."

THE DESIGN COMPETITION THEMED
'THE COLLECTORS' FOCUSED ON THREE ICONIC
WOMEN, ELIZABETH TAYLOR, BARBARA HUTTON,
AND WALLIS SIMPSON, AND ATTRACTED OVER 570
SKETCH ENTRIES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND
VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD.





Reena Ahluwalia

Reena Ahluwalia, jewellery designer, professor and painter, noted: “GJEPC has created an excellent platform to celebrate creativity in design. A successful design displays a designer’s ability to create unique stories, memorable concepts along with technical innovation. That’s what I was looking for in the design entries. I enjoyed the designers’ interpretations and could see their joy in creating.”

Sriram Natarajan, Managing Director of GIA India, “It was a great opportunity to witness the upcoming design talent and their creations at the Artisan Awards 2022 jury meet. Personally, it was so rewarding to be a spectator in the midst of these creative minds and appreciate their designs,

which were so painstakingly created for the theme, ‘The Collectors.’ My compliments to the GJEPC for creating this platform to recognise talented jewellery designers. As the pioneers in the field of gem and jewellery education, GIA is pleased to be associated with the Council and The Artisan Awards 2022 in supporting, encouraging and readying the next generation of gem and jewellery leaders and professionals.”

Vishal Kothari, Founder and Creative Head, VAK Jewels, remarked, “I thought it was a challenging theme for the young designers. To conceive pieces suitable for the three legendary jewellery collectors from the past was quite tricky. However, it was a fine attempt by the participants. One pair of earrings subconsciously plays on my mind – it was unique, edgy, wearable and at the same time a statement piece.”

Gayatri Rangachari Shah, journalist, author and jewellery enthusiast, said, “This year’s Artisan Awards entries showed tremendous potential, once again demonstrating the prodigious talent that is attracted to this prestigious contest. It was an honour for me

to be on the jury to judge the innovative creations.”

Arundhati De, bespoke jewellery shopping consultant,

commented, “As a first-time jury member for the Artisan Awards 2022, I was pleasantly surprised by the entries received for this year’s theme. It was an engaging theme, re-visiting an almost forgotten era of great female jewellery collectors, who had strong and distinct personalities and a great appetite for jewellery. Overall, the entries were fairly relevant. However, I’d have liked to see the use of more unusual gemstones, rose-cuts and mixed diamond cuts; and a more modern approach to fine jewellery making.”

GJEPC conceptualized The Artisan Awards in 2014 and over the years, the prestigious Awards have been attracting a lot of entries not just from India, but all parts of the world – thus establishing its leadership position in the jewellery industry. ■

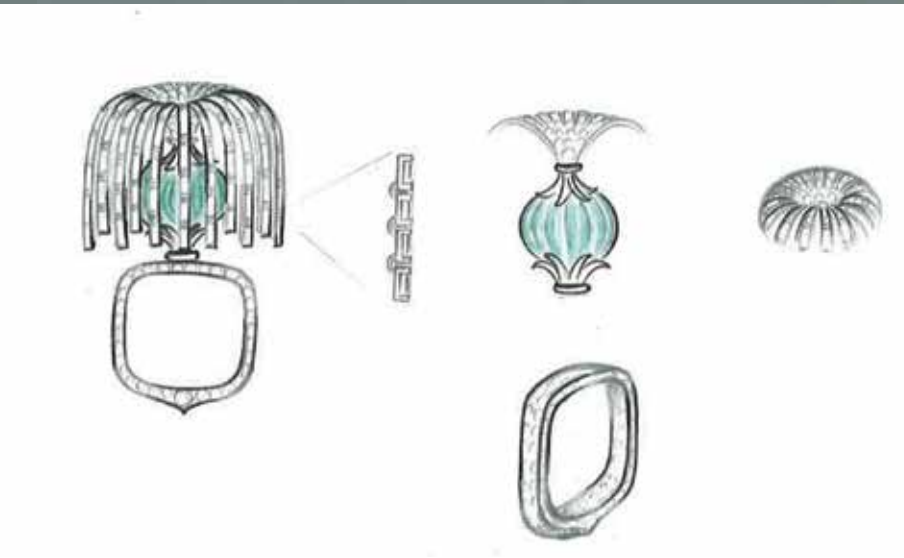
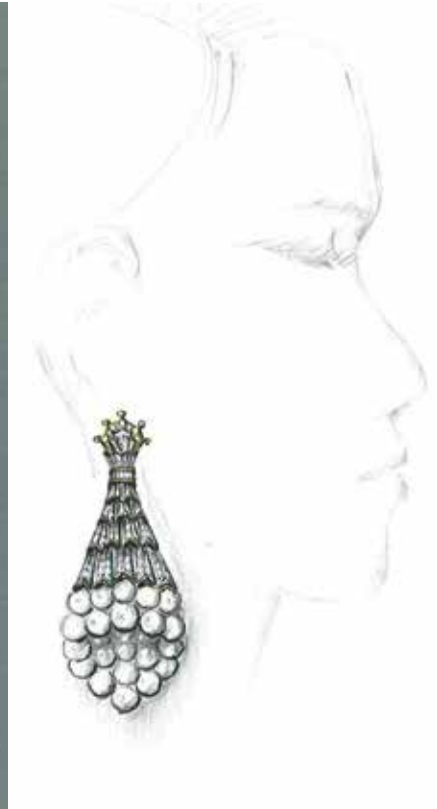
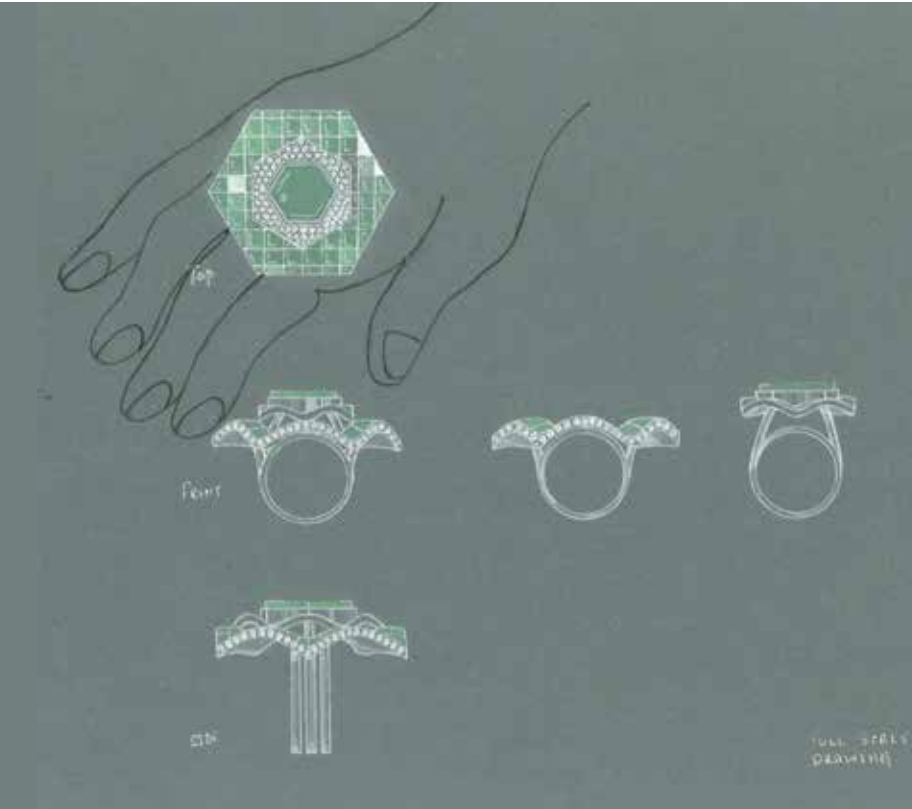
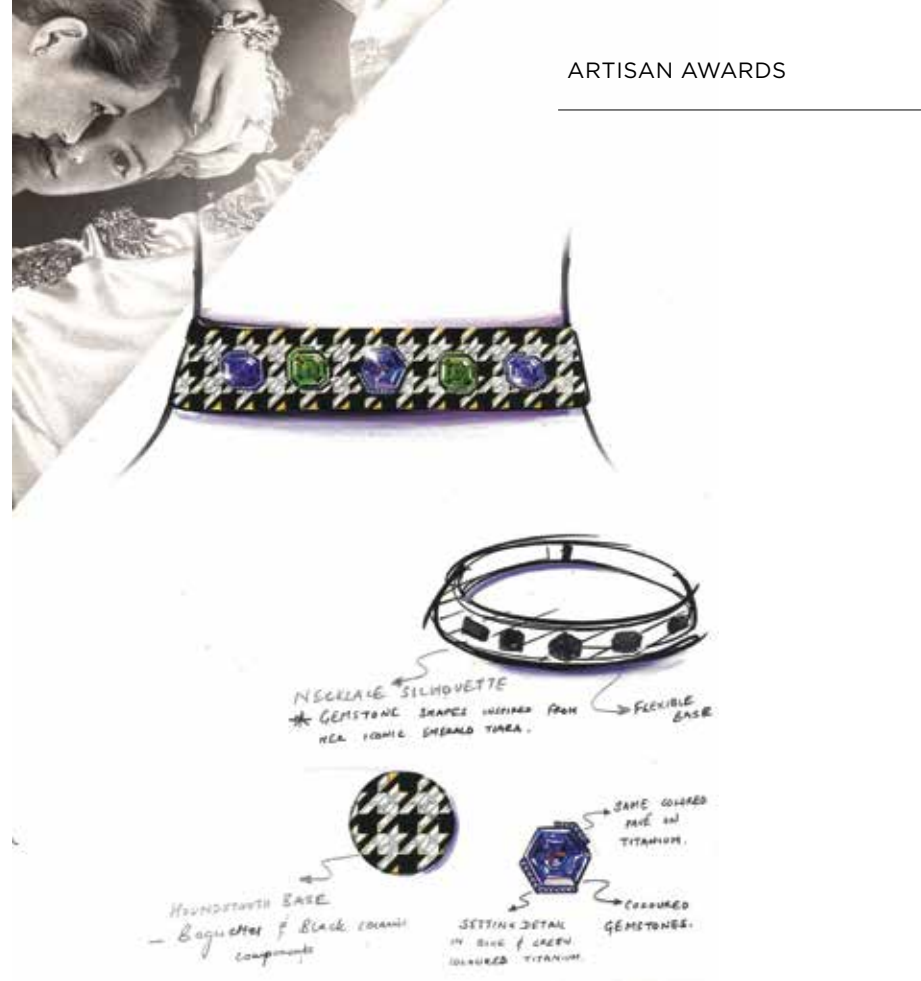
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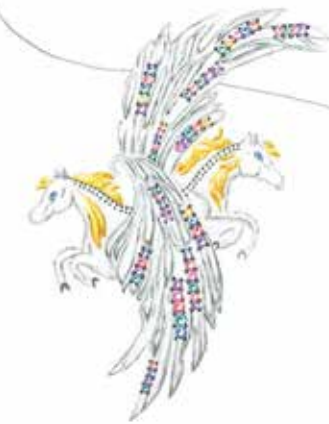
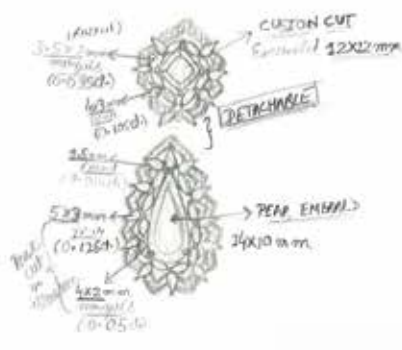
First Judging Round

FINALISTS

✦ **BARBARA HUTTON**

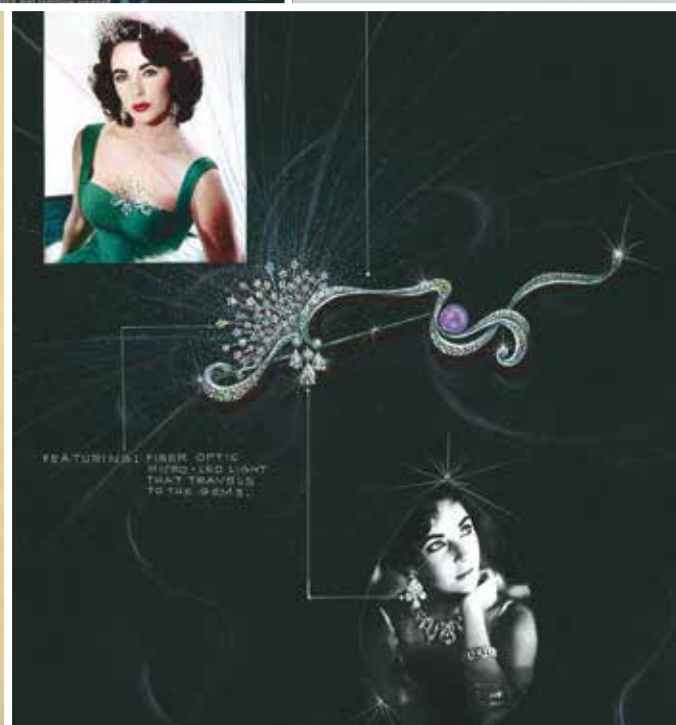






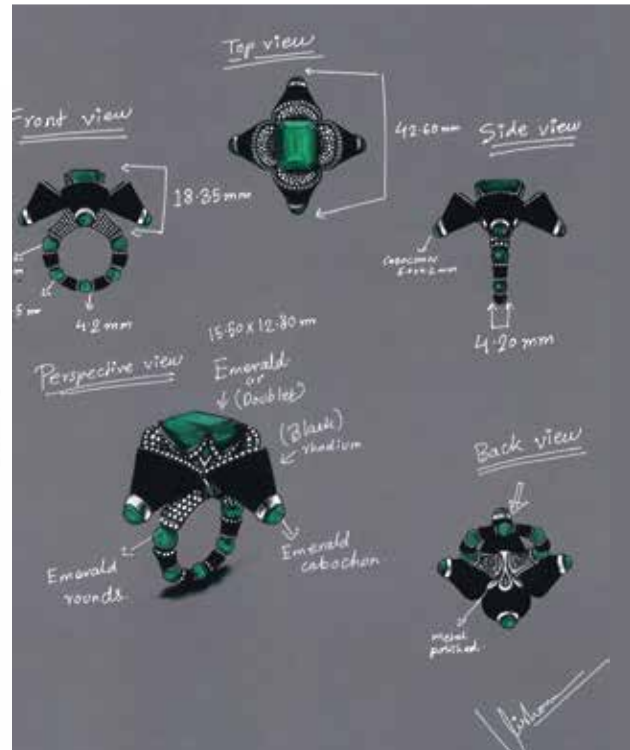
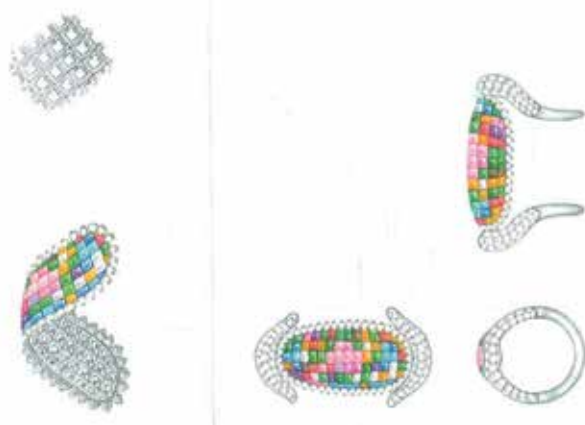
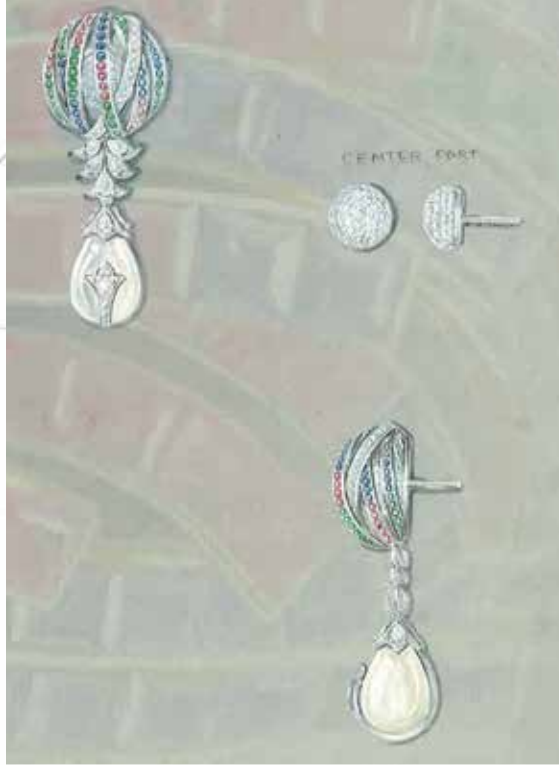
FINALISTS

ELIZABETH TAYLOR



FINALISTS

★ WALLIS SIMPSON



Flamboyance

Charismatic, electric and compulsively ambitious. The Duchess of Windsor, Wallis Simpson, experienced the ultimate fairy tale. This stunning piece is a recreation of Wallis' famous flamingo brooch, a gift given by her husband.

The Duke of Windsor, with a combination of Rubies & pink sapphire gradients, blue sapphire and beads. Studded with diamonds, the burst of colours is striking.

WALLIS SIMPSON

‘India Is The Most Preferred Destination For US-based Diamond Jewellery Retailers’

The USA has long been the mainstay of the Indian gem and jewellery industry. It remained India’s top export destination through 2021, accounting for \$12.32 billion of Indian exports in January-September 2021. **Priyanshu Shah**, Director, Asian Star Co. Ltd., shares his perspective on the US market as the head of one of the country’s top exporting firms.

– Regan Luis



Priyanshu Shah,
Executive Director, Asian Star Co. Ltd.

What is your outlook for diamond and gemstone jewellery sales in the US this year?

The first half of 2021 has been extremely good for diamond jewellery sales in the US. In fact, some would say that business was better than the first half of 2019.

One of the reasons for this buoyancy is the growth in consumer spending due to global stimulus and upbeat stock markets. Also, post pandemic, the share of consumer spend on luxury is constrained due to restricted leisure travel, low-key weddings and events, and hence a large chunk of the discretionary spend goes to jewellery purchase.

For Indian jewellery manufacturers, this situation has been to our advantage as India has now become the most preferred destination for diamond-studded jewellery for the US retailers in the post-pandemic period.

The outlook remains positive for the oncoming holiday season.

Are there any particular categories or price points that have done well or be at least sustainable over the next 6 months?

Customised bridals have done very well. There is a growing trend where brides are increasingly seeking designs with a personal touch. The bridal ring is no

longer just about love and commitment, but also about wearing a ring that tells your story.

Another category showing remarkable potential is men’s jewellery. Over the years, Cuban bracelets, necklaces, and pendants have been made popular by rap artists and this trend has been picking up in recent times.

Are there any regions in the US market (Eastern Seaboard, Midwest, South, West) that are performing better than others?

Across the US, all 50 states saw a jump in consumer spending.

Any particular materials that are doing well there?

Nothing in particular, but diamond jewellery demand has definitely picked up in the post-pandemic period.

How is the US bridal jewellery segment performing?

Extremely well, especially in the case of customised bridals.

What are the popular diamond categories (colour, cut, clarity, carat) for engagement and wedding rings?

In the US, it ranges between GH/SI to GH/I1.



Men's Cuban bracelet in rose gold by Asian Star.



Customised bridal solitaire rings by Asian Star.

| Are brides opting for centre stones other than diamonds?

Yes, a few are opting for lab-grown diamonds. This could be due to price sensitivity, especially with the diamond prices rising in the last few months.

| What are the most favoured price points through 2021?

For retail, it falls in the range of \$499 to \$4,999.



Diamond-studded customised bridal composite rings by Asian Star.

| What are the occasions driving jewellery demand – serious or relationship – type jewellery, or the casual, more self-purchase kind?

Nearly one-third of women in the US buy diamond jewellery for themselves. Post pandemic, though, the strongest driver of demand for diamond purchases centres around romance and commitment. Diamond sales are strong, with bridal being the primary driver for consumer demand. ■

‘Diamonds Continue To Be Stellar In The US, But Price Increases Are A Concern’

Amid the all-important US Holiday season, *Solitaire International* speaks to **Sanjay Shah**, Partner, KBS Group, and Convener, Diamond Panel, GJEPC, to deconstruct demand from the US market, which has kept factories in India humming from Q4 2020 through the end of 2021.

– Regan Luis



Sanjay Shah

What is your outlook for diamond- and gemstone-studded jewellery sales in the US this year?

2020 has been a banner year for the entire trade. Everyone from the miners to retail has had an exceptional 15 months. From a doomsday scenario to almost a Hollywood/Bollywood multi-continent mega-hit!

Are there any particular categories or price points that have done well or will be at least sustainable over the next six months?

Price points across the board have done well. From the promotional to the mid, and in particular the better end has performed well... diamond fashion, bridal, anniversary, better gemstones and lab-grown.

Lab-grown continues its upward trajectory and it shows no signs of slowing down. This growth has not come, so far, at the expense of the natural diamond category which has also shown continuing consumer confidence and increasing in real value.

Are there any regions in the US market that are performing better than others?

All the regions have done well. With the rebound in oil prices, real estate, and commodity prices in general, every geography has been strong.

Any particular materials that are doing well there?

We do see a resurgence in yellow gold. Diamonds continue to be stellar.

What is jewellery set with the most – diamonds, coloured gemstones, the ‘Big Three’ of emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, the ‘semi-precious’ kind, or any other?

Diamonds continue to be in the spotlight. In gemstones, it is sapphire and emerald. Retailers are shying away from ruby due to the Burmese issue.

How is the US bridal jewellery segment performing?



© KBS Group

Bridal continues its strong velocity and in the next two years, this category will continue its forward momentum.

What are the popular diamond categories (colour, cut, clarity, carat) for engagement and wedding rings?

Rounds continue to be the evergreen choice, but fancies are also in vogue. Pear shape, ovals and emeralds in fancy cuts are doing well.

Are brides opting for centre stones other than diamonds?

Diamonds continue to be a girl's best friend!

What are the most favoured price points through 2021?

Depending on the retailer type and category and more importantly the diamond quality, price points differ accordingly.





© KBS Group



What are the occasions driving jewellery demand - serious relationship-type jewellery or casual, more self-purchase kind?

Marriages continue to drive demand as well as gifting. An emerging segment is the men's jewellery section that shows no signs of slowing down - Hip-Hop jewellery, in particular. The colour stone category has also done well both in precious and semi-precious categories.

Anything else that you may wish to add.

On a cautionary note - the sustained diamond price increases are now a cause

of concern. The higher input costs will have to be passed on to the retailer and, in turn, the consumer. Traditionally with higher retail costs, the self-purchase category slows down. Moreover, with the Federal stimulus tapering off and a resurgent Covid, the industry needs to maintain its self-discipline of the last two years and be prepared for any eventuality.

We all, as trade, have a lot to be grateful about and I would like to thank our frontline - our craftsmen in the diamond as well as jewellery segments, who risked everything to make sure we, the Indian diamond and jewellery industry, came through for our customers. ■



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