



The Colourful World of Bharathi Raviprakash

Pendants with diamonds, blue topaz and amethyst.

She has led a life of delightful contrasts. Who would have guessed that Chennai-based jewellery designer Bharathi Raviprakash, who runs a high end jewellery boutique called Studio Tara, was once managing a Forex money changing business for eight long years?

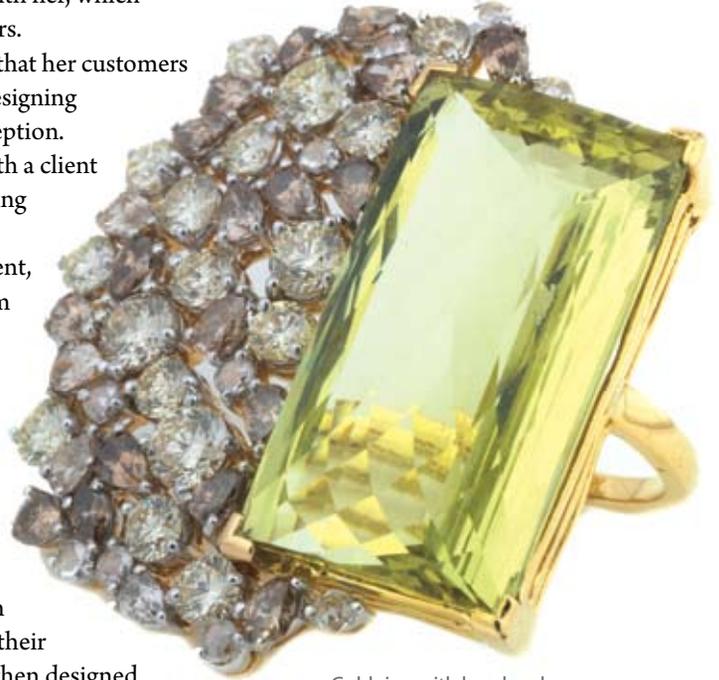
This Economics graduate switched tracks when she decided that she would put all her energy into something she was passionate about – making jewellery.

“I was always in love with jewellery and it was a passion that drove me to doing what I do today,” recalls a chirpy Bharathi. “I never used to get the kind of jewellery that I wanted – I liked coloured gemstones over diamonds – and I could never find something that was ‘cool and hip’, funky yet elegant.” So, she began to design jewellery for herself. She knew that she had the required talent when she received praise from her friends. That’s when she decided that she would get into the business of designing jewellery.

Between the years 2000 and 2002, Bharathi enrolled for courses in gemmology, jewellery making and designing at the prestigious (GIA) Gemmological Institute of America in London. In 2002, she set up Studio Tara, stocking the boutique with about 30 designer jewellery pieces. There was no looking back after that. Today, Bharathi, who customises heavily, has no less than 250 pieces for her customers to pick and choose from

in her boutique. There is a team of 15 people working with her, which includes two designers.

Bharathi ensures that her customers are involved in the designing process from the inception. The process starts with a client meeting and depending on the budget and personality of the client, Bharathi and her team brainstorm together to get the designs approved. Bharathi also keeps a good collection of rubies, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds and other gemstones so that her clients can choose the stones of their choice. The piece is then designed with CAD/CAM so that the client gets a three dimensional view. Later, the client is shown the designs set in wax model, and only after the approval does



Gold ring with beryl and brown diamonds.

Traditional South Indian Annam pendant with an Italian chain.



Bharathi Raviprakash



Gold earrings studded with tourmalines, diamonds and other gemstones.



Gold earrings with citrine, spinel and golden fire opal drops.

Bharathi get it cast in metal or made by expert craftsmen. Bharathi says, “I love to see the clients enjoying the thrill of actually seeing their idea turn into a piece of jewellery. Such a piece,” she notes, “always remains valuable to the customer.”

Today the designer has a huge client base spread across the country and in the US, Singapore and London. She even holds private jewellery shows in various cities across the world.

Bharathi’s inspiration comes from travel, common objects or day-to-day occurrences. For instance, she recently designed a collection based on chillies, an Indian symbol for warding off the evil eye. Another collection is based on peacocks, and yet another

is sheer poetry in wood. At times she makes designs around gemstones. Personally, the designer loves to work with tanzanites, sapphires, emeralds, rubies, coloured diamonds, spinel, tourmalines, morganite, amolite, and even fossils. “Colours actually define your individual tastes,” Bharathi observes.

One creates trends, she believes, and it solely depends on the occasion and the wearer. “For the boardroom, pearls are ideal; blues and pinks look cool on young professionals; diamonds add the required sparkle for weddings and other formal occasions; and for those who seek to wear something really exclusive – they could go for coloured diamonds,” she notes.



Peacock pendant studded with opal and diamonds.



Amber pendant with gold dust on a Japanese silk cord.



Golden enameled chilli earrings.



“Gemstones are timeless; but sometimes fashion is time bound too,” says Bharathi. “I urge my clients to go for top quality, untreated natural stones in designs that complement them. Gemstones could be handed down over generations and designs could always be changed to keep in tune with the latest fashion trends.”

Bharathi admits to having found her calling in creating new patterns and designs all day long. “It doesn’t feel like I’m working,” she says. “The beauty of designing jewellery is that you never know what you will churn out next. The combination of gemstones and the client’s unique personality brings forth an outstanding variety in design. You surprise yourself constantly in this business.”

— **Shanoo Bijlani**