

Mira Gulati

Blending The Contemporary With The Eternal

Delhi-based haute jeweller **Mira Gulati**, owner of the Mirari boutique, speaks to **Shanoo Bijlani** about her eternal passion for jewels, her painstaking attention to quality and plans for the future

Give us a little background about your business. Are you a first generation jeweller?

I come from a non-jewellery family background, but I have been passionate about jewellery and gemstones ever since I was 13 years old. I used to often wear my mother's jewellery, and it was this love for jewellery that helped me successfully convert my passion into my profession.

Have you done a course in gemmology and designing?

I trained for two years as a jewellery designer and gemmologist at the Gemological Institute of America in Carlsbad. Since I had no background in jewellery, I did every course available at the institute.

When did you establish your first boutique?

I set up my first boutique at the Shangri la hotel in 2007. I have one retail location at the DLF Emporio

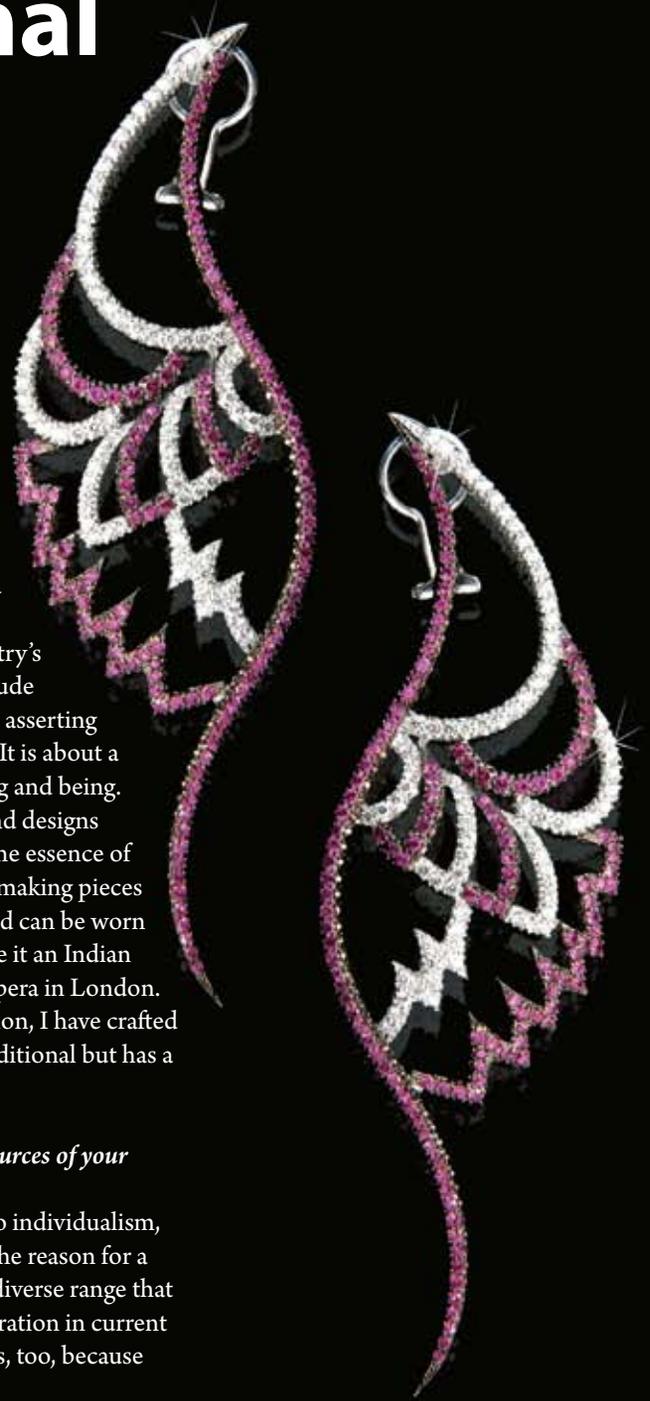
Mall in Delhi.

Mirari jewellery is a reflection of India as we see it today.

It's about this country's contemporary attitude towards design and asserting one's individuality. It is about a new way of thinking and being. I provide quality and designs that I feel capture the essence of Mirari. I believe in making pieces that are versatile and can be worn at any occasion – be it an Indian wedding or to an opera in London. In my latest collection, I have crafted jewellery that is traditional but has a contemporary feel.

What are the sources of your inspiration?

I am attracted to individualism, which is probably the reason for a more creative and diverse range that I make. I find inspiration in current international trends, too, because





these speak of the times we live in, but I always temper these trends with themes that have eternal appeal. For example, jewellers throughout the ages have looked at the natural world for inspiration. But I like to do this with a contemporary eye, to create modern 'heirlooms' that will stand the test of time and be worn in the centuries to come.

What is the creative process that goes into designing each piece? How do you ideate? Do you have a team of designers to back you up?

It all begins with an inspiration, an idea. The idea is then carried forward to the drawing board and put on paper, where it emerges as a jewel designed to actual size and dimensions. Most times, the core of a jewellery piece is defined by a single stone. From then on, depending on the intricacy and complexity of the design, all other stones used for embellishing the piece are hand picked. Once the design is approved, the deft hands of the craftsman take over. He inspects the design to decide how to design the jewel into a piece of art and perfection. Working tirelessly, he infuses life into the sketch, and produces a collector's item! Each piece is then engraved with

the Mirari name and authenticated with a certificate.

I do have a creative design team who take forward my ideas and concepts. They give shape and form to my imagination. I oversee their work and also take the final decision as to what will get manufactured and be offered to our clients.

What is your philosophy about designing?

All jewels I create are hand crafted as I make limited editions and use unique and rare stones. India has been known for its craftsmanship for centuries and I take pride in that fact. I use technology only to enhance and complement the skills of hand to achieve high standards of finish and quality.

Do you cater to any particular client segment?

Mirari jewellery is about women who take the best of modern India and what they love best about Paris, Milan or New York. In designing the Mirari ranges, I've made very sensitive choices in response to this and I am certain that every piece of Mirari jewellery can be worn both with contemporary clothing and with traditional Indian garments.



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What do you think is unique about your brand?

I look to quality – the quality of the gems, the designs, craftsmanship and the whole Mirari experience. It is essential that Mirari continues to be known for its refusal to compromise on quality at any level. I believe that now and in the long run, quality will define what Mirari is all about.

What are the themes that recur in your jewellery?

I use ancient designs, motifs and materials with modern styling and use it to create truly present-day international works of art. For me, the trick is to bring something new and sexy to what is essentially a timeless concept.

What are the trends for the next six months or one year?

For the upcoming festive and wedding season, emeralds, rubies and diamonds are big on the popularity circuit. Jadau is in vogue again. The most surprising items are pearls this season. Different hues of pearls in combination with diamonds have

emerged as flavours of the season.

But fashions will come and go and will vary from place to place. Certain stones of certain colours will be fashionable in one season, and not in another. Thus, Mirari's primary focus is all about quality because quality will never go out of style!

What are the basic metals and coloured gemstones you prefer to work with?

You will find a lot of exotic emeralds, rubies and sapphires in my collections. I also use a lot of South Sea and Tahitian pearls and pink and blue sapphires in my creations.

Any plans of expansion in India or abroad?

We currently only retail in India. However, we do have a lot of international patrons as our designs are very versatile and high quality. Within the next five years I will look at establishing Mirari's presence in international markets including cities such as Dubai, Kuwait, Moscow, New York and Shanghai.

