



Star-shaped, diamond-studded amethyst and chalcedony neckpiece suspended from chunky lines of amethyst and chalcedony beads.

Tara Jhaveri

Making Fine Jewellery Less Serious!

She was never fond of fine jewellery, and considered it “boring and prissy”. And if at all she wore jewellery, she chose funky, out-of-the-ordinary stuff. Today, the same person redefines the style, taste and aesthetics of her customers through her jewellery, which she retails from her boutique in an upscale suburb of Mumbai. Today, Tara Jhaveri is a proud convert to fine jewellery.

Having studied all along in Australia, where she earned a degree in business administration, Jhaveri came back to Mumbai and joined an advertising agency as an account executive. Within months she was bored and quit. Getting into the jewellery business was the last thing on her mind, but then her father, Ashok Jhaveri, fell ill and had to stay home for an extended period to recuperate. She stepped in to manage her father’s firm Manilal Rikavchand



Onyx, chalcedony, pink sapphire and diamond studded neckpiece suspended from lines of Italian coral.

Jhaveri, which manufactures diamonds and jewellery. By the time her father resumed work, Jhaveri was captivated by the magic of gems and jewellery.

She began to train under her father, starting with diamond sorting, sourcing, grading, and evaluating – including assessing long-term value – she moved on to the processes involved in designing and making jewellery.

Soon afterwards, she stumbled upon a box of semi-precious stones lying in a dusty corner of the office. “Although I was fascinated by their colours, my father said he would never touch them as they were not of high quality. But I was

bewitched. It was as if the stones had cast a spell on me. They were beautiful and I knew that I would have loved to wear them.” She designed jewellery around those stones, and discovered the joys of making jewellery, in which she could infuse an element of fun. There was no looking back after that. She started building up a dedicated list of clients who loved her bold and edgy pieces in 18 karat gold jewellery.

Two years ago, Jhaveri opened the boutique Tara J to cater exclusively to her clients. She doesn’t encourage walk-ins as she needs to spend time with her clients. “I custom-make each piece of jewellery, but I design stuff that I would like to wear and all my jewellery carries my imprint. The piece has to be classic and should be eternal and timeless, but at the same time there should be a



strong fashion element woven into it. The piece must be wearable with all kinds of outfits.”

People today love to appreciate diamonds in a non-traditional way, says the designer. She introduces twists and turns in her asymmetrical patterns to create an element of awe. “I like my jewellery to push the boundaries of conventionality,” she says. Currently, she is promoting three-dimensional jewellery, which features multi-tiered landscapes. She also makes ‘multi-utility’ jewellery, because Indians, she says, are very smart and value conscious. “They like to mix and match their jewellery with different outfits and moods. So, one needs different stones and colours to add that extra punch,” she says.

Diamond, ruby and smoky topaz tulip necklace set.



Ornate and abstract, art deco inspired iolite, diamond and charcoal blue pearl necklace.



Among Jhaveri's favourite stones are emeralds, citrines and baroque pearls. She loves enamelling. She takes great pains to ensure that her designs carry accurate specifications, including the sizes of the gemstones to be set. Working it down to the near-perfect estimate per piece is important to maintain costs, she says. She makes 'accessible luxury' beginning at Rs. 20,000 and running to more than Rs. 10 million and more.

Despite the recession this past year, her business was affected only slightly, because her customers would walk in to buy solitaires between 2 and 4 carats

for investment purposes. "Now, some of them are coming back with those very stones, asking me to work and design jewellery around them. My customers believe that the value of solitaires will double in the near future."

Her boutique has a bank of up to 150 jewellery pieces ready to be picked off the shelf. She also designs men's jewellery and accessories. As is her wont, she integrates different material like wood, plastic (that gives the impression of enamelling) in fine jewellery to make hair ornaments, cuffs, bracelets, and cufflinks.

— Shanoo Bijlani



Tara Jhaveri