

July 2026

# Jewellery

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## Bold Palette: Summer Edition

As we move into a season defined by lightness, colour, and creative reinvention, this issue arrives at a moment when the jewellery and watch industries are increasingly shaped by narrative as much as by material value. Across the following pages, we explore how meaning—whether expressed through gemstones, design language, heritage, or time itself—is becoming a defining force in how collections are built, curated, and experienced.

From the rise of coloured gemstones and antique cuts as powerful margin drivers, to the renewed appetite for individuality in jewellery, this issue traces a clear shift: consumers are toward pieces that feel personal, storied, and singular. Megan Crabtree captures this shift in focus, noting that “in an era of mass-produced jewellery, the appeal lies in the rarity and artisanal character of hand-faceted stones.”

That sense of meaning extends beyond aesthetics into responsibility. Lauriane Lognay takes a closer look at what “ethical” truly means in the context of gemstone sourcing, unpacking the complexities behind mining practices, supply chains, and the difficult decisions that sit beneath the surface of responsible jewellery. As she writes, “something is ethical if it is done in a way that is considered right, fair, and honest.”

At the same time, confidence—both personal and professional—emerges as a quieter but equally important theme. Karen Howard explores the “confidence gap” in jewellery appraising, highlighting the space between technical knowledge and professional self-assurance, and the ethical weight that comes with valuation work. She frames this tension clearly: “The confidence gap is the space between *knowing* and *feeling* ready.”

Heritage and storytelling also take centre stage in unexpected ways. Through portrait and memorial jewellery traditions, we revisit how personal narratives have long been embedded in design, from Georgian miniatures to contemporary interpretations that blend craft with emotional storytelling. As Renée Newman notes, portrait jewellery was historically used for those “whose loved ones travelled or lived far away,” underscoring its role as both memory and devotion made tangible.

Cultural influence continues to expand the industry’s language. Marika Gabriel’s conversation with supermodel and influencer Ashley Graham reflects the growing intersection of jewellery, watches, and contemporary celebrity culture, where timepieces function not only as accessories but as extensions of identity and lived experience. Graham puts it simply: “A watch is the piece I always come back to.”

That idea is echoed further in Ayaz Aladdin Hasmani’s exploration of watches in cinema, where time becomes a narrative device—measured, manipulated, and made visible through objects that carry emotional and symbolic weight on screen. In his words, “in cinema, time is not simply measured—it is constructed, manipulated, and felt.”

Looking ahead to Spring/Summer 2026, Duvall O’Steen outlines the season’s shift toward bold primary colours and collegiate influences, offering clear direction for how jewellery can amplify fashion’s renewed sense of energy. As highlighted in the trend cycle, “red was the standout colour of the season,” signalling a move toward intensity and confidence in styling.

Together, these stories point to a defining thread: jewellery and timepieces are increasingly being understood not just as adornment, but as carriers of meaning—personal, ethical, cultural, and cinematic. As you explore this issue, we invite you to consider how storytelling continues to reshape design, influence purchasing behaviour, and expand what luxury represents today.

Until next time. 🌐

Linda

Linda Dalke  
Publisher

“Colour is a power  
which directly influences  
the soul.”

– Wassily Kandinsky



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Contributors: Ayaz Aladdin Hasmani, Duvall O'Steen, Karen Howard, Lauriane Lognay, Megan Crabtree, Renee Newman, Sara Belyazid.

# Jewellery

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## on the cover

On screen, watches can, and often do, play a powerful role. Hamilton has appeared in more than 500 films, understanding that a timepiece can reveal personality, signal era, and bridge the past and future without a single line of dialogue. The model wears the Hamilton Intra-Matic Auto Chrono—a modern reworking of a 1968 icon, famously worn by Morpheus in *The Matrix Resurrections*.

PHOTO BY HAMILTON WATCH

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# Beyond the *sparkle*



## The complex truth about ethical gemstones

By Lauriane Lognay

These days, it is more important than ever to ask the right questions and take the right actions—not only for the environment, but also for human beings. We’re seeing growing awareness of this issue across various fields, and the jewellery industry is no exception. Many jewellers are beginning to take an interest in ethically sourced precious metals, and it is only natural to explore ethically sourced gemstones as well.

The subject of ethical gemstones and ethical mining is much more complex than it seems. Indeed, there are several criteria to consider when determining whether a stone is ethically sourced, and verifying each of them is difficult. We quickly realize that if we want even a limited selection, we may need to focus more on certain criteria. This article will elaborate on

the realities of miners, mining companies, and gemstone cutting workshops to give readers a deeper look.

It should be noted that the term “ethical gemstones” is used here to make the text more accessible. It applies to precious and semi-precious stones.

### What does it mean to “be ethical”?

For most of us, this word represents values/morals that inspire and motivate us to make different decisions and choose different paths—to make it better for others (humans) and for our world (the environment).

The concept stems from good intentions: people want to be fair, equitable, environmentally conscious, or even just a little more mindful of our blue planet.

PHOTOS COURTESY RIPPANA INC.



Alluvial miner in Luc Yen, Vietnam, searching for spinel, garnet and corundum.

What it means:

Ethical (adjective), by definition, means:

- Relating to moral principles (ideas of right and wrong behaviour)
- Morally good or correct
- Following accepted standards of conduct or fairness

In simpler terms, something is ethical if it is done in a way that is considered right, fair, and honest.

Being ethical has been a highly controversial topic in the jewellery industry for several decades, because the concept did not even come close to theory at that time, when the movement began to gain popularity and demand. Today, it is more important than ever to make this effort.

It is a rather complex issue: every country—and every individual—has priorities and ethical frameworks that differ from others. What is fair to you will be unfair to someone else, and so on. It is impossible for a large group of people to all agree on the subject.

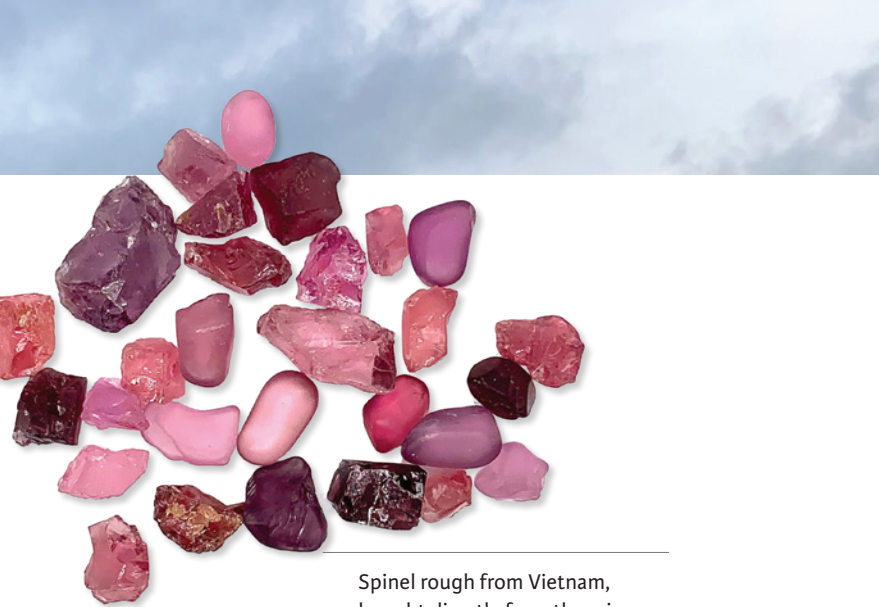
I hope, therefore, to shed some light on the subject and help you discover new aspects of this field that may assist you in your future endeavours.

### Where to start?

First, you must be clear about the areas you want to focus on and what you consider to be morally and ethically sound. While many try, it is difficult in this profession to meet every requirement.

Once you have a good grasp of the customs and practices of each situation, there are several important points to consider:

- Are the miners paid fairly (or at a standard rate for their country, even if it is less than what we are used to) with reasonable work hours?
- Were the stones purchased at a fair price from the small-scale miner?
- Are the mine's equipment and infrastructure built and maintained safely?



Spinel rough from Vietnam, bought directly from the miners.



Artisanal mine in Luc-Yen, Vietnam.

- Land rehabilitation: Will the hole be filled in once the mine is no longer in use?
- Will resources be allocated afterward to replant trees or improve the area where the old mine was located?
- Where are the stones cut? (e.g., Thailand, India, Sri Lanka, France, etc.)
- Does the workplace provide access to water or any other benefits for the miners (e.g., free medical care, housing, education, etc.)?
- Are the funds from the mine used for illegal activities or nourishing conflict within the country?
- Are there any illegal activities such as forced labour or child labour on site?
- Do they have a responsible waste and tailings management?

Now, what if you had to choose from this list the five most important aspects to make it an ethical gemstone? The answer would differ from person to person. Making the subject too ambiguous to achieve the impact it aims to make.

## Miners and their living and working conditions

There are several ways to manage a mine, depending on the country's laws, geography, and who owns it. Let's look at two very different but specific examples:

### *Mogok, Myanmar*

Mogok is an isolated region of the world; it is a militarized government zone that rarely allows tourists. Yet, it is also one of the world's main sources of corundum (sapphires and rubies) and spinel, as well as many other gemstones, such as garnet and peridot. One of the mines I visited operated as follows: there were different elevation levels along an artificial river, and at each level, a predetermined number of people were granted access. The largest stones are more commonly found in the upper levels, while the lower levels typically yield smaller alluvial stones. To ensure everyone has an equal opportunity, a rotation occurs each month among workers at each level.

This way, everyone has a chance to find a stone, and everyone then sells their find at the gem market. Even though they are not paid by the hour, these miners have established a fair system (a system that, unfortunately, is not in place throughout the region or in other mines).

Income is unstable, no tools are provided, and security is low. However, there are "equal" mining opportunities and the chance to keep what is found. There is no forced labour or child labour. This work provides income for women and the economically disadvantaged in the region.

### *Ilakaka, Madagascar*

The Ilakaka region is a very poor and deserted region. The mine is a veritable Swiss cheese of interconnected underground tunnels. The miners are provided with some tools, and the owner buys the gemstones they find directly from the miners.

The holes dug in the ground can be 8-16 m (26.2-52.4 ft) deep, at most 1 m (3.2 ft) wide, and miners are brought down into the hole using a rope and a wooden windlass. At 8 m (26.2 ft), the limit for breathable air, the air in the 16-m-deep hole is brought into the mine by women blowing it in with plastic bags.

The mine employs the impoverished region. Workers are paid based on their findings, tools are supplied, but security is minimal, and the heat can be intense. There are no enforced working hours, and security remains very low.

Given this information, which of the two mines do you think is more ethical? Are they ethical to begin with?

## Regarding the production chain

Any decision about a stone, to determine whether it is an ethical or even fair-trade gemstone, should be made with full knowledge of the entire process, including where the stone was cut.

Often, companies do not consider where the stone was cut when they claim to be fair trade. Countries known for mass cutting include Sri Lanka, India, China, Israel, and Thailand. These places are not known for having the



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Artisanal cutting factory in Mogok, Myanmar.



One month of production at a Sapphire mine in Mogok, Myanmar.



Findings of the day at an artisanal mine in Mogok, Myanmar.

best working conditions (for example, young children cutting small stones or mixed-grade stones and earning only a few cents a day). However, as in any situation, there are also reputable companies in these countries that engage in cutting. In many cases, they are accepted into gemmological associations and other groups to build their reputation.

### The case of the Canadian diamond

An interesting example related to the production chain can be found on the Canadian Diamond Code of Conduct website. The Canadian diamond is widely regarded as a fair-trade gemstone, thanks to its workers being fairly compensated, its mines having a limited lifespan, and its laws requiring environmental restoration at the end of the mines' operational life.

When looking at the information provided on the Canadian Diamond website, the following statement appears in response to the question, "What is a Canadian diamond?":

*It is a diamond extracted from a Canadian mine, regardless of whether the cutting or polishing is done in Canada or abroad.*

This is an interesting answer, because if the diamonds had all been cut in Canada or in Antwerp, Belgium (as is often the case with all large, exceptional diamonds), that would have been mentioned. In this case, one might suspect an external source that is undefined. According to them, as long as the diamond is mined in Canada, it is Canadian and, therefore, considered an ethical gemstone. They do not account for cutting and polishing. You can therefore have an ethical Canadian diamond that was cut in a factory in India.

Since we are talking about diamonds, the Kimberley Process is inevitably part of the chain when purchasing a diamond.



Each worker is forming a chain to get the earth out of the mine in Madagascar.



Artisanal mining in a river in Madagascar.



Tunnel into the tanzanite mine.

What is the Kimberley Process? It is an organization comprising 82 countries to date, whose goal is to stop and/or prevent the flow of funds and subsidies for war in countries in precarious situations through the illegal sale of diamonds—commonly known as “blood diamonds.” This process stops many conflicts and prevents funds from falling into the wrong hands. Does it work 100 per cent of the time? No, but these methods are still highly successful. France and Canada are part of this process to ban the import and export of any diamond not certified by the Kimberley Process.

The only catch is that the Kimberley Process does not prevent child labour in the mines, does not address low wages, and does not address dangerous mining infrastructure. It is easy to erase the numbered engravings on the girdle and recut the blood diamond. So here we are again, facing a dilemma:

What is the most important factor for you in defining an ethical gemstone?

### **A label that is worth its weight in gold**

Since 2018, Tanzania has enacted a law requiring that all facetable rough (except mineralogical and collector’s specimens, as well as non-facetable stones) be faceted within the country to boost the economy and create jobs for citizens. The idea in theory is excellent; however, the result is catastrophic.

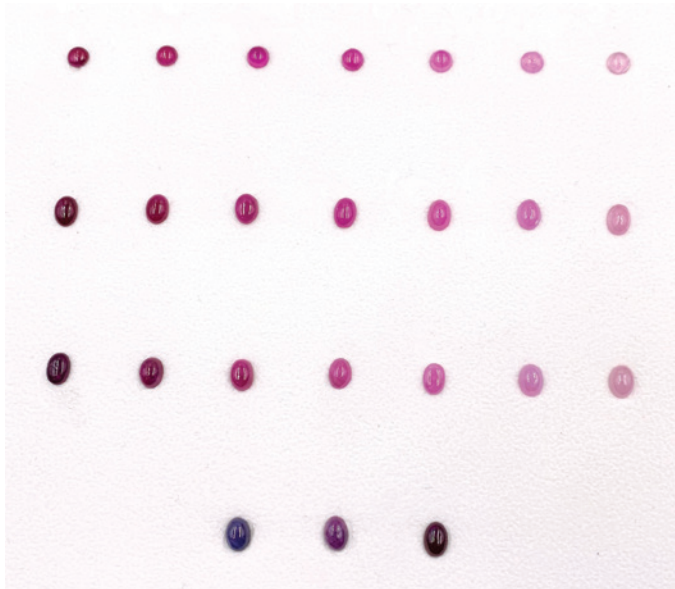
With the small number of cutters in Tanzania (around 500–600 people in 2018), the lack of cutting schools (not for lack of trying), and the lack of professionalism, there are not enough people to meet the global demand for cutting. The result: those who want to buy only rough diamonds do so clandestinely through Kenya, which has become the transit country for the goods. Rough gemstone sellers who used to export to Europe, America, and especially Thailand are struggling because they can no longer sell anything. And all the rough stones that are not considered valuable (*i.e.*, low-value gemstones such as garnet or small rough stones) are left abandoned in the country with no buyers and are, therefore, wasted. On the other hand, some have found workarounds: roughly cutting the stone and sending it to other countries to have it “recut” properly. But even then, there is a waste



Gem market in Mogok, Myanmar, with FGA Lauriane Lognay in the middle.



Gem market in Tanzania, Arusha, with Lauriane Lognay.



Greenland ruby and sapphires colour and transparency chart.  
PHOTOS BY GABRIELLE BELANGER-GIRARD/COURTESY RIPPANA INC.



Greenland ruby's certificate of origin.

of time and resources. Because of this new law, prices are rising, and sources are harder to find.

This decision started with good intentions, but people quickly noticed the ripple effect on the market. After all, who wants to pay double for a stone when they can get elsewhere for less?

### Is buying local better?

When you are lucky enough to live in a country that produces gemstones, it is relatively easy to buy local and find what you are looking for right at home. Creating jewellery with gemstones from your own country is also a major selling point for today's customers. Buying local supports your country's economy and is certainly more ethical than buying elsewhere without any assurance of origin.

It is unique, and we introduce customers to new stones.

Take Canada, for example, which is one of the world's largest producers of gemstones and minerals. In fact, almost every province has its own small mine and/or signature stone—for example, labradorite in Labrador, tourmaline in Gatineau, or vesuvianite in Quebec.

France, on the other hand, except for mineralogical specimens and numerous metals (New Caledonia and French Guiana), is not a major producer of gemstones. It is, therefore, more difficult to market them or encourage others with the limited production relevant to the field. However, countries such as Canada, the U.S., and Australia are interesting options to explore for gemstones if one wishes to support a neighbouring economy.

In the U.S., a gemstone that is very popular right now and delights many with its eco-friendly practices is Montana sapphire. Montana's laws are much stricter than before: a certain percentage of the water used in mines to filter out debris must be recycled. No more than five hectares of land can be excavated at a time to extract the stones, and the land must be backfilled afterward. We can have the stones cut in the U.S. by one of the many professional cutters, or in another country to save money, but at least we have a choice.

Buying locally, as described in the two previous cases, is therefore a good idea and a sound sales strategy if you want to be more ethical without getting bogged down in a complex investigation of every single stone.

On the other hand, if you have reliable suppliers, they can help you find the stones you are looking for that meet your specific requirements. But be warned: the more specific your requirements, the shorter the list will be. The options today are still far more numerous than before. Nature obliges.

### To wrap up

There are several associations (such as the Mining Association of Canada [MAC] and the Responsible Jewellery Council [RJC]) that set specific percentage requirements or strict membership criteria. These are associations strictly focused on ethics in jewellery and gemmology. Check in your region or country to see if similar associations exist, and whether their lists of members and suppliers can be useful to you in your search.

Further, many other mining companies are now taking the right steps for people and our planet (such as Muzo Emeralds and Belmont Emeralds

in Brazil). It would be worthwhile conducting your own research on the matter and establishing the criteria you seek in a gemstone or a company, so that the latter truly represents what you want to sell and what you want your business to project.

In the end, the notion of an "ethical gemstone" is not a fixed definition, but rather a personal balance of values, priorities, and compromises. From the mine to the market, every stage of a gemstone's journey presents both opportunities and challenges, and no single source can meet every ethical expectation. What matters most is not perfection, but awareness—asking the right questions, making informed choices, and remaining transparent with ourselves and our clients.

As the industry continues to evolve, it is this ongoing effort, guided by intention and responsibility, that will shape a more ethical future for gemstones. ☺



*Lauriane Lognay is a fellow of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain (FGA) and has won several awards. She is a gemstone dealer who works with jewellers to help them decide on the best stones for their designs. Lognay owns Rippana, Inc., a Montréal-based company that offers coloured gemstone, lapidary, and jewellery services. She can be reached at [rippanainfo@gmail.com](mailto:rippanainfo@gmail.com).*

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# Old mine cuts, NEW MARGINS

PHOTOS COURTESY PEXELS VIA CRABTREE CONSULTING

## The quiet profit driver of 2026

By Megan Crabtree

**A**s diamond competition and margins continue to tighten, the new status symbols are storytelling and a stone's unique hue. This year, shifting customer expectations are changing how retailers stock and curate their display cases.

Driven by a desire for individuality coupled with an obsession with heritage, coloured gemstones and antique cuts are emerging as the industry's most potent margin-drivers. For retailers, adding product categories such as coloured centre stones or antique jewellery to the assortment is a savvy financial move to boost the overall profitability of the mix.

## The new status symbol

Luxury is being redefined. While a two-carat modern diamond is a known quantity with a price easily cross-referenced online, a Victorian-era sapphire ring is an incomparable artifact.

High-profile celebrities are leading this charge. The “Swift effect” reached a fever pitch this year following Taylor Swift’s engagement, which featured a massive old-mine cut natural diamond set in hand-engraved yellow gold. Unlike the minimalist, halo engagement rings of the 2010s, this look celebrates texture and history.

Renowned antique expert Cynthia Findlay observes that consumers are increasingly seeking out these one-of-a-kind treasures. In an era of mass-produced jewellery, the appeal lies in the rarity and artisanal character of hand-faceted stones. As Findlay highlights,<sup>1</sup> these pieces transcend fleeting trends, offering a “soulful” alternative to the industrial uniformity of modern commercial diamonds.

## The power of the old mine cut

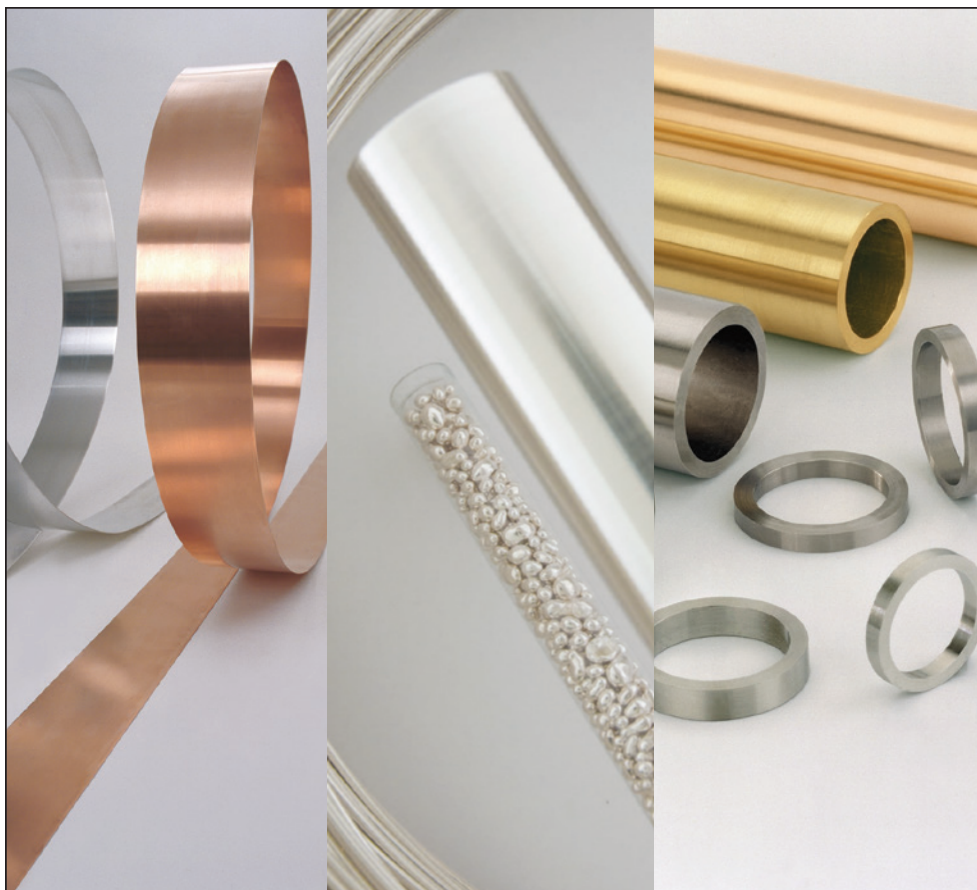
Old mine cuts are the “quiet superpower” of the 2026 market. These stones, largely cut in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, are scarce. Since they are no longer produced in modern commercial cutting houses, their supply is finite.

Industry leaders are increasingly vocal about this shift toward authenticity over perfection. Sean Dunn, president of J.R. Dunn



Old mine cuts—scarce, hand-faceted, and no longer produced—offer built-in exclusivity and pricing power as non-replicable pieces of history.

Jewelers, has become a prominent advocate for the enduring value of natural stones, noting that “people are not falling in love with perfection anymore. They’re falling in love with what feels real.” He points out that the modern buyer finds value in the imperfections that only nature can create.<sup>2</sup>



  
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Celebrity influence is pushing non-traditional gemstones such as sapphires, spinel, and warm-toned tourmalines into the bridal mainstream.



Category	Era/Stone	Why it sells
Antique	Old mine cuts	Hand-faceted, high crowns, and scarcity provide a unique alternative to modern rounds.
Colour	Sapphires	Highly popular in Canada for their “forest and ocean” hues.
Colour	Tsavorite Garnet	A durable, vivid green alternative to emerald that offers better clarity for the price.

For a retailer, this creates built-in exclusivity. Scarcity grants jewellers pricing power. When a client falls in love with the specific, chunky faceting and high crown of a particular antique stone, they are not just buying a diamond; they are acquiring a non-replicable piece of history. You can confidently charge a premium because the “comparables” simply do not exist.

### Profitability math: Why colour wins

The math of the “Big Three” (sapphire, ruby, and emerald), along with rising stars such as spinel and tourmaline, is often more attractive than that of modern diamonds.

- Lower acquisition versus perceived value: A high-quality three-carat teal sapphire from Montana or a vivid spinel can offer a “wow factor” that rivals a diamond at a fraction of the wholesale cost. This approach enables healthier profit margins while still providing consumers with a sense of exceptional value.

- Reduced comparison shopping: Finding a unique Colombian emerald or an Art Deco ring with an old mine cut online is nearly impossible for customers. This shields the retailer from the race-to-the-bottom pricing seen in the standardized diamond market.

### Spotlight on celebrity colour

It is not just Swift. Zendaya’s preference for emerald-cut coloured stones and Miley Cyrus’s embrace of chunky bezel settings have also brought non-traditional bridal into the mainstream. Retailers can translate these red carpet looks into salable collections by focusing on:

- Sapphires: In shades of “cornflower” or “midnight,” offering durability second only to diamonds.
- Spinel: The “insider’s gemstone,” prized for its brilliance and historical confusion with rubies.
- Morganite and Peach Tourmaline: Tapping into the “ballet-core” and warm-tone trends dominating social media.

### Building a profitable assortment

To maximize gross profit, your assortment should balance demand with story.

### Story-driven sales training

To sell these pieces, your associates must move beyond the loupe. Training should focus on narrative over numbers.

Instead of leading with “2.10 carats, VS2,” a successful associate should say: “This sapphire was ethically sourced from a small-scale



Story-led selling, social-first storytelling, and editorial-style merchandising are reshaping jewellery retail—shifting focus from specs and price points to origin, craftsmanship, and emotional value that justifies premium pricing.

mine in Sri Lanka, known for this specific ‘cornflower’ blue. It is set in an authentic 1920s mounting that survived the Jazz Age.”

By weaving in origin, craftsmanship, and rarity, you shift the conversation from “How much?” to “How rare?”

### Leveraging social media

Your storefront is a smartphone screen. The most successful jewellers are turning individual pieces into mini documentaries.

Use Instagram reels to show the “glow” of an old mine cut in natural sunlight versus office lighting. Share educational content such as “Why this 19<sup>th</sup>-century diamond has a flat bottom and how this is a mark of authenticity, not a flaw.” These stories drive in-store appointments by building trust and justifying your premium pricing before the customer even walks through the door.

### Visual merchandising for maximum margin

While it remains practical to group staple inventory (*e.g.*, diamond studs or basic engagement solitaires) by price point to assist the efficiency-minded shopper, unique assets require a different stage.

For coloured gemstones and antique cuts, display them in their own dedicated space to distinguish them from common inventory.

- The mine-to-market story—For a loose emerald or sapphire, include a visual sign in the case that details its specific origin. Seeing a photo of the lush terrain where a stone was unearthed justifies the premium for a high-end client.
- The hand-forged narrative—Use signage to highlight the artisan nature of antique pieces. Explicitly contrast the hand-engraving and manual stone-cutting of the 19<sup>th</sup> century against the uniformity of today’s mass-market competitors.
- The heirloom connection—Group antique pieces together with heritage-inspired props to emphasize these as artifacts, not just products.

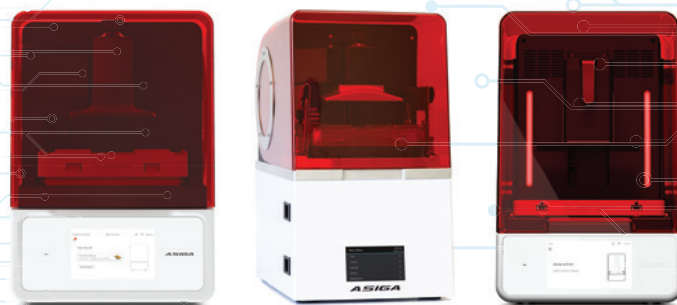


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Coloured gemstones deliver stronger margins by pairing lower acquisition costs with high perceived value.

PHOTO BY LUCIA CHIRILA/CANVA  
VIA CRABTREE CONSULTING



### Buying and pricing strategy

When evaluating estate opportunities, market context is the best tool. Structure pricing by surveying the current landscape for similar items.

Use replacement difficulty as your benchmark. If a piece is truly one of a kind, do not be afraid of a higher keystone; the value lies in the fact that the customer cannot find it elsewhere. The initial ticket price should reflect the rarity and market demand of the story you are telling.

### Avoiding pitfalls

Dealing in antique and coloured stones requires a different set of best practices:

- **Authentication:** Always have your bench jeweller inspect “estate finds” to properly document as-is conditions before they hit the floor.
- **Maintenance:** Always have your bench jeweller inspect “estate finds” to properly document as-is conditions before they hit the floor.

- **Warranties:** Be clear about the “as is” nature of antique stones while offering a care package (e.g., free cleaning and first sizing) to close the sale.
- **Insurance:** Ensure your jeweller’s block policy covers the unique risks of high-value, one-of-a-kind coloured stones, which may be difficult to replace in the event of loss.

Today’s industry trend of lab-grown saturation and race-to-the-bottom pricing means the commodity diamond struggle is a fight no one can win forever. Your competitive advantage is not a certificate number; it is your ability to source the unsearchable.

Walk your floor today and look at your displays. If you removed the price tags, would your pieces still have a voice? 🗣️

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Refer to [cynthiafindlay.com/blog/blog-cf-fine-jewellery-and-antiques.html?page=2](https://cynthiafindlay.com/blog/blog-cf-fine-jewellery-and-antiques.html?page=2).

<sup>2</sup> Read more at [www.linkedin.com/posts/sean-dunn-05860915\\_desertdiamonds-warmdiamonds-jrdunnjewelers-ugcPost-7459924788522766336-cTzM/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sean-dunn-05860915_desertdiamonds-warmdiamonds-jrdunnjewelers-ugcPost-7459924788522766336-cTzM/).



*Consumers are increasingly seeking out these one-of-a-kind treasures. In an era of mass-produced jewellery, the appeal lies in the rarity and artisanal character of hand-faceted stones.*



*Megan Crabtree is the founder & CEO of Crabtree Consulting, a boutique consulting firm with a proven track record of successfully growing jewellery retailers and manufacturers for more than two decades. Known for their unique data-driven approach, they identify barriers and create tailored growth opportunities, fuelling success and helping clients reach their goals in the industry.*

# The language of *time*



The Khaki Field Murph.



The Khaki Navy BELOWZERO.



The Ventura.



The Khaki Field Automatic.

“All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”  
*—The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

By Ayaz Aladdin Hasmani

A watch ticking in close-up. A character glancing at their wrist. A moment stretching just long enough to create tension. In cinema, time is not simply measured—it is constructed, manipulated, and felt. It shapes structure, pacing, silence, and the objects characters carry. Among those objects, jewellery—timepieces in particular—has held a persistent, understated role. It is rarely incidental. In film, almost nothing is.

Within visual storytelling, jewellery operates as a form of shorthand. A ring can suggest continuity or entrapment; a necklace may hint at memory, inheritance, or loss. A watch, however, introduces something more precise. It sits close to the body, partially hidden, yet constantly active in meaning, measuring time while shaping how a character is understood within it.

From early Hollywood onward, accessories became extensions of narrative. As filmmaking matured, watches evolved into tools of restraint—often implying emotion rather than stating it. In suspenseful films such as *North by Northwest* and *Apocalypse Now*, time does not simply exist within the story; it becomes part of that architecture. This is what gives watches their unique position in cinema: they are functional objects that behave like metaphors. They also shape how that narrative is experienced. Costume designers often describe this as “psychology you can see”—the idea that a character’s inner life can be expressed through carefully chosen objects rather than explicit exposition.

Within this landscape, timepieces created by Hamilton Watch have become part of some of cinema’s most recognizable worlds, operating as narrative devices embedded within storytelling. In *Interstellar*, the Khaki Field Murph functions as a bridge between distance, memory, and emotional time. In one of the film’s most memorable moments, the watch becomes a medium for communication across time, grounding an abstract idea in a deeply

human gesture. In *Tenet*, a custom Hamilton timepiece translates the logic of temporal inversion into a physical object, making an invisible concept tangible for the audience. In *Men in Black*, the Ventura becomes part of an iconic uniform, its bold geometry helping define identity within the film’s universe. Across these films, the watches are not decorative—they actively shape the narrative language.

In recent years, video games have also absorbed cinematic language. In this shift, the watch changes function again. It is no longer only a symbol observed by an audience, but an object experienced within a world. Rather than being seen, it is used, interacted with, and integrated into gameplay. This convergence between film and gaming has created a shared visual vocabulary—one that relies on consistency, detail, and immersion.

Within this evolving landscape of film and video games, Hamilton Watch occupies a space in storytelling culture. Its timepieces have appeared in film as integrated elements of character and world-building. That philosophy has gradually extended into gaming, where immersive environments demand the same level of precision and intentional design.

There is also a quieter recognition embedded in this shift: that stories are built collectively. Films and games are shaped not only by performers and directors, but by designers, editors, costume teams, and technicians. Ultimately, what connects cinema, jewellery, and gaming is not technology, but attention—attention to detail, to character, and to time as both structure and experience. A watch does not simply tell time within these worlds; it reveals how time is felt. 🌐

*Ayaz Aladdin Hasmani leads Blancpain in Canada. Previously, he held leadership roles across the watch industry, including HAMILTON Watch. He writes on horology, culture, and storytelling.*

Whether you are a collector, retailer, designer, or student, understanding the confidence gap helps you appreciate the role appraisers play.

PHOTO © SEVENTYFOUR/COURTESY BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM



# The confidence cut

Inside the space between gemmology knowledge and appraisal responsibility

By Karen Howard

**W**alk into any jewellery show, classroom, or trade event, and you'll meet them immediately—people who love jewellery.

They are captivated by gemstones, drawn to the artistry of design, fascinated by history, craftsmanship, and value. Some collect. Some sell. Some study gemmology for the joy of learning. And some, quietly, are wondering whether they might one day cross the line from admiration to responsibility—from gem lover to jewellery appraiser.

That transition, however, is far more complex than most people realize.

Jewellery appraising is often misunderstood as a technical pursuit: identify the materials, assess the quality, determine a value, and write

a report. It is a profession built on judgment, accountability, ethics, and trust. And between fascination and professional authority lies what many in the industry experience but rarely discuss openly—the confidence gap.

## What is the confidence gap?

The confidence gap is the space between *knowing* and *feeling ready*. It's the difference between having the education needed and believing you deserve the professional role.

For aspiring appraisers, it sounds like:

"I need one more course before I start."

"What if I miss something important?"



Jewellery appraising is often misunderstood as a technical pursuit: identify the materials, assess the quality, determine a value, and write a report.

PHOTO © YEVHENIA VITTE/COURTESY DREAMSTIME.COM

“Who am I to put a value on someone else’s jewellery?”

“What if a more experienced appraiser would do it differently?”

These thoughts are not signs of incompetence. In fact, they often indicate the opposite: a deep awareness of responsibility.

And while the confidence gap is particularly acute for appraisers, it is something nearly every jewellery professional encounters at some point—whether stepping into sales, design, valuation, consulting, or education.

### Why jewellery appraising feels different

In many areas of the jewellery industry, confidence grows visibly.

Sales numbers increase. Designs improve. Client feedback reinforces progress.

Appraising is different.

An appraisal isn’t just an opinion—it’s a document that carries weight. It may be relied on by insurers, lawyers, courts, financial institutions, or grieving families settling estates. Errors don’t just cost money; they can damage relationships, create legal issues, and undermine trust.

For this reason, caution is not only natural—it’s essential. Yet there is a tipping point where healthy caution turns into paralysis, and many talented, capable professionals get stuck there.

### The myth of “being ready”

One of the most persistent myths in jewellery appraising is the idea that at some point, you will feel fully ready.

You won’t.

There is no moment when a professional appraiser wakes up knowing everything, having seen everything, and feeling completely confident in every scenario. Jewellery is too varied. Materials evolve. Markets shift. Clients surprise us.

What experienced appraisers develop instead is judgment—the ability to recognize what they know, identify what they don’t, and proceed responsibly.

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Imposter syndrome is often discussed in creative fields or corporate environments, but it is present in appraisal work—especially among those who care deeply about doing things correctly.

PHOTO © PATRIZIO MARTORANA/COURTESY DREAMSTIME.COM

Confidence in appraising does not come from certainty. It comes from process, boundaries, and integrity. This is where many new appraisers benefit from learning not just gemmology, but professional frameworks—how to define scope, use disclaimers, and know when outside expertise is required.

### Imposter syndrome wears a lab coat, too

Imposter syndrome is often discussed in creative fields or corporate environments, but it is present in appraisal work—especially among those who care deeply about doing things correctly.

Unlike overconfidence, which can be dangerous in valuation, imposter syndrome manifests as:

- Over-preparing but never launching
- Undervaluing one's services
- Avoiding visibility or professional identification
- Deferring unnecessarily to others even when competent

Ironically, those most affected are often the most conscientious. The goal is not to eliminate doubt entirely—doubt is part of ethical practice. The goal is to separate responsibility from self-distrust.

### The turning point: responsibility over perfection

Most appraisers describe a moment—not dramatic but defining—when they realize something important: “I don’t need to know everything. I need to know how to act responsibly.”

This shift is subtle but transformative.

Instead of asking:

- *Am I good enough?*

They begin asking:

- *Is this within my scope?*
- *Do I have the right tools, information, and references?*
- *Do I know when to seek help or decline?*

That’s when confidence begins to grow—quietly and steadily.

### Confidence is built in layers

One of the reasons the confidence gap feels so intimidating is that people assume confidence is something you either have or don’t.

Professional confidence is layered:

- 1. Technical confidence:** understanding materials, construction, and terminology
- 2. Procedural confidence:** knowing how to conduct an appointment, write reports, and document findings
- 3. Ethical confidence:** being comfortable saying no, setting boundaries, and remaining impartial
- 4. Communication confidence:** explaining findings clearly to non-experts
- 5. Judgment confidence:** recognizing when something falls outside your expertise

Each layer builds upon the last—and none arrive fully formed.

For appraisers, this layered approach is often what separates those who last in the profession from those who burn out early.

### Why jewellery knowledge alone isn’t enough

Many people assume that strong gemmological knowledge automatically translates into appraisal readiness. While knowledge is foundational, appraisal requires application under pressure.

A client may be anxious.

A piece may be damaged.

Family members may disagree.

The jewellery may carry emotional weight that far exceeds its monetary value.

This is where confidence is tested—not in identifying a gemstone, but in navigating real-world complexity with professionalism.

For readers outside the appraisal profession, this explains why a good appraiser may ask more questions, take more time, and refuse

to give “off-the-cuff” values. These aren’t signs of uncertainty—they are signs of care.

### The role of mentorship and community

One of the most effective ways professionals bridge the confidence gap is through connection.

Talking openly with other appraisers reveals a powerful truth:

Everyone struggles. Everyone second-guesses. Everyone learns continuously.

Mentorship doesn’t eliminate responsibility, but it normalizes growth.

For newer appraisers, structured support—whether through associations, coaching, or peer networks—can shorten the confidence curve dramatically.

### Confidence is not loud

The most trusted professionals in the jewellery industry are rarely the loudest. They don’t rush. They don’t exaggerate. They don’t promise certainty where none exists.

Their confidence shows up as: Clear explanations, thoughtful documentation, professional restraint, and calm decision-making.

To clients and colleagues alike, this quiet confidence inspires trust.

### Why this matters to you

Whether you are a collector, retailer, designer, or student, understanding the confidence gap helps you appreciate the role appraisers play.

When an appraiser takes time, asks questions, or sets limits, it’s not hesitation—it’s professionalism. Trust isn’t built on bravado. It’s built on responsibility.

### A final word

If you find yourself caught between passion and readiness, know this:

Confidence does not arrive before responsibility.

It grows because of it.

Every trusted appraiser you respect once stood exactly where you are—knowledgeable, cautious, uncertain, and committed to doing the work properly.

That commitment is not a weakness. It is the foundation of the profession. 🌱



*Karen Howard, FCGmA, RMV, is a veteran gemmologist and retired Jewellery Appraisal business owner with over 30 years in the jewellery trade. Through her platform, Jewellery Appraisers Coach, she now coaches new appraisers how to overcome the challenges of their*

*first year in business—covering everything from client communication to ethical practices. Her work has been featured by more than 20 media outlets, including Yahoo Finance, Fox4, NBC, and WGN Chicago, highlighting her contributions to professional standards and training in the appraisal industry. Her best-selling book, ‘From Start To Success, The Business of Jewellery Appraising’ is available on Amazon at <https://jewelleryappraiserscoach.com/> and <https://the-language-of-gems.com/>*

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# The future beckons!

**A**s summer arrives across Canada, it's a chance for renewal and connection. Whether you're enjoying the lakes in Ontario, lively conversations on Montréal's terraces, or hiking along the Maritimes' calm shores, summer invites us to celebrate, network, and move forward. For our industry, it's also the perfect time to come together, collaborate, and reflect on our achievements.

This year, that spirit of innovation continues with one of our most exciting developments: the launch of a fully online JETS program. Designed with accessibility and quality in mind, this new format consolidates all course content on a streamlined LMS platform, enabling participants to engage with materials anytime, anywhere. Quizzes are automatically graded, guaranteeing immediate feedback and a more fluid learning experience, while the final exam follows the same integrated system. This transition constitutes a significant step forward in how we deliver education—modern, efficient, and consistent with the needs of today's professionals.

At the same time, we are proud to continue building momentum with Expo Prestige, now entering its second year under the CJA's leadership. The work behind the scenes has been both extensive and deeply intentional. Every detail, from exhibitor experience to programming, has been carefully considered to upscale the show to greater heights. With the vision of the Canadian Jewellers Association, this event is truly becoming a real place for key stakeholders of our industry to meet and shape together how our industry moves forward. We are committed to delivering a unique edition, filled with surprises, meaningful connections, and opportunities that reflect the transforming landscape of jewellery in Canada.

As we celebrate growth and innovation, this is your reminder to stay compliant with the Anti-

Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorist Financing (AML/ATF) regulations. In an increasingly regulated environment, remaining compliant protects not only your business but also the integrity of the industry as a whole. This is why we continue to emphasize education and support in this area, ensuring our members have the knowledge and tools they need to operate confidently and responsibly.

One of the ways we are supporting our community is through our Outlier membership benefit, which offers an exceptional \$2,000 kit to our members at no cost. This initiative embodies our pledge to deliver tangible value and empower professionals with resources that drive real impact in their day-to-day operations. It is one more way we are investing in your success and strengthening the foundation of our industry.

With graduation season here, a new group of talented people is ready to join our field. We encourage all members to offer internships or apprenticeships, either through our job board or by connecting with us on social media. Supporting new professionals helps their future and keeps our industry strong and innovative. Don't forget to stay connected with us online for opportunities, updates, and insights all year long.

Do not miss our show in Montréal at the Grand Quay on **August 23 and 24, 2026**, for the second CJA-led edition of **Expo Prestige**—the longest-running and most prestigious jewellery show in Canada. 🌐

See you soon in Montréal,

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# A life in moments

## Ashley Graham on style, self, and story

By Marika Gabriel

**S**upermodel. Entrepreneur. Body-positivity trailblazer. Ashley Graham is a force to be reckoned with—having built a career that has actively rewritten conversations around beauty, representation, and confidence across fashion, media, and business. From global runways to hosting, campaigning, and championing inclusivity, she has become one of the most recognizable—and relatable—voices in contemporary fashion.

That influence is felt far beyond the runway. To that end, seeing Graham appear in the sequel *The Devil Wears Prada 2*—a cultural touchstone for a generation of millennials like myself—feels especially resonant. The blockbuster has already drawn hundreds of millions at the box office, but Graham's cameo is more than a moment on screen. It reflects her standing within the industry and the way her presence has become woven into fashion's modern narrative.

In this conversation with *Jewellery Business*, Graham reflects on her relationship with OMEGA, what “time well spent” means to her, and her evolving relationship with watches—both as a signature and as markers of life's big milestones.

### Tell us about your journey with OMEGA?

It started back in 2024, when I joined the brand's celebrity Bob Run. What an introduction. Then, I came on as one of the campaign ambassadors for the

Aqua Terra 30 mm collection in 2025, and then this year I got to be part of OMEGA House at Milano Cortina, which was such a special chapter. What resonates with me is how seriously OMEGA takes women's watches. These timepieces are built for the way we actually move through a day, and you feel that the moment you put one on.

### How do OMEGA designs align with your personal style?

My schedule is full. So, when I find a watch I love wearing, I want it to keep up. The Aqua Terra 30 mm does that for me. The design is beautiful, the materials feel really considered, and it's a piece I just don't think twice about. I move through everything that makes up my life, the work, the kids, the travel, the events, and this watch comes along for all of it.

### How do you typically incorporate watches into your day-to-day looks?

A watch is the piece I always come back to. My earrings might change three times before I leave the house, the bag definitely changes, but the watch usually stays on for the whole day, so it has to really feel like me. I'll grab mine in the morning without overthinking it, and somehow it works with whatever I've pulled together. That's the mark of a well-designed watch, I think. It just slots in.

### What does “time well spent” mean to you?

When you're young and trying to make it in your career, “time well spent” can mean so many different things—working late nights, taking as many meetings as possible, meeting new people, networking... but as you get older and you might want to start a family, that perspective can totally change. Time well spent now can be just hanging out with friends and family, finding that special time to be with my husband and our kids, or even just taking a moment to myself! And honestly, that's part of why I love a mechanical watch.

It pulls me back into the moment. I'm not glancing at a screen and getting yanked into 20 notifications. I check the time, and I'm right back in the room with whoever I'm with.

### Do you see your watch as more of a functional tool, a fashion statement, or a bit of both?

A bit of both, for sure. Think about the astronauts who wore their OMEGAs in space. For them, it was a tool, full stop. I love being part of that legacy. Then on a wrist like mine, where I might be on a red carpet one night and on a flight the next morning, the watch takes on another life entirely. The fact that one piece can carry all of that, for me, is the real fashion statement.

### Can you remember the first watch you ever owned?

The first time I ever wore a watch was in middle school. It was a gift from my parents, and it made me feel like a grown-up. It was a great coming-of-age gift that made me feel very adult-like.

### What advice would you give to people who want to buy their first luxury timepiece?

Buy what you love. Truly. Don't overthink the investment angle, don't let yourself get talked into something that isn't really you. A luxury watch should be something you reach for again and again, season after season, year after year. The only way that actually happens is if you love wearing it on the wrist.

### Are there certain watches in your collection that reflect different moments in your life?

Definitely. Watches end up being these quiet little markers of where you were and who you were becoming. From buying your first watch to maybe celebrating a huge milestone and buying a beautiful new watch for yourself... a watch can be tied to so many special moments in someone's life. I still have all the watches I've ever bought, or that people have given me. I'll put those pieces on now and feel like I'm right back in that moment for a second.

### How does your lifestyle influence the watch you reach for on a given day?

Hugely. My days look really different from each other, so I need pieces that can transition with me. Something I can wear to an event one evening and then onto a flight the next morning without thinking about it. The Aqua Terra is wonderful for that.

### Time is crucial—how does it shape your life and work?

Time is the thing I'm always negotiating. Work, family, travel, friends, the calendar runs hot. So, my relationship with it has to be hands-on. I plan ahead, I'm protective of my hours, and I try to be intentional about where I'm spending



them. Wearing a watch I love is part of that intention. There's something about looking down at my wrist that reminds me this hour is mine, and I want to spend it well.

### How many timepieces do you own?

I own about seven watches. Watches that have been passed down from my family, gifts from others, special watches that I've bought myself... I love a beautiful timepiece. One of my absolute favourites, though, is the Aqua Terra 30 mm. It goes with everything I own, and as we head into summer, it's the piece that genuinely lives on my wrist.

### If you could go back in time, just for a day, which moment in time would you go back to?

Holding my oldest son in my arms for the first time is definitely a moment I think about a lot. He's the first baby that made me a mom! Women's bodies are incredibly powerful, and it's amazing that we're able to do this. Experiencing that feeling of accomplishment and seeing my son for the first time is just a feeling you never forget.

### What are you most excited to make time for?

This year has been incredible, celebrating big career wins and achieving things that I've truly been dreaming about for a long time. I'm excited to keep working toward my goals and developing the business side of my career. It's an exciting time, and I don't take any of it for granted! ☺



PHOTO COURTESY | SEE IDEAS

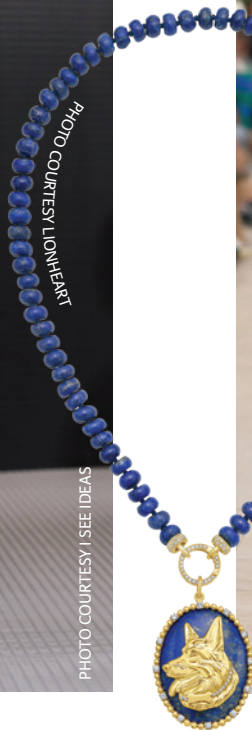
# Statement Season

The trends defining the  
spring and summer of 2026

By Duvall O'Steen

**W**armer temperatures mean shedding the many layers of winter fashion. Now is the time to embrace the colourful fun of spring dressing. Key fashion trends from the Spring/Summer 2026 season will be prominent, prompting accessory and fine jewellery needs for your customers. Here are the trends to know now from the runways of New York, Paris, London, and Milan, as well as the recent red carpets in Hollywood.

Alice + Olivia by Stacey Bendet (S/S 2026  
Spotlight Launchmetrics).



**Left to right:** Jil Sander (S/S 2026 Spotlight Launchmetrics), Lionheart Lapis bead chain with oval Lapis Best Friend dog charm, Celine (S/S 2026 Spotlight Launchmetrics), Oscar Heyman yellow sapphire pendant necklace, Oscar Heyman ruby and diamond bracelet, and Alice + Olivia by Stacey Bendet (S/S 2026 Spotlight Launchmetrics).

### Primary colours, especially red

Instead of the usual pastels for spring and summer, there was a prevalence of primary colours in ready-to-wear collections this year. Bold yellows, cobalt blues, and fire engine reds make for striking wardrobe options. Bright yellow was featured in monochrome looks at Rabanne, Fendi, Michael Kors, Carolina Herrera, and Loewe. Blue hues also dominated, seen at Marc Jacobs, Victoria Beckham, Area, and more. Red was the standout colour of the season, especially bright red. The vibrant hue was ubiquitous, seen at Alice & Olivia, Balenciaga, Chanel, Fendi, Givenchy, Issey Miyake, Ralph Lauren, Tory Burch, Valentino, and more. Red was so dominant, it prompted an editor at *Harper's Bazaar* to advise that the best way to be on-trend this season is to add "a pop of bright fire-engine red to your outfit."

Many designers also paired primary colours. Cobalt blue and bright red shared the spotlight at Jil Sander. Yellow and blue paired perfectly at Celine. The same goes for jewellery. Encourage customers to wear deep blue sapphires with their flashes of red or rubies with their cobalt blues. Fancy yellow diamonds are also on the rise and are the perfect complement to the bright, sunny yellows in warm-weather fashions.



PHOTO COURTESY / SEE IDEAS

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**Clockwise from bottom left:** PICCHIOTTI Xpandable signature style emerald bracelet, Max Mara (S/S 2026 Spotlight Launchmetrics), Chris Ploof signet ring, Lionheart fancy cut diamond linear drop earrings, and Guzema gold huggie hoops.

### Sporty, collegiate, chic

Another runway trend for the warm seasons is a sporty, collegiate vibe. Schoolgirl short skirts are back, especially tennis skirts and mini pleats, seen at Dior, Alice + Olivia, Rabanne, and more. Short shorts and no pants proved another fun way to put the focus on the legs, seen at Givenchy, Lacoste, and Max Mara. Bralettes thrived at Fendi, Jason Wu, and Prada. Academia reigns in collegiate sweaters, rugby stripes, vibrant blue, and polo shirts, effectively creating a playful mood.

Though the feel is casual, the esthetic is still very upscale. Jewellery will help to elevate the look. Sales associates should suggest huggie hoops, on-the-lobe buttons, or short drop earrings to pair with the lingerie-inspired bra tops. For the striped polos and mini skirts, help your customers curate the perfect stack of bangles. Opt for chunkier or thicker bangles this year, especially those set with diamonds and coloured gemstones. Recommend longer earrings, such as stilettos and chandeliers, for the sporty blazers worn over miniskirts or shorts (seen at Ralph Lauren and Max Mara). For collegiate sweaters and ruby stripes, offer signet rings to complete the look.



PHOTO COURTESY | SEE IDEAS

PHOTO COURTESY PICCHIOTTI



Footwear is similarly casual, as fashion designers finished off these looks with sneakers, sandals, and even flip-flops, letting the full length of the leg be admired. Clogs and colourful, ornamented sandals will prevail. Now is the perfect time to stock and sell anklets. Be sure to have your gold and silver chains available in anklet links.

### The big sassy skirt

Another fun trend for spring and summer is the bold, wide, sassy skirt. The look was ubiquitous, prompting *The New York Times* to devote an entire article to “Why skirts are back for spring 2026.”<sup>2</sup> Flouncy skirts and peplums drew the focus away from the blouse with feathers, fringe, and flares, emphasizing the pelvis, hips, and bottom half.

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PHOTO COURTESY CHRIS PLOOF



PHOTO COURTESY TANYA FARAH



**Page 31:** Chanel (S/S 2026 Spotlight Launchmetrics) and PICCHIOTTI Essentially colour Xpandable bracelet.

**Clockwise from bottom left:** Orogami sterling silver bubbles oval pendant with adjustable silk chord, Balenciaga (S/S 2026 Spotlight Launchmetrics), Chris Ploof hand-forged Damascus steel crescent earrings with 18K gold, and Tanya Farah butterfly wings diamond and 18K gold earrings.

*W magazine* noted that these statement skirts are best worn with plain or simple tops: “This season, designers are flipping the formula by calling for party skirts to take centre stage while the predictable ‘going out’ top is left firmly at home.”<sup>23</sup>

Seen at Balenciaga, Chanel, Givenchy, Christian Siriano, and even dramatic flair skirts or trains at Carolina Herrera, the skirts have volume and width. Peplums are also back, bringing attention to the pelvis as seen at Max Mara, Khaite, Stella McCartney, and more. From feathers and fringe to petticoats, these designer looks draw the eye downward and leave room for longer necklaces, especially leather cords with bold silver pendants. Pendants on cords were easily the most widely seen jewellery trend on the red carpets for spring/summer.

To compete with the volume below, adorn the simple tops with bold accessories. Suggest wider drop earrings, including chandeliers, girandole styles, and forward-facing hoops, for customers who wish to balance the look or add a sense of movement at the neck to match the skirt beneath. Bold, chunky bracelets, preferably stacked (as seen at Michael Kors, for example), make the perfect adornment as well, competing with the colourful swaying as you walk. Help customers choose colourful bracelets, too, for layering with thicker gold bangles or diamond tennis bracelets. Since the blouses are rather plain, suggest offsetting the skirt’s width with a statement necklace, such as a bib, cluster, or dramatic Y chain.

PHOTO COURTESY OROGAMI





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PHOTO COURTESY OSCAR HEYMAN

### Old Hollywood glamour

Award show season brought old Hollywood glamour back. The esthetic “dominated the Golden Globes,” according to *Vogue*,<sup>4</sup> and continued to prevail at the SAG-AFTRA Actor Awards and the Oscars. Opera gloves, vintage vibes, and elegant floor-length gowns create the look. Statement necklaces were prominent, especially with coloured gemstones and white-diamond styles. Earrings seen on red carpets were mostly sleek drops or shorter styles.

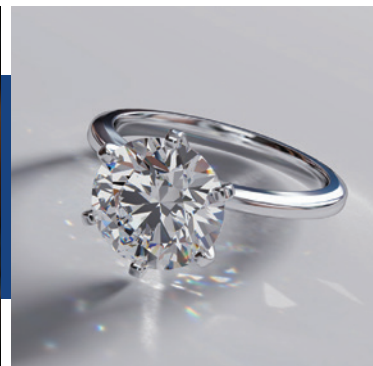
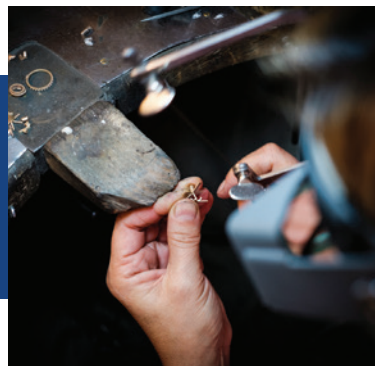
As you help customer prepare for special events, galas, or charity balls, encourage them to wear jewellery on the outside of their opera gloves (gloves were also trending on the runways) with statement cocktail rings, cuff bracelets, or two wrists filled with stackables.



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PHOTO COURTESY VERRAGIO

**Page 33:** Selena Gomez at the 2026 Golden Globes and Oscar Heyman fancy yellow diamond drop earrings.

**Left to right:** Elle Fanning at the Oscars 2026; The Diamond Embrace necklace by PICCHIOTTI, Kate Hudson at the 2026 Golden Globes; and Verragio Vanguard diamond earrings.

High-collar short necklaces add loads of sparkle to the face. For customers who want to fill out the décolletage, opt for bib necklaces and Y chains. Chandelier earrings also elevate the little black dress and evoke the perfect amount of glamour. For those with shorter necks and hairlines, try diamond on-the-lobe button earrings. And of course, the overall look would feel incomplete without a statement cocktail ring. Natural “desert diamonds” are getting a lot of attention these days thanks to the De Beers campaign. Customers who feel they have already worn their white diamonds can freshen up their jewellery box with some new yellow, brown, or cognac diamonds. The best thing about old Hollywood glamour is the childlike glee of indulgence and of playing dress-up. Permission granted (thank you, celebrities) for all of us to splurge and enjoy!

Other notable spring/summer trends include Jazz Age shift dresses (seen at Tory Burch, Calvin Klein, and more), floral prints (especially three-dimensional embroidered flowers at Issey Miyake, Dolce & Gabbana, Dior, and Nardos), and lots of fringe (seen in fabrics at Jason Wu, Michael Kors, and Balmain). More fringe is coming for fall/winter 2026, so stock up now on fringe earrings and tassel pendants.

Now is the season of mixing things up. Primary colours, instead of pastels (especially red). Sassy skirts with simple tops, instead of dressy

blouses with sleek pants. Glamour rather than minimalism for black-tie attire. And comfortable sporty looks, but with a dash of class and elegance. Help your customers enjoy the fun of dressing and choosing the perfect accessories. ☺

## Notes

See notes at <https://www.jewellerybusiness.com/features/statement-season-trends-of-2026>



*Duvall O'Steen is a New York publicist, writer, trend reporter, and luxury communications consultant, specializing in the fine jewellery industry. Following more than a decade of service as director of jewellery PR and promotion for World Gold Council, O'Steen established her own freelance business in 2011, providing her expertise and creativity to jewellery designers worldwide. She is also a jewellery publicist for the boutique public relations firm Luxury Brand Group.*



Figure 4

Enamel Spaniel dog pendant/brooch.  
PHOTO COURTESY GEORGIANJEWELRY.COM

# Picture this

## The return of portrait-inspired design

By Renée Newman

Antique jewellery was often decorated with portraits of loved ones and pets, serving as personal mementos, memorial pieces, or symbols of devotion. Portrait jewellery was particularly meaningful for those whose loved ones travelled or lived far away. The portraits were either carved, engraved, set in precious metal with gems, or painted on glass, ivory, mother-of-pearl, metal, or porcelain. For portrait artists, jewellery was an additional source of income. Portrait jewellery can also provide jewellers with added income if they promote it.

Cynthia Renee, who specializes in custom jewellery, commissioned the cuff links in Figure 1 after suggesting the project to her client. She knew he really liked cufflinks and unusual things and had the budget. She recommended making cufflinks with scenes from his home and images of his family's Jack Russell and West Highland Terrier dogs. He liked the idea and agreed. He provided photos of his dogs and the exterior of his home and its garden, which were depicted with engravings, diamonds, and black lacquer. It took six months to design and engineer these handmade cufflinks.

### Antique portrait jewellery and its influence on modern jewellery

Portrait jewellery was designed to immortalize people and express loyalty and love to them in the Georgian era. This period extended from 1714 to 1837, when permanent photography was not available. Miniature portraits were set under crystal or glass in rings; pendants were made with small hand-painted portraits on ivory, animal skin, or card, set in gold or silver and often surrounded by gemstones backed in foil or silver. Figure 2 is an example of a pendant (circa



Figure 1

"Hearth and Hounds" cufflinks by Cynthia Renée.  
PHOTO BY JOHN PARRISH PHOTOGRAPHY



Figure 2

Georgian garnet miniature portrait pendant.  
PHOTO COURTESY GEORGIANJEWELRY.COM

Figure 3



Victorian coral family portrait brooch from LangAntiques.com.

PHOTO BY COLE BYBEE

Figure 5



Rémanimals™ brooch by Rémy Rotenier.

PHOTO BY STUDIO SEVEN



Figure 6

Art Nouveau pendant/brooch, circa 1890.

PHOTO COURTESY ANTIQUEJEWEL.COM

1780) from Georgian jewellery. It features almandine garnets set into silver, surrounding the hand-painted miniature portrait.

Carvings were also used for antique portrait jewellery. The hand-carved Mediterranean coral brooch from Lang Antiques in Figure 3 depicts a Victorian mother and her twin daughters, each donning flowers. The Victorian period extended from 1837 to 1901; this piece is circa 1875. Women were a common motif alongside floral patterns, reflecting the era's appreciation for nature and beauty.

Pets were important to the Victorians, so jewellery was sometimes designed to include an image of a cherished dog or cat, as seen in Figure 4 (page 35). It is a miniature enamel spaniel dog brooch/pendant from Georgian Jewellery. It was probably painted by William Bishop Ford, who studied under the most celebrated miniaturist enamel painter of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, William Essex in England, a favourite of Queen Victoria.

The miniature paintings of Essex set in jewellery were so famous that reverse-carved rock crystal miniatures of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century were also called "Essex brooches," even though Essex only did enamel paintings, not intaglio carvings. Essex animal portrait brooches are available today from Rémy Rotenier, a French jewellery designer and painter of fine art miniatures based in Albuquerque, N.M. An example is shown in Figure 5. It is a reverse-carved rock crystal cabochon with an image of a poodle, reverse-hand-painted in oil, then backed in mother-of-pearl and trademarked as the Rémanimals brooch. All Rémanimals portraits

Figure 7

Cat necklace and bracelet (Figure 8)  
by Mark Schneider Design.

PHOTOS BY JACKY TRUJILLO



Figure 8



are framed in sterling silver set with diamonds, and given thick, 22-karat gold bezels. On the back, a baguette diamond is set (as the centre of a dog bone for dog portraits). There is also a round diamond set next to his signature, as a secret “wink” to the wearer. He dresses the animals in human clothes to enhance their natural elegance and celebrate our close relationship with them.

Women motifs were as common in Art Nouveau jewellery as they were in Victorian jewellery. Created in France around 1890, the Art Nouveau movement sought to modernize jewellery design. It was also a reaction to events in French society at the time, including women’s fight to secure more rights for themselves. An example from the Art Nouveau period is the plique-a-jour enamel brooch/pendant in Figure 6 from Adin Fine Antique Jewellery. Plique-a-jour (French for “letting in daylight”) is a technique of applying enamel between fine metal frameworks without a backing that creates a stained-glass window effect. Famous Art Nouveau jeweller, René Lalique, was noted for his plique-a-jour enamel jewellery.

### How to initiate portrait jewellery sales

Mark Schneider, a custom jeweller in Long Beach, Calif., gets commissions for portrait jewellery during conversations with his clients about their lives and interests. The necklace and bracelet in Figures 7 and 8 were the result of a discussion he had with a client about her seven stray cats. After

she related how important the cats were to her, Schneider suggested he make some jewellery portraying them. When she agreed, Schneider and his sketch artist did a pencil sketch of a bracelet with seven cats in different positions and a necklace with one of the cats. The client liked the sketch, so their master jeweller hand-carved a wax model for her to view. The wax gave the client a more accurate idea of how the finished piece of jewellery would look. Next, they cast the metal in the client’s choice of metal—14-karat gold. The Mark Schneider team then cleaned the hand-set diamonds the client had requested for the ribbon. The final step was to choose the finish type, which in this case was a textured finish, but could have been high polish, satin, hammer, or sandblasted, depending on the client’s preference.

Schneider proposed the horse pendant in Figure 9 to a horse owner as a gift for his wife. Figure 10 shows the wax and sketch used when designing the pendant. The client liked the finished pendant so well that he ordered three more horse pendants—one for his daughter, one for his trainer, and one for the owner of the equestrian centre; and Schneider ended up selling four pear-shaped diamonds at the same time.

Schneider loves animals and is always ready to propose animal jewellery appropriate for his clients. His jewellery receives an appraisal, a certificate of authenticity, and any stone certification for the stones selected for the piece.



Figure 9

Horse pendant by Mark Schneider Design.



Figure 10

Wax and sketch used for horse pendant by Mark Schneider Design.

## Benefits of portrait jewellery

Customers appreciate custom portrait jewellery because it allows them to express their affection for people and pets they love. It also attracts more attention than mass-produced pieces and often serves as a conversation piece, during which admirers may ask where it was purchased. This, in turn, provides free publicity for the jeweler who made it.

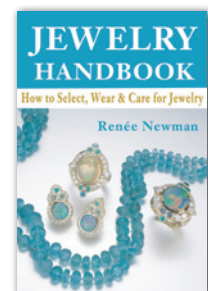
Portrait jewellery allowed Rotenier to create his Rémanimals™ brooch collection, which he features on the home page of his RémyRotenier website. Viewers are immediately invited to commission personalized brooches not available elsewhere, thereby generating new business for him.

Customers seldom walk into a store and ask for portrait jewellery. Jewellers normally must propose it. Cynthia Renée and Mark Schneider engage in conversation with their clients to learn about them and their interests, and they keep records about client preferences. This allows them to suggest portrait jewellery ideas that their clients can't resist.

If you would like to grow your business and enhance your reputation, ask your clients good questions, listen carefully, and consider suggesting original portrait jewellery pieces. You and your client will enjoy creating sentimental jewellery together, and you will both experience a deep sense of satisfaction when you see the finished piece. ☺



*Renée Newman, GG, is a gemmologist and the author of 'Jewelry Handbook: How to Select, Wear & Care for Jewelry' and 14 other books on jewellery and gems. She became interested in jewellery design while overseeing jewellery quality control at the Josam Diamond Corporation in downtown Los Angeles. For more information about Newman and her books, visit [ReneeNewman.com](http://ReneeNewman.com).*





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