

Exclusively yours



SHOBHA ASAR, JEWELLERY DESIGNER AND PARTNER OF 'SHOBHA ASAR' JEWELLERY SPEAKS TO SAVIA RAJAGOPAL ON HER GROWTH AND EXPANSION PLANS



WHEN DID YOU START YOUR DESIGN STUDIO AND HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

I started designing and learning about diamonds in 1981. Of course, I followed my passion for jewellery by learning the technical skills through a gemological course. I then joined my friend's store for a while. Earlier the emphasis wasn't so much on diamonds but I wanted to get into diamonds specifically. I worked from home for the first two years and then started the office.

YOU ARE KNOWN TO HAVE AN EXCLUSIVE ONE-OF-A-KIND BOUTIQUE. WHAT IS 'SHOBHA ASAR'S' USP?

We want a one-to-one relationship with our clients. Secondly, we want to keep it exclusive so that no one copies our designs. We don't like to tamper with our quality and so the entire process from beginning to end is made by us. The quality is completely in our hands and we don't compromise on it.

DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE RESTRICTING YOUR MARKET BY MAKING ONLY EXCLUSIVE JEWELLERY?

Well, we have a slight distinction there. We have two kinds of design — exclusive and non-exclusive. The non-exclusive segment consists of small pieces which are repeated, but not mass manufactured as such. They are trendier and sold across different cities. But exclusive jewellery is not repeated as people don't want their design everywhere, especially after spending so much money.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT CREATING YOUR JEWELLERY PIECES? HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU TAKE PER PIECE?

It comes naturally to me. Nature is very inspiring. Also, you see and observe things around you which give you ideas. Inspiration comes from the smallest things in day-to-day life.

WHAT FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS DOES THE SHOBHA ASAR STUDIO PARTICIPATE IN?

We have our own shows in every city. We had taken part in Bridal Asia when

it started, but for the last few years, we haven't taken part in any exhibitions because we want to keep it exclusive. So we showcase our products in Delhi, Calcutta, Hyderabad, and other cities. That way, the clientele focusses on seeing just our jewellery.

WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE YOU RECEIVED AT IJS 2005?

Fantastic! People were completely floored. We got so many calls after that. Compared to last year, I think they have

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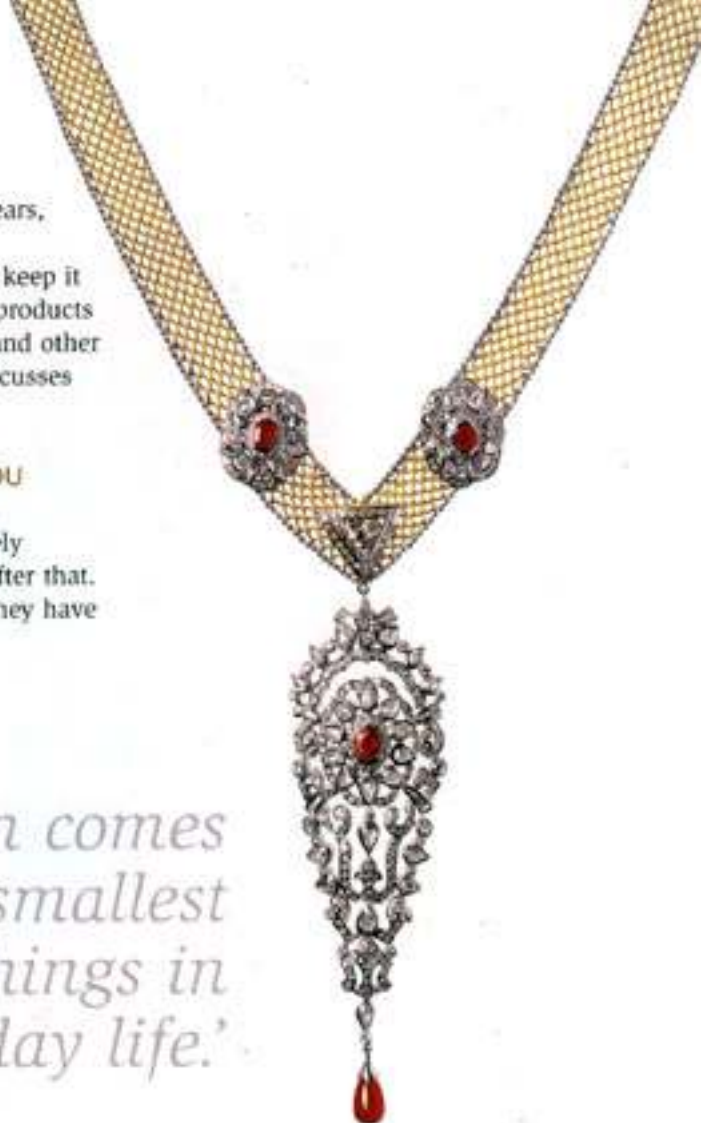
evolved as it was very well organised. The only sad part was the rains but it wasn't really their fault! The only area of improvement has to be the convention center. Everything else was absolutely fantastic — whether it was food arrangements or the toilet facilities, it was world class. They advertised so well at JCK and other shows abroad.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TASTES OF YOUR INDIAN AND NRI CLIENTELE?

There's a definite difference between tastes here and abroad. The NRI's don't want something that's too spread out. They look for something very tasteful, classy and dainty with elegant designs, which is more western in concept and more angular stuff as compared to floral motifs.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT TRENDS FOR THIS SEASON?

The long earrings are very much in vogue. Bracelets, lose and broader ones. Chokers are back again. Rose cut diamonds have been taking over quite a bit. The 24-faceted ones look very nice because it gives a superb shine.



WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PLANS FOR THE STUDIO?

We expect to have a studio in North Mumbai. Many clients would appreciate something there, so that's an immediate plan. Of course, having a presence in other cities too is in the pipeline.

