

WHAT'S IN A STONE?



Pavan Anand, Designer, Creative Director and Founder of Dagmar Jewellery talks to *Time 'n Style* about all things jewelled

BY ALISHA FERNANDES



Pavan Anand, Designer, Creative Director and Founder of Dagmar Jewellery

Hailing from an affluent family of professionals in South Mumbai, Pavan Anand is a professional architect whose passion lay in jewellery. A quest to realise his vision resulted in the founding of Dagmar, an internationally-renowned jewellery brand. His sense of structure and aesthetics acquired through his education in architecture has allowed him to create a global presence within a relatively short span of time, and he's only moving forward.

Excerpts from the interview

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER YOUR PASSION FOR JEWELLERY?

Well, I am an aesthete and have always been drawn to design and style elements, from perhaps the age of 10. I was always a very curious observer when it came to jewels. Attending the rigorous five year architecture program was one of the best things I could have ever done. It was a very productive, distilling and disciplining journey, especially from a creative point of reference. I never really left architecture, I simply extended myself onto another canvas; the canvas being jewellery. It was an extremely easy and spontaneous decision at the time. It just felt like the right thing to do and I have had no reason to regret that decision in any way, whatsoever.

WHAT DOES THE BRAND STAND FOR?

I sensed a certain gap in the market, with some earth-shatteringly priced fine jewellery, as well as some really inexpensive poor quality products at the other end of the spectrum. The entire

middle segment was missing at the time. That's when I decided to create a collection that stood for my version of 'affordable luxury', and that's what the Dagmar label stands for. It represents effortlessly exquisite pieces of jewellery crafted with materials that allow for great opulence, without costing the sun and the moon. However, in no way is the brand inexpensive or cheap. Another essential aspect of the brand and my personal endeavour has been to represent the Indian jewellery aesthetic globally with as much élan as any international brand.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO SHIFT THE FOCUS OF CONSUMERS FROM TRADITIONAL GOLD AND GET THEM TO APPRECIATE ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS AND SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES?

As in any design or entrepreneurial venture, the most imperative feature is uniqueness. I think once you design something novel, patrons will gravitate towards it. I'd like to believe that happened with Dagmar, globally. Customers that typically buy precious metals from an investment perspective were investing in my pieces owing to its novel sensibility and design tone.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS FROM RETAILING IN INDIA TO EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA?

The business aspect of any design venture can be dynamic if one makes the right associations for the product. I recollect the first collection I showcased was at the time a really cutting-edge line for the country. It





was an ensemble of very feminine, yet regal pieces of rose-cut diamonds and semi-precious stones set against soft suede and goat hair. Stores like Ensemble and Ogaan, among others, stocked the line. I also had a poignant desire to take India to the world and not in an understated and sheepish manner, but with a bang and with confidence. I began to seek out the right brand representative for my collections in the West, starting with the U.S. We now have over 21 global offices and we are also probably one of the only Indian designer brands to have our own shows twice a year on the Toronto Shopping Channel.

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

The essential inspiration comes from antiquity the world over, be it Persia, Egypt, Spain, France, and so on. Yet despite that, the philosophy is to ensure each piece looks very relevant. The antiquity is just a whiff that dictates the form, but the textures, tone and overall appeal are very current. My endeavour has always been to ensure that Dagmar pieces look as immaculate on Indian attire as they do when worn over a white shirt in Manhattan. I was more than excited when the Versace representatives in Jakarta requested my line as the 'jewellery associate' for their show last year.

My target audience comprises women of any age and nationality, living anywhere in the world, but with an impeccable sense of style. Chances are that she is a world traveller with many passions. She, much like the jewellery, is very current and lives in the now!

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Every international representation that we set up for the brand feels like an achievement. My participation at the New York and Jakarta Fashion Weeks were really productive. Being at the Toronto Film Festival and talking to Edward Norton who loved the jewellery was great as well. The strongest compliment for me, as the Creative Director of the brand, was to have had the opportunity to do a showing with Versace and to have my pieces featured in *O*, Oprah's magazine.

WHAT MAKES YOUR BRAND STAND OUT IN A MARKET WHICH IS POPULATED WITH JEWELLERY BRANDS?

I think most successful brands find their own growing list of patrons based on their aesthetic. Being in the luxury segment, I have never been intimidated by other labels. In fact, we often see copies of our designs, but I think of it as a good sign.



YOU'VE DRESSED MANY HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES...

Yes, I've been fortunate to have some globally celebrated women embrace our work. I have never aggressively pursued that though. Recently, I did some pieces for a member of the royal family in Morocco. It's a wonderful feeling when an association like that does occur. Most recently, I put together some pieces for Goldie Hawn. She and I both share a deep inclination for emerald green, so I designed a 28-carat green quartz ring for her with a matching 52-carat Egypt-inspired green quartz necklace.

FROM WHERE DO YOU DRAW YOUR INSPIRATION?

Inspiration is everywhere! You just need eyes and mind to see and process it. Over the years I have been inspired by history, antiquity and travel. They create a very robust mix of ideas in terms of form, colour and direction. In fact, I have even titled my collections after locations that have moved me, such as 'Nefertiti', 'Memoirs of Ibiza', 'Marrakesh' and earlier this year, 'The Upper East'. However, my most recent Fall-Winter 2012 line was based on intangible references. The collection is dedicated to those untapped and unexplored parts of our personality that we leave out and forget as we spend our lives playing many roles. **tlr**

