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# EDITION

MAGAZINE

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# TAYMA



Tayma Page Allies is a British designer of fine jewellery who established her individual brand of exotic gems in Hong Kong 25 years ago – with no stock, no backers, no Chinese language skills, and no official premises. Today her luxurious shop in the former British colony's prestigious Prince's Building opposite the Mandarin Oriental hotel rubs shoulders with the likes of Van Cleef and Arpels, Bulgari, Cartier and Chanel as the only independent boutique jewellery maker designing handmade, unique pieces crafted from wax mould to silver and then finally gold.

Integrity of the product is the core DNA of the brand with each gemstone personally sourced by Tayma and each with a clear provenance and independent gemmological certificate. Over the years she has established access to suppliers of the best gemstones in the world, including lapidaries and mine-owners with archives of rough crystals from old or closed mines. Thus a newly-cut TAYMA gemstone could be from a mine which has been closed for 50 years. She has also introduced rare and exotic gemstones to the Hong Kong market: Rubellite tourmaline in 1995; Watermelon tourmalines in 1997; Paraiba tourmaline in 2005, and Spessartite garnet in 2007.

According to Tayma: "My favourite clients are professional women who treat themselves to a gift of jewellery to celebrate a bonus, a milestone, a new job, a personal anniversary etc. They go to a party wearing their TAYMA piece which starts a conversation...which leads to a relationship...which leads to an engagement...they become

more interesting as their style and taste is admired. It's happened many times that TAYMA jewellery has changed someone's life."

Because TAYMA designs with unique, carefully selected coloured gemstones and pearls, it is impossible to copy the original creation, even if the mounting can be copied. "Most imitators copy because they want to offer a cheaper product but an imitation is always a poor comparison because I use only the best diamonds, quality gold, and experienced goldsmiths – and I never cut corners. Sometimes I remake a ring four times to ensure its perfection...quality and integrity is the core of my business.

My jewellery is treasured and handed down with pride as an original TAYMA. The competition have access to my designs (through my calendars, for instance) and often try to reproduce them – but the jewels I use for my designs are unique and irreplaceable – a pair is rare!"

TAYMA had an international upbringing and early work experience included schooling in Trinidad, Malta and the UK and teaching in Lagos and Nigeria. After work experience in the events/conference industry in Russia and China (which saw her travelling to Beijing in 1985 in the days when a blue-eyed blonde British single girl was still a novelty), she ended up in Hong Kong "with one navy blazer, £50, a return ticket and small suitcase – nowhere to live, and no job" She then got a job with a local corporate PR agency handling clients such as the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group.

One day whilst working, she "noticed a jewellery company in the same building so I knocked on the door and convinced them to

let me in and ended up designing three rings. Two weeks later I went out to lunch with two girlfriends and got two orders on the spot. That led to me to me designing Gretel Packer's (Kerry Packer's daughter) engagement ring. I kept the day PR job but found I was increasingly designing jewellery for friends."

In 1990 she set up Tayma Page & Associates when she won a contract to organise fashion shows in China for French fashion house Montagut incorporating models, choreography, advertising, promotion, venue, lighting etc. She spent three years organising shows in Beijing, Dalian and Shanghai then realised that "70% of my time was spent on fashion shows for 30% return and 30% time on jewellery for 70% return".

In HK at that time, it was possible to find hand-workers and goldsmiths to make rings and earrings for very little cost "so I spent every weekend re-designing my 21st birthday aquamarine and diamond ring and making pieces for myself... all my friends (like Annabel Heseltine) loved them and asked me to make some for them. I was really taken with freshwater pearls, in those days they looked like coloured Rice Crispies, so I had an old local man who went to a farm in China to buy the best quality for me. With these I designed beautiful extra-long multi-strands of seed pearls to wear as necklaces and bracelets, interchangeable to five different styles. I always had one round my neck and one in my bag. People loved those pearls and are still wearing them today. It was this "seed" pearl money of about HK\$10,000 (£1,000 today) that paid for my gemmology lessons and with which I was able to buy my first gemstones."

After studying gemmology for four years, TAYMA decided to concentrate on jewellery full time and opened a small shop in Lan Kwai Fong in Central Hong Kong. She was just 30 when she established her own business.

In the early days, TAYMA was a one-man-band... "doing round-the-world trips on United and BA Concorde to take in the main trunk shows in LA, San Francisco, New York, London, Paris, South of France in the summer. My sister worked for ABC News in London, so I went to ABC, CNN in New York and sold jewellery to many presenters and producers like Barbara Walters, etc."

For TAYMA's loyal clientele, nothing is too much trouble: "A man rang the other day from China: it was his wife's birthday the next day and she was in Thailand. He wanted to choose a gift, send his friend to the shop in HK to pick up the jewellery and his friend would fly to Thailand and meet the husband there. We looked at our records, saw what he had purchased for her in 2008 and knew exactly what his wife would like – then we emailed five suggestions, and he selected one and within 24 hours his wife had lovely opal and diamond earrings from TAYMA for her birthday in Phuket!"

"On another occasion, a girl rang from London as she was getting engaged she wanted a diamond. She had researched on our website and told me exactly what she wanted. I found three diamonds for her to choose from. She arrived from London on the Saturday morning, came to the shop, chose her diamond and we designed and hand-made the ring within six hours and she flew out at 7 pm delighted!"

www.taymajewellery.com