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TAYMA PAGE ALLIES

such as tourmaline, rubellite and aquamarine. She undertook gemmology training, attending evening classes at the house of a fellow expat and sitting her exams among the boys of a school in Kowloon.

The Chinese love of more expensive metals and stones meant Ms Page Allies had to turn to the expat market, flush with earnings from the so-called “hardship postings” of westerners sent there by the colonial UK government and multinational groups.

“The business was founded on expats,” says Ms Page Allies, recalling her first sale to two women she lunched with. She found it easy to join elevated expat social circles, becoming a regular at the parties of the embassy circuit. “It was like Disneyland,” she says. “In our era, you knew everybody from top to bottom and it was led by the colonial Brits.”

The scene did not last for ever. In 1997, the UK [transferred sovereignty](#) of Hong Kong to the Chinese: “It stopped in 1997 on the dot,” she says.



Tayma Page Allies of Tayma Fine Jewellery

Now the Chinese wield such spending power that jewellers are keen to tailor their collections accordingly. Instead of Ms Page Allies’ rare and expensive semi-precious gemstones (a term she is not fond of), demand grew for diamonds and fine jade. Chinese jewellery designer Dickson Yewn, who started working for private clients in 1995, says that “the Chinese are crazy for jewellery and value-keeping commodities due to the past 300 years of social instability.”

Mainland Chinese consumers have become ever more powerful in Hong Kong as travel regulations have relaxed. The Individual Visit Scheme was introduced in 2003, allowing personal travel, and in 2016 there were 42.8m travellers from China, up from 6.8m in 2002, according to the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

Mr Chan believes this has had an enormous effect on the Hong Kong jewellery market: “With the rising living standard of consumers and a change of taste due to the western influences, luxury jewellery brands from Europe and America have bloomed alongside local jewellery brands to satisfy the demand of both traditional Chinese customers and those who prefer western styles.”