

# Designers make unique pieces

Coloured stones and other materials are used to satisfy customers' demands for individuality, writes **Bernice Chan**



Tayma Page Allies says she designs around 'unusual or fabulous' coloured stones for a unique touch.

**J**ewellery pieces are the result of translating ideas into reality, a long process that requires patience, discerning taste, experience and knowledge. Each designer has his or her own approach.

Using coloured stones, each piece is unique, depending on the colour and shape. They are not classified like diamonds and are rare, each cut different to bring out the stone's sparkle.

For Hong Kong-based Tayma Page Allies, of Tayma Fine Jewellery, the inspiration starts with the stone. "The stones are the star, and I design around them," she explains.

The design process starts with buying the stones. She looks for stones that are "unusual or fabulous", but it is really the colour that catches her interest.

"Diamonds have a lack of colour, but with coloured stones there's something special about the colour. You can have peacock green or blue, powder pink or hot pink," says the creative director in her shop at

## CREATIVITY

Prince's Building. By handling the stones, she immediately sees the design possibilities, be it a ring or necklace, bracelet or brooch. She tries to match the stones for colour combinations, but she says this is a difficult task, particularly with earrings as both pieces must be cut from the same stone.

She then has the jewellery setters make each piece by hand, working around the stone rather than making the stone fit a mould.

"They need to know the different heat temperatures for each stone," Page Allies says.

Changes are made along the way, and she says it's all about proportion, the width of the band compared with the width of the stone.

As a general rule, the more expensive the gemstone, the more simple the setting. Some pieces of jewellery can be finished in two weeks, while others can take up to a year.

"A lot of the jewellery I see is formulaic," Page Allies says. "I get great satisfaction seeing customers wearing my pieces. Some of them are art pieces. Coloured stones are so personal, so we try to advise clients on what looks good for them."

Jewellery pieces by French designer Sarah Besnainou are created through her imagination. The founder of Etername was recently in Hong Kong to launch her jewellery line at Lane Crawford in IFC Mall. She explains she designs mainly for herself with the aim to create luxe products.

"When I wake up in the morning and I'm dressing, there's always something missing," she says. "Sometimes it's a pair of earrings or



Etername Argan earrings of onyx, white diamonds and white gold

a cuff or a necklace." While she admits these bursts of inspiration don't come to her every day, she will dedicate periods of time focusing on, say, earrings for a month or two, followed by cuffs or necklaces.

"I need to have contact with people, and I travel to give me ideas."

She admits she's the worst salesperson for her brand because she would never sell pieces she doesn't like.

Only when she has decided exactly what she wants does Besnainou take her ideas to her studio, where artisans source the stones and transform her concepts into reality. This can take from four weeks to a year.

Some of her favourite materials are titanium, enamel, wood, a royal blue stone called tanzanite and deep red rubellite. "I design for the look of a person that makes them feel more beautiful, more feminine, more sexy and glamorous," she says.

When she works with clients for one-off pieces, she usually gives them a series of questions such as



French designer Sarah Besnainou



Etername Lune ring

the Proust Questionnaire to get a better picture of their likes and dislikes. Finding individual taste is also something Page Allies observes with clients in Hong Kong.

"There's been a shift in the last three years, with a lot of interest from Hong Kong ladies who were originally looking for whatever everyone else had but now want something different." No doubt many look to her for unique jewellery pieces.

Pariba host stone and clover pendant from Tayma Fine Jewellery