

# LUCKY CHARM

Talisman jewellery of the unmissable kind is becoming a favoured method of self-expression for a brave new world. By Jonah Waterhouse.



**OF ALL THE** unique accoutrements we layer on our bodies, jewellery is arguably the most personal. Whether an understated pearl pendant, or vividly coloured decorative earrings, the regalia we wear speaks volumes about our personality.

But while an elegant necklace may seem like a sensible choice, recent jewellery trends reflect investments in individuality, eschewing the idea of a 'safe' purchase. Specifically, talisman-style necklaces and brooches with large pendants dominated runways for autumn/winter '22/'23, from coaster-sized silver worn around the neck at Chanel to thick, crystal-adorned amulets at Alexander McQueen. Gabriela Hearst's monochromatic clothing at Chloé was complemented by chunky heart-shaped locket necklaces, with the charming addition of miniature keyholes. It bears wondering whether a life-altering pandemic has unlocked a new desire for self-expression among wearers, leading to jewellery of the more personal variety.

"It takes a strong person to wear big jewellery," says Los Angeles-based jewellery designer Sophie Buhai. After starting her brand in 2015, the Parsons graduate has become known for her distinguishable necklaces, many of which fashion onyx and jasper into striking shapes. "By choosing to wear a heavy piece of hand-carved carnelian around your neck, you're saying a lot about yourself," she adds. "It's very different from wearing an emerald."

Buhai's pieces convey different meanings for different wearers, but the necklaces from UK-based brand Alighieri are more descriptive in their connotations. Inspired by the Italian poet Dante Alighieri, each solid or plated silver or gold pendant carries a story unique to its wearer. Astrological sign necklaces are handcrafted from recycled materials so that no two are the same, while others bear affirmations in visual form; the 'Snow Lion' necklace, for example, was created by founder Rosh Mahtani as "a reminder to myself, to be strong in moments of self-doubt".

Mahtani says Alighieri was created during a difficult period in her life, and tells *Vogue*, "I hope that the stories that accompany each talisman invite the wearer to delve deeper into their own emotions, and to gain strength from them."

It's little wonder Alighieri's necklaces have gained popularity in what have been a few wrought years. The brand is singled out by Tanika Wisdom, buyer at Matches Fashion, as having a noticeable uptake among those that offer talisman-style jewellery, alongside Diane Kordas and Retrouvaï. As for stones resonating with customers, Wisdom highlights citrine and smoky quartz. "Interestingly, both in different shades of brown," she says. "Yellow, rose and white gold has had a resurgence, but we've seen them used in a more modern, elevated way, mixed to create contrasting designs."

Beautiful gemstones become immeasurably more special when they carry meaning. This is something Harry Pickering, creative director of Sydney jewellery brand Loki Patera, is aware of when designing the brand's fantastical pendants. Incorporating the likes of pearls and white sapphire to create striking and unconstrained jewellery, each piece is designed to last years, and even longer in the memory.

"We as humans love to ascribe meaning to everything in our lives ... it makes living so much richer," Pickering says. "Objects become wrapped in stories, carried with us, prayed to, symbolised as a moment in time, gifted to a lover, and passed on to our kin. Little carriers of our past, and vessels for our tomorrow."