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AUGUST 2019

On Jewellery

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VANITY FAIR ON JEWELLERY AUGUST 2019



Profile
By Annabel Davidson

Off the Cuff Jeweller Diane Kordas is reinventing wrist candy with the launch of her sustainable collection

When Diane Kordas gets excited about something, you know about it. This is not a designer who likes to pretend that she's above it all, nor one who takes herself too seriously. So when she explains how her first truly sustainable collection came about, this leggy London-based American jeweller is as enthusiastic in the telling of the story as she is about the pieces themselves.

"I always wanted to do something sustainable, particularly something that reflected my passion for the ocean," Kordas explains, sitting cross-legged on the sofa in her Kensington showroom. "I was that mom who had her kids spend hours picking rubbish off the beach, and wanted to combine two of my passions: jewellery and cleaning up our precious oceans."

Alas, it wasn't to be because the charity she most wanted to work with already had a jewellery item. So it was back to the drawing board. As is so often the case, the closed door that she found herself in front of was replaced by an open one, but in a rather unexpected way. It was at the Sonia Rykiel show in Paris that she first came across the work of The Sustainable Angle, a non-profit organisation dedicated to lowering the environmental footprint of the textiles industry. Kordas was stunned by their alternatives to traditional leather; by-products from other industries like commercial salmon fishing or ostrich farming, apple or banana growing.

"I was blown away by this stuff. The salmon skin leather is the softest, most



Clockwise from left: Diane Kordas; ostrich, the skin of which Kordas uses as an alternative to traditional leather; pale gold leather cuff from the new Diane Kordas collection



amazing skin, and it's a by-product," she says excitedly. "The ostrich skin is literally discarded by farms in South Africa."

And so the Diane Kordas fully sustainable cuff collection was born, a concise range of boldly scaled cuffs to be worn with jeans and a rolled up shirt sleeve, or to add a warrior edge to a red carpet look. The first series of cuffs are made from discarded ostrich skins from South African farms, dyed with

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organic, chrome-free dyes in pale gold, silver, and deep, forest green. From the water-based, non-toxic glue that binds the leather together to the recycled leather shavings that reinforce it, each cuff is made from 100 per cent traceable materials, including recycled, audited eco silver and conflict-free diamonds.

"We decided to use eco silver to reach a larger audience in terms of price point," Kordas explains. "But, as part of our next phase, we are also planning to use eco gold."

With 20 per cent of Kordas' profits going back to The Sustainable Angle, and Kordas' energy and passion for sustainability in general, this is just the beginning. ■



DC DAVIES (CUFF); DIANE KORDAS (PORTRAIT); ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (OSTRICH)