

Introducing expatriate Anna-Mieke Anderson, founder of the Portland, Oregon company MiaDonna & Company®, an innovative, earth-friendly jewellery company offering the latest in man-made diamond and gem alternatives.

**How long have you lived in the United States and who do you share your home in Portland, Oregon, with?** I share my home with my two gorgeous children, Mia and Tyler and my German shepherd, Berkley. I have lived here for about 14 years now. Ironically, Oregon is very similar to New Zealand, so it was not a hard transition.

**When and how did MiaDonna & Company evolve?** After discovering the origin of my own earth-mined diamond ring, I set out to find a conflict free diamond. I soon found that the only true conflict free diamond was a man-made option. Most people don't know that we can now make diamonds in a modern-day lab environment, that are more beautiful and affordable than earth-mined diamonds, without the conflict that is associated with getting them out of the earth. Thus, MiaDonna & Company® was born.

**Where does the name MiaDonna come from?** The name MiaDonna® came from my daughter's name Mia and my mother's name Donna. Together they can be translated "My beautiful lady," which is a fitting description of the products MiaDonna® offers.

**Describe MiaDonna's business activities.** Our mission is to provide consumers an affordable diamond alternative and to create the highest quality, most beautiful, eco-friendly fine jewellery available, while helping repair the lives and the land damaged by the unethical conflict diamond industry. Our vision is to create a greener diamond culture by being the world leader in modern-day, ethically-produced fine jewellery.

**Where is your jewellery crafted?** We handcraft everything in the USA. All our jewellery is made to order at the highest standards available. This is the only way to ensure our jewellery is conflict free. It does take longer to do it this way, but our prices

are still very competitive.

**What is your role in the company? And what do your responsibilities include?** I am the CEO and CFO. Basically I am the decision maker, but I have an amazing team who work really hard along side of me. I also do a lot of the creative side of things... I design rings, design photo shoots etc. I also run The Greener Diamond Foundation. That is really where my passion lies, but that is volunteer work.

**Tell us about MiaDonna's involvement with the charity foundation, The Greener Diamond.** The Greener Diamond® is the foundation of MiaDonna®. I created them together to work as a system. Every purchase at MiaDonna® passionately sponsors agricultural projects in mining provinces in Africa, through The Greener Diamond Foundation. MiaDonna® customers have already funded a 100-acre farm in Sierra Leone. This farm is run by more than 500 reformed child soldiers.

**If you hadn't become part of an earth-friendly jewellery company, is there another career you would have liked to have pursued?** I am a makeup artist by trade, specialising in special effects. That is the reason why I first came to the USA. My father was an art director for film companies and my mother was a model. It would be a delight to be doing that for a living.

**Tell us about two special/memorable things that have happened to you during your working life.** In 2010, The Greener Diamond supporter Johnny Littlefield (Designer from Extreme Makeover: Home Edition) and I visited our farm in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It was an amazing mixture of emotions, but it gave me the courage to keep on going, as I could see firsthand the progress we were making and the real problems that existed with blood diamonds. The next most memorable event



Anna-Mieke Anderson

would have been last year when MiaDonna was awarded the 18th fastest-growing private business in Oregon. That was a true honour.

**How often do you return home to New Zealand and is there something you really miss about New Zealand while living in the States?** I try to be back once a year. I miss the accent, the summers, the beaches, the food and my family. New Zealand and Australia are the greatest places in the world.

**Which is your favourite city for a bit of retail therapy?** New York! I love New York. I only ever go there for work, but I always find the time to fit in some shopping. However, I do most of my shopping online; it is super convenient and can be done in my pyjamas.

**What jewellery do you wear?** I love my MiaDonna Diamond Hybrid® stud earrings and one statement cocktail ring.

**What do you do to relax?** I switch off all electronics!

**If there were one special luxury item you would like to buy for yourself today, what would that be?** I have a cocktail ring I am thinking about designing... it would have a 3.0ct Asscher cut yellow man-made diamond (this cut and colour stone is the most stunning I have ever seen), set in a yellow gold setting with a halo of pavé set yellow diamonds. Beautiful!