

# Fair Trade Butterfly Wing Jewelry from Peru



In Lima, Peru, a group of talented jewelry artisans are hand crafting our butterfly jewelry line. Working with silver plated jewelry and sterling silver ear wires, each piece of butterfly jewelry is hand formed by the master silver-smith to make earrings, pendants and bracelets. It has taken many years for the artisans to perfect their art, ensuring that each butterfly earring is consistently the same size and shape, and that the butterfly wing patterns are selected to perfectly match. Once the silver holding has been made, acrylic glass is cut and the butterfly wings are mounted inside. Once completed, each piece of butterfly jewelry is buffed and polished until it is shiny and perfect. It is important that each artisan constantly receives training, learning new aspects of the art, so every bit of the production process and the business is known.

The butterfly wings that are used to make this jewelry come from two places. Most are collected from the warm tropical region of Peru in the Amazon basin, where they are bred in large netted enclosures. The collection of the wings is a byproduct of the breeding, which also attracts local tourism to the area and ensures bio-diversity and research of the butterfly species. The butterflies are not killed for their wings, their lifespan is usually short and they are collected when their life comes to an end, making it sustainable. It also enables the generation of income in rural Amazonian communities, which since the decline in the logging industry have suffered depression and poverty.

Other butterfly wings, to supplement those from Peru, are collected right here in the US. Butterfly houses are popular tourist destinations, as well as for releases at weddings and special functions. Silver Tree Designs is trying to establish more relationships with butterfly farms in the US to get more exotic wing colors and ensure the sustainability of this beautiful jewelry.