

Big, bold and bright on the fashion front Guelph's Pretty Chic Boutique owner shares trade secrets

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Every woman has her weakness. For my sister, it's shoes, for my grandmother, it's purses, and for me, it's jewelry, especially gold. It can be white or yellow, and it must sparkle when it hits the light. Other than that, I'm not so fussy.

Every piece of jewelry I have holds a story much like some scrapbooks; I have a piece of jewelry to signify most of the milestones in my life. So I was excited to find a hidden gem, a boutique called The Devil's Workshop, that embraces this idea. The Devil's Workshop provides people with the opportunity to make their jewelry much more personal.

The Devil's Workshop is a two-year-old jewelry boutique located on the street level of the historic Chocolate Lofts in Toronto.

The Devil's Workshop is centred on the idea of providing people with workshops in which they can make jewelry.

And I am not talking about monotonously stringing beads and voila! A dreary day doing something absolutely dreadful.

Here, you have the opportunity to live a day in the life of a goldsmith. How intriguing. And I have something even more intriguing.

To all those couples out there who have had long engagements waiting for the missing piece: This is it.

Or at least, it is for me, after a six year engagement. The Devil's Workshop has a wedding band workshop taking place every Saturday from noon to 6 p.m.

Participants make the rings from scratch, measuring, cutting, shaping and polishing.

The materials available are silver and gold, and after the rings are finished, participants have the opportunity to have a stone set into the ring or options such as mill grain. Then you get to take your rings home with you!

The workshop costs \$275 per couple, plus the cost of materials, which can range from \$60 to \$500 per ring, depending on the materials used.

However, there's a catch. This workshop is very popular, so you have to book your spot a month or two in advance. But how special is that? To have your wedding band made by the one you love?

There's another workshop worth noting for the big day: it is a bridesmaids jewelry party. You can book a free consultation to choose your styles and colours then you can book a Friday evening for the party.

TRENDS FOR 2008

Recently, I asked Corin Comisky, owner of Pretty Chic Boutique in Guelph, some questions to find out about styles and trends in jewelry this year.

Q: What is going to be in style for this spring/summer 2008?

A: This season, "more is more," as opposed to "less is more."

Big, bold, bright colours are in style for spring/summer 2008. And the bigger the better.

You will see lots of oranges, yellows, emerald greens, purples and corals.

Big, thick bangles -- and two or three at the same time, in the various colours. Thick, bold cuffs, too.

Also popular this season will be multiple gold bangles. You will see big, chunky necklaces in vibrant colours. Look for big hoop earrings, or long dangle earrings. Big cocktail rings are back. It's going to be a colourful spring.

Q: You carry a Canadian brand that has been picked up by Holt Renfrew. Can you tell me a bit more about them?

A: I have one designer at the moment who was picked up by Holt Renfrew, Dandi Meastre (www.dandimaestre.com).

She is located in Toronto, and works out of her beautiful home on Spadina Road.

She specializes in oversized, fashionably ethnic accessories and only works in raw materials: horn, amber, seeds, shells, etc.

Her designs are bold and exciting and the textures she chooses to work with are fabulously interesting. And big is in.

Q: What is in style for bridal jewelry this year?

A: The colour trend is pink and brown.

Brides are using their accessories to add a splash of colour to their overall appearance -- jewelry, shoes, sashes around their waists, hair accessories.

The accessory trend is custom. Brides want the opportunity and flexibility to have unique pieces that will work for them and all the women in their bridal party. They want their personalities to shine through in every detail.

Pretty Chic Boutique will be carrying a Bridal line designed by glamjulz.

Each piece is handmade with glass, crystal and semi-precious stones.

Designer Monica Graves has created a beautiful line where brides can actually pick the colour of their beads to match their gowns and bridal party dresses.

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