



Play the age card

Knowing your demographic can help seal the deal for jewelers.

BY LORRAINE DEPASQUE

LDEPASQUE@OPTONLINE.NET

NEW YORK—Despite the conventional wisdom that “age doesn’t matter,” NATIONAL JEWELER’S recent interviews with select luxury retailers from Silicon Valley to suburban New Jersey confirmed that in this economy, it does. Below, we describe how jewelers are catering to top demographics.

THE TEEN SCENE

After expanding Nancy and David Fine Jewels in the tony suburb of Millburn, N.J., two years ago and building a “teen boutique,” co-owner David Stone says he and his wife Nancy have increased sales to the 13- to 19-year-old set “by 1,000 percent.”

So what do those texting and tweeting teens want?

“Colored stone jewelry with pavé diamond accents, colored stone briolette pendants with a diamond bale, peace sign motifs and, most of the time, 14-karat white gold,” Stone says. “At \$36 to \$1,500, it’s the lowest-priced merchandise in our store, but it introduces us to future customers.”

Dorfman Jewelers in Boston met teens on their turf too, with the 2004 launch of Dorfman Sterling, now carried in some 75 U.S. stores. Teens favor silver hearts on chains or cords and anything inscribed, says Gerard Riveron, Dorfman’s executive director.

20-SOMETHING STYLE

Nestled in the heart of Silicon Valley, Joe Escobar Diamonds in Campbell, Calif., serves 20-something engineer and venture capitalist types in the know, “so we try to stay on the pulse of what’s going on,” says

Stacey Escobar, store vice president.

Four products are key right now—pavé, platinum, cushion cuts and rounds—and white gold reigns over yellow by a percentage of at least 70 to 30, Escobar says.

In bridal, cushions (including in color) and round diamond center stones are red hot.

For the 20-ish crowd at Weston Jewelers in Weston, Fla., three earring styles—chandeliers, diamond hoops and peace sign drops—outshine them all, says Tracey Geffin Dikes, co-owner and president.

Stone cites lever back drop earrings, particularly, as the top-selling earring for those ages 25 up to around the mid-50s.

FABULOUS AT 30, 40 AND 50

Self-purchasing women in their 30s, 40s and 50s are crucial for jewelers like Twist owner Paul Schneider, whose Portland, Ore., flagship store is near world headquarters for Nike, Adidas and many ad agencies.

“It’s a big area for creativity, attracting some of the sharpest minds in the country,” Schneider says. “So that’s who we’re selling to.”

Silver, especially blackened, is selling well, as is high-karat gold by the likes of Gurhan and Yossi Harari.

Gemstone and diamond customers also snap up rose cuts, with colored diamonds a common band choice for previously married brides. Older brides also like understated rings



Clockwise from top: Sandy Leong’s 18-karat white gold commitment rings with champagne or green diamonds; suggested retail prices (left to right): \$3,000, \$1,200 and \$2,000; (646) 725-3336 or SandyLeong.com. Yvel South Sea pearl necklace in 18-karat gold with 16.55 carats of natural cognac diamonds; (310) 860-0041 or Yvel.com. Gumuchian 18-karat white and yellow gold earrings with 1.21 carats of diamonds; suggested retail price is \$5,600; (800) 223-0774 or Gumuchian.com. Diana Widman Design cuffs with diamonds; suggested retail prices are \$10,000 for 14-karat yellow gold, \$5,000 for palladium; (847) 235-1686 or WidmanDesign.com. FuFu Fine Jewelry’s 14-karat white gold and diamond peace sign earrings; suggested retail price is \$614; (877) 795-1713 or FuFu.com.

with matte and hammered finishes, included stones, and odd and old cuts, as well as anything nature-inspired.

Weston, in a bedroom community for Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Miami, also sells to the 30-ish to 50-ish set.

“The big cuff and the big ring are both so hot, especially the statement cuff for women in their 30s and 40s—but also in their 20s,” Geffin Dikes says. “Dramatically sized fashion rings without gemstones, too.”

WHAT OLDER WOMEN WANT

Trends matter somewhat for a 60-ish demographic that eyes trendsetters like Susan Sarandon or Goldie Hawn—but so does the region in which they live.

“I sell a lot of important pearl necklaces and, in this category, golden South Sea pearl necklaces have been a favorite,” says Riveron of his conservative customer base in Boston.

“So, too, has moonstone jewelry.”

At Weston Jewelers, older women buy multiples of wide bangles from Roberto Coin’s “Capri Plus Collection,” particularly in wood and gold.

At Nancy and David, 60-plus women are key purchasers of important diamond necklaces, diamond studs—2.5 to 3 carats per ear—and new engagement rings that often involve swapping rounds and pears for 5- to 8-carat emerald and cushion cuts on new micro-pavé bands.

“I call it ‘the new classic mounting’ as opposed to ‘the traditional classic mounting,’” Stone says. “Customers often ask me if this is going to go out of style and I tell them no, it’s timeless.”



Lorraine DePasque is a freelance writer who specializes in fine jewelry and gems.



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