

# Pink gold has rosy outlook for holidays

By Lorraine DePasque

**NEW YORK**—When it comes to “What’s new?” for the holidays, rose gold is the red-hot response.

Numerous factors, from the metal’s flattering effects on the skin tones of women 40 and older to a rising interest in rose gold watches, foretell a rose gold resurgence in the making, perhaps one that is unmatched since its wild popularity in the first half of the 20th century.

Experts say copper-alloyed gold has just begun to trend with consumers and will most likely hit its stride this holiday in trendier regions at price points in the mid to high range.

“It’s definitely showing signs of becoming more interesting in the market,” says Andrea Hansen, H. Stern’s international communications director. In 2009, the world-renowned luxury jeweler will introduce a rose and red gold collection—distinct from its proprietary 18-karat “Noble Gold,” which was launched in 2003 and reigns as a top seller in H. Stern’s U.S. stores.

“At this point, rose gold’s popularity probably wouldn’t be a great seller in the very, very high end, say over \$100,000, because when people make such an expensive purchase, they won’t necessarily go with a trend,” Hansen says.

Duvall O’Steen, public relations and promotion director of the World Gold Council, says rose gold is on the rise but it remains a small percentage of the overall gold market so far.

“It is being led by jewelry designers at the higher end,” O’Steen says. “To date, fashion designers are not using a lot of it on the runways, but perhaps that’s because it isn’t as prevalent and easy for them to get as yellow and white gold jewelry.”

All that may change—and very soon. More designers are getting into rose, with numerous debuts at the summer trade shows in Las Vegas and New York. Plus, there’s a new color reality in fashion.

Internationally recognized fashion, color and trend forecaster David Wolfe, creative director for The Doneger Group, New York, says rose gold jewelry is the perfect complement to fashion’s soft new shades for fall/winter and spring/summer, which are replacing the brights, neutrals and black.

“We certainly haven’t had pretty, soft, feminine color in fashion for almost a decade,” Wolfe says. “That’s over. The new soft colors—pinks, lavenders, mauves, blues and turquoises—are calming. They’re a bit like tranquilizers for the current psychological mood of the times, heightened and fragile with worries about the economy, the environment and the war.”

Medical esthetician and celebrity makeup artist Joanna Rolleczeck, owner of Jadwig European Skin Care salon in Cedar Grove, N.J., says softer color palettes are particularly complementary to women over

40, whose skin tends to grow sal-low and more yellow over time because of hormonal changes.

“The skin becomes much more dehydrated, so the pigment changes,” Rolleczeck says, adding that environment, medication and lifestyle can also play a role.

Echoing many jewelry designers, Brooklyn, N.Y.-based goldsmith Annie Fensterstock says that, in the last year, retail clients on both coasts are requesting more 18-karat rose and 22-karat red gold, with one store asking her for a whole collection of pink gold rings.

“Store owners tell me they want to stock up on something fresh and new in their cases,” she says. “I really believe the enthusiasm of these retailers will trickle down to the consumers very soon—by the end of this year and into 2009.”

Christensen & Rafferty Fine Jewelry, just outside San Francisco, is also seeing growing interest in rose gold.

“Our customers are asking, ‘What do you have in rose gold?’ not ‘What is rose gold?’” says Colleen Rafferty, the store’s co-owner. “That is happening a lot more today than last year, in part because the upscale magazines are saturated with coverage on it and certainly because the designers themselves are promoting it.”

Rafferty and others point out that a shift among numerous watch brands toward the once-retro metal has driven interest in rose

gold jewelry to match watches.

“High-end rose gold watches—the men call it red, not rose—seem to be driving the rose gold jewelry category,” says California-based jewelry designer Sarah Graham. “We’re selling a lot of red band-style men’s rings because my customers are asking for it—especially on the East and West Coasts.”

Still, retailers in conservative locales are proceeding with caution.

Brian Alter, managing owner of Alter’s Gem Jewelry in Beaumont, Texas, wears a tricolor Rolex and a tricolor ring

era, it’s new to most of the customers in this region.”

Scott Rudd, owner of luxury store Scheherazade Jewelers in Edina, Minn., has a similar perspective.

“In our experience in our Midwest market, it is clearly for the sophisticated customer,” Rudd says. “So here, I see the opportunities for selling rose gold with unique artists that will appeal to our upscale customers.”

For that high-end niche, Rudd stocks rose gold and diamond bracelets by Lecil Henderson in the \$6,000 to \$15,000 range. For clients reluctant to wear rose gold with their existing yellow or white

## TIPS > for selling more rose gold jewelry

■ Encourage—delicately and with finesse—your 40-plus customers to try rose gold earrings, as skin experts say the tone helps to warm up complexions.

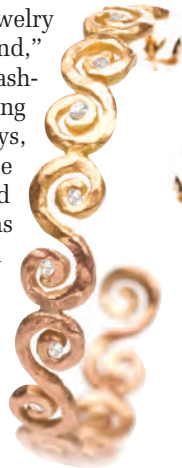
■ Recommend rose gold mixed with white gold or platinum to your more sophisticated, cutting-edge clients.

■ Suggest rose gold charms—either for bracelets or neck chains—as gifts to instantly

update older, monochromatic gold jewelry.

■ Make sure consumers—particularly self-purchasers—know they can buy a rose gold pendant for a yellow or white gold chain, making for an additional look.

■ Merchandise rose gold designs together in one prominent showcase, perhaps highlighting signage depicting it as what’s new, special and fashion-forward.



Gintare Jewelry’s handmade 18-karat rose gold rings features rare quartz-on-quartz center stones and diamond accents; suggested retail price is \$3,470. (310) 319-2419 or [www.gintarejewelry.com](http://www.gintarejewelry.com)

“Eternal Scroll Sparkle” hoops from Pamela Froman Fine Jewelry’s “Ombre Crush Collection” in 18-karat pink and yellow crushed gold with 0.70 carats of diamonds; suggested retail price is \$4,670. (323) 954-7436 or [www.pamelafroman.com](http://www.pamelafroman.com)



Dragonfly bracelet in 14-karat rose gold with turquoise beads from Jessica Fields’ “Cartouche Collection;” suggested retail price is \$1,265. (800) 231-6504 or [www.jessicafields.com](http://www.jessicafields.com)



J.R. De Bellard Fine Jewelry’s “Heart Collection” pendant in 18-karat rose gold with a 0.30-carat brilliant-cut diamond on black woven leather cord; suggested retail price is \$14,500. (877) 596-4367 or [www.jrdebellard.com](http://www.jrdebellard.com)



Annie Fensterstock Fine Jewelry’s stack of 22-karat red gold hammered bands with colorless and natural color diamonds; suggested retail price begins at \$600 for all-gold design, up to \$2,600 for ring with colorless diamonds all around. (646) 644-3223 or [www.anniefensterstock.com](http://www.anniefensterstock.com)

himself, but he doesn’t stock much rose gold jewelry, fearing his customers won’t make the color leap.

“This is a part of the country that likes consistency,” he says. “They’re comfortable with their yellow or white gold. And even though we, in the industry, know that rose gold is a throwback to another

metal wardrobes, he suggests mokume-gane bands from artist George Sawyer that are priced between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

“Mokume mixes the rose with other hues of gold, and I see it as one way to bridge the hesitations that people may have,” Rudd says. ♦

—E-mail: [ldepasque@optonline.net](mailto:ldepasque@optonline.net)