

STYLE PROFILE

I've never known a jewelry designer whose inspiration began with a fishing tackle box. Then I met Nicole Landaw. It all started when her college roommate opened a nondescript fishing case and, in it, Landaw saw what the roomie called her jewelry tools: lots of metal, gems, and half-finished pieces. "I remember asking, 'You *move* metal?'—and from that moment, I was hooked."

Landaw spent her years after college immersed in jewelry, receiving a master's in fine arts, studying old-world techniques in Germany, then working with craftspeople like John Iverson and Gabrielle Sanchez. "You first learn what the materials and techniques are, then you design. It's like learning the piano. Before you become a singer or composer, you learn the scales first."

Such a philosophy, as well as her talent, caught the attention of the American Jewelry Design Council. At the JA New York show this month, Landaw is being honored as the AJDC's new talent contest winner. It's quite a coup, considering Nicole Landaw Jewelry is only three years old. Landaw had been maintaining her own studio in New York for many years while creating private labels and working for companies like Fabrikant and Andin.

The turning point came when Hollywood called. She'd made a charm for a bracelet worn by Meg Ryan in the film, "In the Cut." A few months later, Sarah Jessica Parker wore her jewelry on "Sex and the City." "It was then that I decided to bring my own work and style out of the secrecy of my studio."

In 2004, she premiered a signature texture, creating the "Champagne" collection, featuring high-polished recessed bubbles. Her "Blossom" collection followed. Earrings are in the \$900 to \$1,100 retail range, but opening price for a stack ring is \$325, while a large bangle is \$8,800. Working primarily in yellow gold, most of the line is going toward 18k.

She explains, "I don't work with gold just because it's nice and it sparkles. I understand its history, how it works, and where it comes from. I suppose that's what really caused me to decide to become a professional creative person."

— Lorraine DePasque

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