

Creazione Privata lace-like white gold ring with rubies and diamonds



all the RAJ

FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE VICENZAORO1 FAIR (January 16-23), the message was as bright as the Tuscan sun: Italy meets India. The exotic Asian nation, edged by the waters of the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, and Arabian Sea, is having a huge impact on the newest jewelry designs from the romantic European nation bordered by the Adriatic and Mediterranean.

For one thing, the freshest jewelry collections are all about the vibrant colors of saris: strong reds, purples, oranges, blues, greens, and yellows—and, frequently enough, mixed with black. The stone to watch amid this sea of sari shades? Ruby. Its rich red is perfect for the



Pegorotto; image by Labo.it/URBAN Management



Valente "Texture" collection ring with diamonds and sapphires in red, yellow, pink, and orange



Paola Ferro necklace



Salvini serpent ring in white gold and diamonds



Micro-mosaic jewelry from **Tagliamonte**



Paolo Piovan ruby rings



Salvatore Bersani



La Nouvelle Bague enamel bangle bracelets from the "India" collection



Primavera ID charm bracelet with amethyst and citrine



Luca Carati's "Harem" collection earrings in yellow gold



Orlando Orlandini "Crystal" necklace featuring black gold accent beads



Courtesy of ABC Carpet & Home

Palmiero Jewellery Design's white gold ring from the "Mushroom" collection in black, white, and colored diamonds and many colors of sapphires



Many of the designers from these parts of the world are very fresh in their ideas."

De Luca says that the trend is really just starting next season, but it will evolve for the next five years. "This year, it's an Indian inspiration, then maybe an African tribal inspiration the following year, and so on. The Global Quake trend reflects the mobility of our society, not only physically but also virtually." Many materials are now being used to reflect Global Quake's mixing of cultures, for example, Tagliamonte's micro-mosaics.

In terms of themes, De Luca says snakes are part of the Global Quake trend—"because they were important to ancient cultures." While there was a good deal of snake-themed jewelry at VicenzaOro1 this year, to be fair, we've been seeing serpentine style from Italy over the past three years or so. But for 2005, Roberto Coin (who has done a "Cobra" line in the recent past) has a new collection, exclusive to Neiman Marcus, called "The Snake," with pavé rubies—there are those rubies again—black sapphires, and blue sapphires set in black rhodium.

In regard to color, De Luca says, "The colors are very strong in this Global Quake trend.

Nothing delicate. Eclectic, warm, strong, and interesting, giving you a baroque effect. Lots of orange, fuchsia, purple, and red. It's an extremely interesting gem palette of citrine, garnet, ruby, amethyst—often combined with pearls and black onyx."

De Luca's interpretation of how the world's politics is affecting fashion and jewelry is notable: "The things that are happening in the Eastern part of the world today are being reflected in fashion and jewelry. Think about it—after 9/11, we were forced to see cultures that we may not have looked so closely at before. For example, the news focus is on what's going on in the desert in the Middle East. So the colors in jewelry and fashion are reflecting that kind of warm weather, the sunshine, the mosques, the temples, the bazaars, the souks, the burkas and, of course, the saris."

She continues, "The return to yellow gold is also part of this Global Quake trend. Yellow gold is a warm color. New technology in jewelry manufacturing is also affecting this direction, so now we have rich-colored metals, for example, from Calgaro—also the new blue rhodium from Luca Carati and Fope's new oxidized gold."

Some of the most on-trend Italian companies have also been motivated by motifs that were typical to ancient Indian culture, for example, paisleys and snakes. Several, in fact, want us to make no mistake about the influence and, therefore, have straightforwardly given the new collections names like "Harem," "Snake," and "India."

As Italian jewelers journey through the first decade of the 21st century, who would have thought that saris, snakes, and India itself would be so intoxicating? Well, Paola De Luca, for one. De Luca is creative director for the international firm, Trends & Jewellery Forecasting, based in Arezzo, Italy. When De Luca discusses color going forward for autumn/winter and into spring 2006, she explains that, in fact, there are four co-existing conceptual macro trends affecting the fashion world—"which jewelry should follow," she says—and, for each one, the color palette is different.

That being said, however, of the macro trends, the one she refers to as "Global Quake" is the strongest. And the color palette within that trend? The India inspired shades. Here, De Luca further explains:

"In terms of finished jewelry, the colors, silhouettes, and mixes of objects is all part of what I call the Global Quake trend. In fashion and jewelry, it often mixes cultures. It's very rich, baroque, and eclectic. It can go from the influence of India to the orient express of China to the tribal of Africa. The influences are primarily Eastern—mainly India, China, and Russia—what we call 'the emerging markets.' The economies of these countries are growing and so they are really influencing fashion.



Zydo brooch from the "Blooming" collection

palette of India-indigenous hues, and every forward-thinking house in Italy seems committed to using it—at the very least, for accent.

As the next few seasons unfold, keep a watchful eye, too, on bright green jade (another ancient Asia favorite) from the fashion-directional Italian designers going for dramatic scale without ruby's dramatic price. Among the best right now is the new green jade collection from Pippo Perez.

What this ubiquitous Indian influence means in terms of metal is yellow gold, of course—high-toned yellow gold. It's often sumptuously textured to look like fabric, in designs that can best be described as upscale craftlike—evoking the ancient goldsmithing techniques of the land of Maharajas and Moghul jewels, but demonstrating the design and technological ingenuity of modern-day Italy.



Ambra Greco's yellow gold rings with carved amber

Pippo Perez carved green jade earrings in white gold

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