

JEWELRY

FINE JEWELRY FROM ITALY: BLACK, BLENDED, BIG

Despite the negative economy, new offerings from Italy's premier goldsmiths showing at the [Vicenzaoro First](#) jewelry fair in Vicenza, Italy (January 16-21) did not disappoint. Among the strongest directions to emerge were black metals and gems, tone-on-tone pieces jewelers refer to as "blended," and medium-large silhouettes. And the newest jewelry classification? The single-drop earring.

In the Black

First and foremost, Italian jewelers have gone to the dark side. Perhaps it's a bow to black as a safe colour in an unsteady economy. Still, never before has so much black surfaced from the jewelers in this Mediterranean country—in surfaces as well as in the gems themselves. Gold is often rhodium-plated for a lustrous deep effect. Add to this, black gems, most notably black diamonds and sapphires, Tahitian pearls, gray and black mother-of-pearl, and onyx. Fashion-forward houses are also showing ink-colored alternative materials like ebony, resin, and ceramic.



Fibo



Autore



Autore



Ecojewel



Dada Arrigona



Bliss

The Blend Trend

Black gems and materials set in the darkened surfaces are particularly popular, but the whole tone-on-tone look—whatever the colour—is stronger than ever. While fashion designers refer to the layering of like shades as tone on tone, jewelers in Italy talk much of matching the colour of gold to the colour of gems and call it “blended.” In addition to black-on-black, there are many yellow-hued gems in yellow gold. But, by far, the strongest blend is rose gold set with a spectrum of red/pink/blush browns. In gemstones and in enamels. *Mattioli’s* newest links, for example, feature pink and red enamel floral stations on rose gold chain. Pink sapphire is a favorite of many high-end classic companies, but the strongest blend, whether traditional or avant-garde, Champagne and roses, of course! Light pinkish-brown champagne diamonds set in rose gold—a subtle combination, as wearable as it is beautiful.



Piero Milano



Mattioli



Roberto Coin



Mattioli



Damiani



Carlo Palmiero

Bigger is Better

In spite of gold prices that continue to rise, Italy's jewelers are not shying away from bold. Even stud earrings--typically known for their diminutive size--are bigger than ever. Italian innovation is allowing the brands to go grand scale, as their proprietary technology produces pieces large but lightweight. Of course, the newest collections also frequently come with plenty of perforation to bring down the gold weight. Cutouts are everywhere: open-worked ovals, lacelike links and, in general, lots of negative space for positively powerful looks.



Vendorafa Lombardi



Ecojewel



Salvini



Piero Milano



Marco Bicego



Alfieri

Single Drops & Globes

The newest dramatically-scaled style is the one-drop earring. It's a strong silhouette, but highly wearable for day into evening. Generally, the earring is medium-large in size and the drop, typically hanging from a Euro-wire, takes the form of either a gemstone or a dangly charm element, for example, a heart or a ball.

In fact, there are many new *boule* collections, although some companies refer to the circular elements as globes or spheres. Either way, the cylindrical three-dimensional forms show up not only as drop earrings but also as stations on links or dangling from bracelets, necklaces, and rings. And whether they're created from precious metal or precious gems, they reflect the fun-loving Italian spirit that continues to pervade the newest collections amid a not-so-spirited global economy.

Key Concepts

- blackened gold
- black gemstones
- tone-on-tone pieces, especially champagne diamonds and pink gems in rose gold
- medium-large silhouettes
- balls, spheres, and globe danglers

[About J](#) in Venice, May 19-21, 2010

[Vicenzaoro Charm](#) in Vicenza, May 22-26, 2010

[Vicenzaoro Choice](#) in Vicenza, September 11-15, 2010

