

Interview



ABOVE: A symphony of precious metal and mineral defines this floral gold, turquoise and diamond danglers by Rosily Paul

TOP RIGHT: A queenly pair of pachela adorned with polki, ruby and green emeralds in 22k gold by Jewels by Preeti

FACING PAGE: Gold leaves mark out this body vine piece in yellow gold with matching earrings by Pallavi Foley

They are the leading ladies of jewellery design. Creative visionaries and feisty entrepreneurs.

From made-to-order masterpieces that embody heirloom to artfully-crafted designer collections, their jewels are exquisite sculptures of precious metal and gemstones.

In the universe of these designer-entrepreneurs, it is the unique and fine details that give a contemporary twist to an ancient art. From design concepts and the mechanics of construction to excelling in business roles, they have pushed the envelope. They have broken the glass ceiling and stormed into what was, until a few years ago, a male-dominated industry.

Pallavi Foley, Rosily Paul and Preeti Jain share their many thoughts...

Jewellers by Design

PREETI JAIN

is known for her exquisite and meaningful jewels. Founder and creator of the brand Jewels by Preeti, she is a diploma holder in Polished Diamonds from the prestigious International Gemmology Institute. She is also a qualified MBBS doctor with a fellowship in Dermatology from Singapore. Preeti has for three consecutive years since 2012 designed the top part of the Shree Lal Panna Porcelain Whitening Acharvans Awards. Her passion that began with motherhood, Jewels by Preeti, on a rise she has made for her mother has evolved into an art and a career that she pursues devoutly in her Delhi design studio.



ROSILY PAUL VADAKKEL

is known for her original and fresh designs. A professionally-qualified gemmologist, jewellery designer, diamond grader and manufacturing graduate, Rosily is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Gems & Jewellery and Indian Institute of Gemmology, New Delhi. She worked as a designer for an international brand before starting her boutique in Gold Sook, Gurgaon. Winner of 16 prestigious national and international awards, which include the DeDeera Awards, WGC Swarnamanjari Awards, GJEPC Vision Awards and Tahiti Pearl Awards - National and International, Rosily specialises in modern precious jewellery with unique customised designs.



PALLAVI DUDEJA FOLEY

is known for her avant-garde jewellery pieces and international award-winning jewels. An Accessories Designer graduate from the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in New Delhi, she worked for nine-and-a-half years at Tanishq before setting up her studio and boutique in Bangalore. A design consultant to many Indian and international jewellery brands today, Pallavi features in *Treasures of Bangalore*, a book on 28 entrepreneurs of the city. Honoured with the Best Designer award instituted by the South India Jewellery Show in 2011, she has also been featured by the World Gold Council this year.



with whom I share the same passion for jewellery.

ROSILY PAUL: When I entered the jewellery world, most people thought I was indulging in a hobby. Female kaurigors were few and there were other limitations as well. Confidence and tenacity of purpose, however, won the day for me.

PREETI JAIN: You are not taken seriously when you are young, especially when you do not belong to a particular industry. There is also scepticism about a woman's ability to do business. Many people thought my venture was a source of entertainment that I would abandon it when I got bored.

Women designers better understanding jewellery women want to wear

PALLAVI FOLEY: Designing has nothing to do with gender. It is about

LEFT: Geometric open work earrings crafted in yellow gold by Pallavi Foley

BELOW: An oval amber pendant with a curved 22k gold mesh and bead chain from Rosily Paul's 'Layers' collection

Their iconic brands and individual journeys

PALLAVI FOLEY: I did not start out to be iconic, only to be unique in my designs and ensure exceptional craftsmanship. After graduating from NIFT, I enhanced my skills and knowledge by taking courses at Domus Academy, GIA and other institutes. Thereafter, as a designer at Tanishq I learnt the many facets of business before I decided to set up my boutique and design studio.

ROSILY PAUL: It is providence that made me a jewellery designer and entrepreneur. I was a simple housewife before I decided to do a gemmology course. Jewellery had always fascinated me and, inevitably, my education did not stop there. Within a span of three years, I completed the diamond grading, jewellery designing and manufacturing courses as well. I participated in competitions, won many of them and worked for an international brand before I entered the retail space with Rosily Paul Creations.

PREETI JAIN: Jewels by Preeti has come a long way, completing more than four years of hard work and success. Initially, the going was rough, but I remained positive and that gave me the courage to overcome all hurdles. The beginning was fortuitous, with my mother encouraging me all the way.

Being taken seriously in a male-dominated industry

PALLAVI FOLEY: This was never a hurdle. In fact, working in the male-dominated world of jewellery has been a great journey in which I have met the best of human beings



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ABOVE: A ring crafted in 18k gold and invisible setting of emeralds and diamonds by Jewels by Preeti

RIGHT: Elegant necklace and matching earrings crafted in 18k gold studded with ruby polki and round diamonds with pearl drops by Jewels by Preeti

individual design sensibility and understanding of art and fashion.

ROSILY PAUL: Women have a knack for understanding trends and style. They can also easily comprehend a client's description of what she wants. I feel more blessed because I also understand the mechanics of constructing jewellery.

PREETI JAIN: Women connect more deeply and easily to adornments which is why it is said that "diamonds are a girl's best friend". Today, women designers are paving the way for new perspectives.

The most challenging aspect of design. Catering to customer desires or personal creative endeavour.

PALLAVI FOLEY: The most challenging aspect is to keep raising the bar with every new collection. Customer requirements, trends, being unique, manufacturing friendliness and timeless design play in the mind while designing.

ROSILY PAUL: When I create a collection, like for instance for the ILLW, it is a personal creative endeavour. However, when I create for my boutique customers, the final designs are predominantly influenced by their wishes.

PREETI JAIN: Creating new designs is the greatest challenge. Jewellery is essentially heirlooms and I like to get

involved with clients' desires while designing and crafting. A piece of jewellery must reflect a personality, which is why understanding client taste and customising jewellery accordingly is very important.

Creative process and inspirations

PALLAVI FOLEY: Since I cater to two channels of business – my label and Indian and international business clients – my creative process is at times brief-driven and at other times inspired

by an experience, a craft or nature. Travel enthuses me like nothing else – from the eclectic design sensibility of Japan to the history of Europe, the modernism of New York and the detailed crafts of India, I am influenced by them all.

ROSILY PAUL: A part of my mind is constantly on the lookout for interesting ideas – patterns, materials, objects, nature and more. Once an idea strikes, it is developed. Nature is a major inspiration, so is architecture.

PREETI JAIN: The creative process includes visualising the end product and considering details such as the type of diamond or gemstone, the mount and cutting style, and even evaluating if I would buy that piece of jewellery. Many visual details and experiences influence my work. I personally meet clients as I want each one to relate to the design. Urban Indian women – homemakers and corporate icons – are my inspiration. I love nature and all my collections, be they traditional or contemporary, draw inspiration from it.

Role of colour and other trends

PALLAVI FOLEY: My day is never complete without reading and studying trends in all fields of design. This study and extensive travel keeps me ahead of the fashion curve.



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LEFT: A pair of danglers showcasing an interplay of organic and geometric patterns by Pallavi Foley

BOTTOM: Yellow gold gemstone-studded bangle with floral enamelling by Pallavi Foley

ROSILY PAUL: What first attracted me to jewellery are colourful gemstones. So, quite naturally, colours are the leitmotif of my creations. In fact, I am happy that colourful jewellery is in vogue again.

PREETI JAIN: Colours enhance the overall look of jewellery and is a powerful force that influences moods. However, as far as trends go, as a designer I feel it is my responsibility to be a trendsetter and not a follower of fashion.

Marrying designing with marketing

PALLAVI FOLEY: I do not find marketing daunting at all. It is quite interesting and as a creative person it is my responsibility to communicate my artistic endeavours to the end customer.

ROSILY PAUL: True, designing comes naturally to women, while men are better at marketing. But, in a boutique set-up like mine, the jewellery speaks for itself and marketing is word of mouth.

PREETI JAIN: Marketing is not tough. In fact, it gives me immense satisfaction to market what I create. Women designers are not too daunted by the idea of marketing because their customers are also women with whom bonding is easy.

Evolving in the fast-changing landscape

PALLAVI FOLEY: The DNA of the jewellery world has changed over the last decade. Design interventions, fashion

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trends, technological innovations, historical crafts are all pushing the envelope. Even a purchase decision today is largely influenced by design.

ROSILY PAUL: Variety is the spice of life and for customers it is always "*aur dikhao, aur dikhao*". A designer has to constantly innovate to be in tune with trends, consumer behaviour, purchasing capacity and market demands. The situation is dynamic and one has to keep evolving.

PREETI JAIN: Being a designer is a huge responsibility. Besides setting a trend, I have to provide clients with what they want and also make sure that the designs are in harmony with what is in fashion.

Jewellery industry today and women designers five years down the line

PALLAVI FOLEY: Today, the jewellery industry has several dimensions, that will only grow further in the years to come. Jewellery will always remain an investment; but, of late, the concept of it also being a fashion accessory has brought a totally new way of looking at the business. The



LEFT: An elegant four-line 22k gold *jadau* necklace and matching earrings with *polki* diamonds, semiprecious stones and beautiful pearl and tourmaline drops by Jewels by Preeti.

BOTTOM: A necklace with a floral finial set with a diamond orb that fans out in a burst of diamond-studded asymmetrical curved lines by Rosily Paul



entire vocabulary is about to change, with jewellery integrating with other fields of design.

ROSILY PAUL: The industry today is energetic and changing every day. Gold has made a comeback, people are wearing a lot of artificial jewellery and gadgets and vacationing have become top priorities. Five years from now, there will be a sea change. Fine jewellery and good designs will always sell, but how important they will be is questionable. And, as far as I see, there will be more women designer-entrepreneurs.

PREETI JAIN: The industry is dynamic and poised for a glittering future. Trends are changing and women designers are being taken seriously. Challenges exist, but understanding the advantages of being a woman entrepreneur can help to take up business roles easily. ■