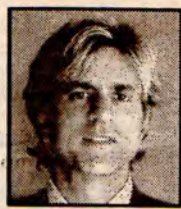


THE *Jeweler's* BENCH

By Ron Rizzo



Expand Your Jewelry Wardrobe with Convertible Pieces

Some pieces of jewelry were meant to be worn as they were created, while others were designed with the intention of being re-invented. Such is the beauty of convertible, or interchangeable, jewelry. Well chosen necklaces, clasps, brooches, rings and other jewelry offer the versatility to take you from day to evening, creating new and spectacular pieces whenever you choose.

Convertible jewelry has been in style for decades, but is becoming ever more prevalent as people are stepping out more often and are looking for jewelry that can take them from day to evening effortlessly. There are two types of convertible jewelry: pieces designed specifically to convert (mechanical convertible) with devices that allow them to come apart or attach other components; and jewelry that is made to be worn alone, but can be combined with other pieces (non-mechanical convertible).

Convertible by Design

Some pearl necklaces unscrew at certain lengths to add gemstones or other embellishments or to shorten to various lengths. Several shorter strands can be transformed into a choker either on their own or with a brooch affixed.

Pendants with bales that fold down to be concealed can then be worn as pins. Elegant pendants can make a gold chain dazzling or, worn on a black cord, can be turned into a sporty piece for everyday wear. Some pendants are reversible with one gemstone or design on one side and a different look on the other side.

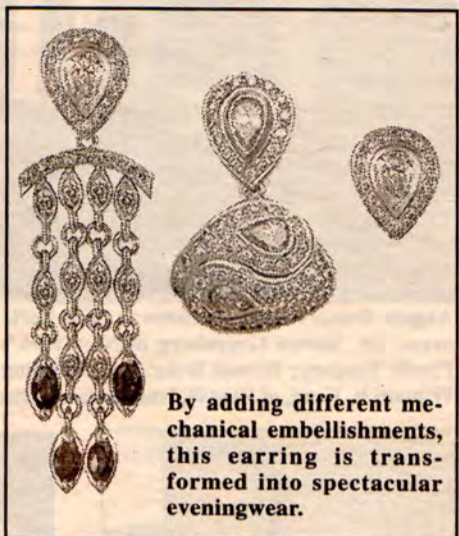
All Clasps Are Not Created Equal

Clasps, locks and other closures can take simple necklaces and turn them into spectacular showcase pieces. S-locks and closures in various other designs are available, including the J-clasp, my personal contribution to clasp design. Most clasps can be worn with any type of necklace to which it can be affixed. If you have a necklace you'd like to wear with a clasp, it can be modified by a jeweler.

Metamorphoses

Wearing multiple rings on the same finger (referred to as "stackable rings") is just one example of non-mechanical convertible jewelry. Alone, these rings are lovely, but when worn in different combinations, they can be dazzling. Stack them on your middle finger for a trendy style that's all the rage with celebrities. As far as how many rings to stack is concerned, the only rule I would advise is, when there are so many rings layered that you can no longer bend your first knuckle, take one or two off.

Double a long strand of pearls and clasp the two sections together with a brooch for a romantic look. Or wear it full length and cinch it in the middle with the brooch for a lariat effect. Lariats are very versa-



By adding different mechanical embellishments, this earring is transformed into spectacular eveningwear.

tile necklaces. Tie it once and wear it long or wrap it several times, then tie it together either alone or with a pendant.

Huggy style hoops that fasten securely and stud earrings are perfect candidates for thin chains dripping with briolette diamonds or other draping or "stileto-style" embellishments.

More Versatile Than That Little Black Dress

Lifestyle jewelry that takes you from jeans during the day to that little black dress in the evening is such a relieving, no muss, no fuss addition to your jewelry wardrobe. Basic lifestyle jewelry is chic and stylish without being overstated for a great look wherever you're going and with whatever you're wearing. Many of these pieces are designed so that you can add a simple or dramatic embellishment, giving it exquisite, eye-catching detail that's perfect for any elegant affair.

Convertible jewelry adds such a tremendous amount of diversity to any jewelry wardrobe. Delve into your jewelry box and have fun experimenting with different combinations. While you're delving, gather up some pieces you don't wear any more and consider having them redesigned into a great convertible piece. Have one or two classic everyday pieces made that are convertible and pair them with some dazzling embellishments and you'll go from day to evening with effortless panache.

May the year ahead sparkle in every facet of your life, and may you cherish all that you have and have all that you cherish.

Ron Rizzo has been a jewelry designer for over 25 years. His infatuation with gemstones led him to the Gemological Institute of America where he studied gemology. After attending the Fashion Institute of Technology, Ron's designs became highly sought after as several of his collections were commissioned by Henri Bendel, Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue prior to opening his own store.

An award winning designer, Ron is a three-time winner of the World Gold Council Designer Award, a highly coveted international jewelry award, as well as diamond design honors from DeBeers. Stop by Ron Rizzo Jewelry at 54 Roslyn Avenue in Sea Cliff. Call 671-1269 or visit ronrizzo.com for further information or to request a new brochure.

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Bridal Jewelry That's Well Beyond 'Something Borrowed'

By Ron Rizzo

As you move ever closer to your wedding date, friends and family will undoubtedly offer to lend you a necklace or other piece of jewelry to wear on your special day. Better still, you may be the beneficiary of a diamond given to you by one of your grandmothers or even a great grandmother. This is a special heirloom indeed as it coincides with a huge trend in diamond jewelry, which is antique cut diamonds and estate-inspired jewelry.

These cuts, such as—old miners, old Europeans, cushion shapes, Ascher square cuts, rose cuts and briolette diamonds—have been the inspiration behind many a client commissioning jewelry designers to fashion pieces that beautifully showcase these timeless beauties.

The key distinguishing characteristic of antique cuts is that they have greater depth and smaller tables (top surfaces) than modern cuts. Luckily, inheriting these types of diamonds is not the only way to own one, as many world-renowned diamond cutters are fashioning diamonds this way, even improving upon them by adding their own unique branding.

The cushion shaped diamond is a square to slightly rectangular shape with softer rounded edges like a pillow. This shape is highly desirable among aficionados, as is the Ascher, a cut cornered square shape (emerald) with an extra layer of top facets. Briolette and rose cut gemstones date back to the Middle Ages. A briolette is usually a teardrop shape and is faceted all the way around and underneath with a hole drilled on the tip to attach it to a setting. This is ideal for anything that dangles though I have experimented with mounting briolette cut diamonds in a stationary position for a dramatic effect in rings and earrings. A rose cut diamond is unique for, while it is round in shape, the bottom is flat and facets only cover the topside. The sparkling effect is subtle, yet glorious when accented with micro pave, or as an eternity wedding band where diamonds are set all around.

Few women would ever discourage the notion that a diamond can be too big, but today the setting plays just as important a role in the decision process as the diamond itself. This takes the pressure off a diamond having to be so "big" for the entire piece of jewelry to be very impressive. Even a simple delicate setting will be given the same level of attention to detail as was done back in the day when jewelers truly created works of art, and perfection and execution was their pride. Jewelry like this will always be admired.

Micro pave is an elegant, dazzling design technique that enables jewelry designers to create intricate, detailed pieces with a contemporary flair. Micro pave is the use of

many tiny diamonds less than one point in size (100 points to one carat) set very close together—so close the jeweler may use a microscope to set them in rows on narrow rims surrounding the center stones. The look is not only spectacular, but is also a great way to increase the total carat weight of your setting and dramatically enhance the overall look of the center diamond.

On her wedding day, everyone's eyes are on the bride so the jewelry she's wearing is clearly very important. A gorgeous piece of jewelry will naturally enhance the beauty and elegance of you and your gown. And if you choose wisely, you'll also have a dazzling reminder of your special day you'll be able to wear long after the rice has been swept away and the last flower petal has faded.

Once you've selected your gown, you can then focus on your hairstyle and jewelry. Naturally, the jewelry you select will differ based on the neckline and style of your gown, how you'll wear your hair and your personal taste. Just as you would speak with a hair stylist about how you'll wear your hair, I highly recommend meeting with a jeweler to help you decide what jewelry to choose.

Dripping earrings with briolette diamonds make enough of a statement without a necklace. Or a pearl accented diamond necklace with diamond stud earrings will achieve elegance and balance. I recently made a choker for a woman using 11 strands of three-millimeter pearls to wear with her gown. We found a great faux crystal brooch that looked like an estate piece. I adjusted the brooch to go on and off the choker and that day she was totally regal. A fantastic brooch, by the way, can be worn in the center of a gown as a closure.

The most important trend in bridal jewelry is the one that makes you feel happy. Your love for your jewelry should be everlasting. Best wishes for a storybook wedding and a lifetime of happiness.

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Micro Pave ring, Rose Cut diamond eternity band and Briolette ring.