

Intelligent
Obsession



express

SENDING YOUR JEWELRY TO WORK

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CYNTHIA RENÉE CO.

Jewelry stores are your Disneyland. Any direction you look, there's something "to die for." Does this sound too familiar? You purchase that gold-and-diamond bracelet, those green tourmaline and matte-gold earrings and a platinum-and-tanzanite ring that really doesn't move you but "made sense" as it was "50 percent off retail." It doesn't take long for your jewelry tab to add up, and none of those three pieces you spent a lot of money on can even be worn together as an integrated whole.

Your jewelry needs to go to work. It just can't lie in the safe or dresser drawer. Not only is it too expensive to not earn its living, but you are denying yourself a vital means of self-expression.

A lot of women are uncertain just how to fit together all the pieces of their jewelry wardrobe. Once the language of jewelry fundamentals is learned, the puzzle is extremely engaging. After all, the puzzle's focus is your self-expression through the combination of fine design and the earth's rare treasures. The prize for putting it all together is that you feel great. And, best of all, it's fun! Jewelry should express the joy and beauty in our lives. As our lives change, our jewelry can evolve with us.

I want to share some of the ideas and methods I have serendipitously stumbled upon throughout my career in jewelry. It's not that I feel my answers must be your answers, but that through the approach I have used in building my own and my clients' jewelry wardrobes, I hope to give you some ideas to think about in developing your own wardrobe of joy and expression.



For the advanced collector: three matching black opals with diamonds in ring. Ring by Cynthia Renée Co., photo by Weldon.

What is vital is to have a Jeweler who will spend time showing you different types of jewelry, listening to you and helping you assemble your jewelry wardrobe. Jewelry stores aren't necessarily formal and austere; they can be extremely dynamic in their mission to help you celebrate life's beauty and passages. They can tell you about new designers, new gemstone finds and new styles of wear.

This doesn't necessarily mean rubies, diamonds or pearls. To me, colored gemstones of all types are the best jewelry medium for expressing one's individuality, uniqueness and passion for life. You need to work with a professional who not only knows how to wear jewelry, but also knows the many types of colored gemstones and how they can be

worn and put together. Seeing how various types of colored gems can mix and match inspires us to go far beyond birthstones to the wearing of diverse colored-gem jewelry as an expression of ourselves. Think of an artist's palette: the paint colors express the artist's emotions. With our colored-gemstone palettes, the gems are the paint and the jewelry is the canvas of self-expression.

Like many women, when I first entered the jewelry business, I went crazy buying pretty things. After I spent what was quite a bit of money, I decided to formulate a jewelry wardrobe buying plan. It's much like clothing: once you have the basics, you'll find you have much more versatility. A strong foundation of jewelry "must haves" provides the framework for real fun. It's like having one frame in which you can hang various paintings depending upon your mood. While clothing basics might be a black suit, navy jacket, white shirt and a cashmere sweater set, there are jewelry basics. I consider the following a basic foundation on which to build a jewelry collection of substance and individuality.

GOLD

Two pairs of earrings: tailored clips for day and a more fun hoop or dangle for evening.

Continued on page 68

Bright lights
palette: hot pink
tourmaline and
vibrant green
tourmaline rings
featuring the
large gem center.

**A STRONG
FOUNDATION
OF JEWELRY
"MUST HAVES"
PROVIDES THE
FRAMEWORK
FOR REAL FUN.**

Two rings
featuring
multicolored
gems. Seafoam
tourmaline and
pink tourmaline in
LaViana rings
and red-and-pink
tourmaline ring by
William Lowe.
Gems from
Cynthia Renée
Co., photo by
Weldon.

Continued from page 67

Ring: something interesting—domed, textured, wide or high.
Choker: this is extremely important, as you'll use this for hanging gemstone pendants in the future.

PEARLS

Necklace: consider using a clasp which allows you to wear one pearl strand in different lengths.

Earrings: studs for future earring jackets and/or large clips with gold.

OPTIONAL BASICS

Wedding ring: a must for many—not for me!

Diamond stud earrings.

Opaque gems: onyx or lapis and gold pieces.

Gold brooch from which future gems can be suspended.

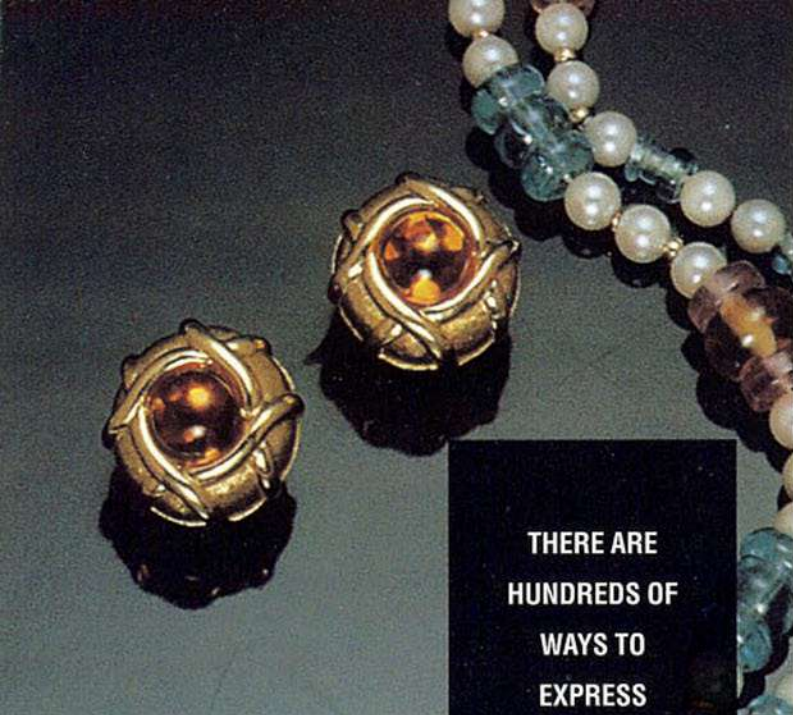
When I start working with people, I review with them their current jewelry collection. We discuss what pieces they actually wear and like and what they haven't found many uses for. Some pieces just aren't that comfortable, and slight modifications can be made to make them more wearable. Sometimes we'll just eliminate some pieces as "mistakes" upon which it would be unsound to invest more money. Other pieces they love but don't wear much; sometimes companion pieces need to be purchased which will expand the use of the pieces already in their collection. I also get an idea of the jewelry style that appeals to them, knowing that, as we work together, their tastes usually change as a reflection of their growing jewelry and gem sophistication.

One common mistake women make is to select fine jewelry that is too small in size. I have a motto: "No 'junior miss' jewelry!" We are women and deserve to honor ourselves with pieces of suitable substance. Making a jewelry statement shows confidence and self-esteem. Why is it that we will choose large faux jewelry and "dainty" fine jewelry? This probably started because the price of diamond, ruby, emerald or sapphire often makes a large piece price-prohibitive. But the wide variety of colored gemstones available today makes quality available in any price range; price no longer limits size. And, believe me, after two weeks, that large ring begins to look small as we become visually accustomed to its presence.

I feel women need sensual yet simple jewelry that can bridge casual and elegant wear. Jewelry designed to focus on colored gemstones, with or without diamonds, allows a woman to feel put together, well-groomed and sophisticated without being overdone. This is a very modern approach to jewelry—designed for the busy woman with a strong sense of self.

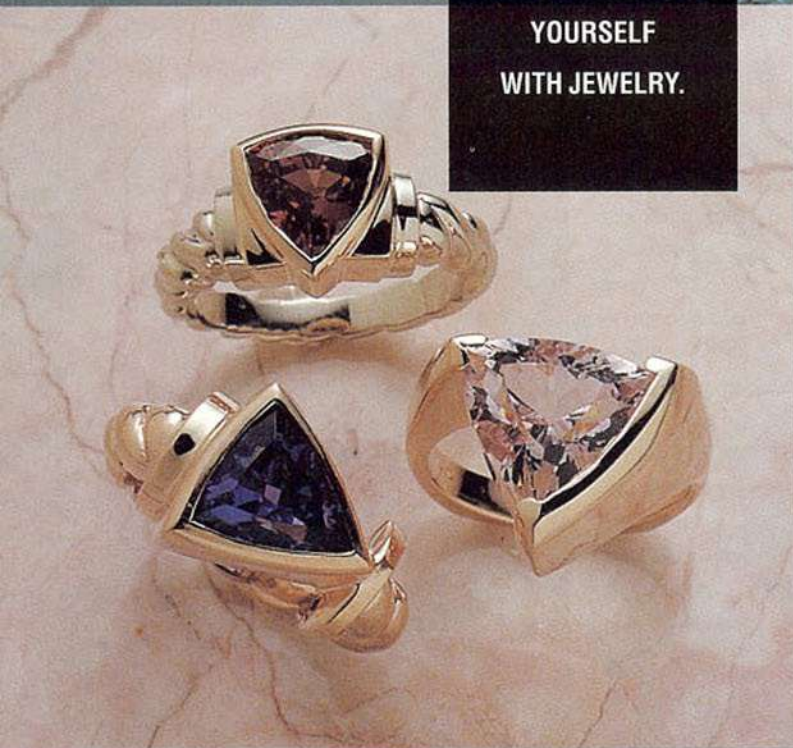
A great colored gemstone to start with is citrine. It will harmonize with preexisting gold jewelry and can present an extremely intriguing optical illusion whereby you don't know where the gem ends and the gold begins. Not only is it a beautiful gem available in large sizes, but it also has the added bonus of being one of the least expensive gems. Every woman with a gold collar-length necklace should invest in a big citrine pendant. Adding a jewel in the monochromatic tones of your gold collar gives you a piece that will greatly extend your options. It can be neutral enough to wear for day and dazzling enough to reflect the evening's light. Pick a fine gem and let it speak for itself. Accent it with various textures or colors of gold and little or no diamonds. Two-toned metal can be very useful in bridging the gap between all-yellow and all-white metal jewelry pieces.

The citrine can then be the core of a variety of color palettes.



Above: Icy pastel jewelry: citrine buff-top earrings and pearls strung with hand-carved aquamarine, pink tourmaline and citrine beads.

**THERE ARE
HUNDREDS OF
WAYS TO
EXPRESS
YOURSELF
WITH JEWELRY.**



Below: Multicolored gold rings with colored gems: rhodolite with pink-and-white gold; morganite with rose gold and tanzanite in yellow. Gems from Cynthia Renée Co., jewelry by Nanz Aalund for Nordstrom Fine Jewelry. Photo by Jeff Engelstad.

Continued from page 69

tourmaline pear-shaped drop earrings. They were of very simple, clean lines. Looking through our collection, what made her heart sing was not another hot pink tourmaline, but a tranquil seafoam green tourmaline in an emerald (rectangular) cut. The easy way out would have been to just put the beautiful seafoam stone in a standard ring and be done with it. Building a jewelry wardrobe, however, requires another type of thinking. The question then becomes: "How can we combine two jewelry pieces made from two very different feeling gems and end up with workable pieces that harmonize?" By different "feelings," I mean the hot and fiery colored pink with a rounded shape and the cool and tranquil seafoam with sharp corners. On top of that, she also selected for a neckpiece a cabochon-cut (smooth-topped) seafoam tourmaline in a full pear shape. The domed cabochon cut presents yet

another different texture in the design equation.

For the ring, we purchased an extra pair of similarly colored hot pink tourmaline pear shapes, which we used to flank the side of the seafoam tourmaline in an eighteen-karat yellow gold setting inspired by Etruscan design. We used no diamonds, relying on the depth of two different textures of gold (matte and high polish) and the two colored gems. Now she could wear her earrings alone, with her pearl or gold jewelry, or with her new ring.

What about a necklace? For a little bit extra, we designed her a necklace to give her much more versatility. She should be able to wear it not just with the seafoam tourmaline, but also on its own or with other gemstones. We hand-made eighteen-karat yellow-gold chain links, again with inspiration from antiquity. The neckpiece has the same feel as the ring but a different design, which keeps her jewelry from looking too planned or "matchy." The cabochon was very full in shape—its length from point to point being slightly less than its width. This shape makes it ideal as the base upon which we added the neck and handles of an ancient urn or "amphora." The urn shape, with its fullness and curves, is one I think of as being very womanly. The neck chain has two clips that fit into the handles of the seafoam tourmaline amphora, so it can be the central focal point of the necklace. The urn has a bayonet under it, so it can also be worn as a brooch. And, so the necklace isn't useless without the amphora, we made a slightly more ornate gold link with a diamond for a centerpiece that can clip into the neck chain for wear on its own. With a little forethought, the customer received a brooch, seafoam green tourmaline necklace and a gold necklace with diamond center.

Before it was made, the customer wasn't overly excited about using the amphora as a brooch. She said she "never wears pins." Now that she has it, she had found many uses. Most people don't wear brooches because they don't have them. Or, like scarves or hats, they secretly want to wear them but are unsure how. Try them on your shoulders, sleeves, chest, shirt collars, sashes, scarves and hats. What could it hurt?

Though the jewelry mentioned above is custom-made, you can apply the same approach to putting together a wardrobe of manufactured jewelry. Also, the jewelry you collect doesn't even have to be new. It can be "vintage," and lend the wearer the grace and soul of another time. I'm crazy for my first pair of vintage earrings. They have a very quiet and serene feeling. They are Victorian drop earrings made of tortoise shell inlaid with gold. I can wear them with a tortoise-shell Maltese cross of the same period inlaid with silver and gold. I then juxtapose the old on the new by wearing the cross on a black latex thong collar. If my clothes



Above: Gems in the icy pastel palette: peach and seafoam green tourmaline. Gems by Cynthia Renée Co., photo by Weldon.

Below: Three mocha zircon rings. Gems by Cynthia Renée Co., jewelry by Nanz Aalund for Nordstrom Fine Jewelry.



I can then wear my new ring with the above-mentioned blue tourmaline, emerald, platinum and yellow-gold ring and my pair of matte and high-polish platinum earrings with removable blue-silver South Sea pearl drops.

There are hundreds of ways to express yourself with jewelry. A close friend of mind (a graphic artist) thought she wasn't interested in "real" jewelry until she started playing in my office safe. I can't say I created a monster: her sense of style, form and color was always lurking below her psyche's surface just waiting to be set free. But she erroneously thought fine jewelry was too formal and not at all part of her active life and planned budget. Nobody had shown her how to express herself with colored-gemstone jewelry. Now she's absolutely ecstatic over her first "woman's" ring—a fiery orange Malaya garnet set in white and yellow gold. She doesn't know it yet, but she is going to be really happy when I show her a fancy-cut citrine and matte gold ring. ■

Cynthia R. Marcusson, owner of Cynthia Renée Co., is a frequent contributor to JQ Magazine on the subject of colored gems and their marketing and promotion. Beginning as a gem mine geologist, Cynthia was soon lured by the creative challenges of the jewelry industry. Cynthia Renée Co. brings innovative Jewelers and designers the powerful combinations of fine colored gemstones, promotional expertise and sales and marketing training. Cynthia believes "the relationship between supplier and Jeweler is central in magnifying the return on colored gemstone investment." An example of marketing assistance for their customers is an Ametrine Promotion Kit for Jewelers containing black-and-white ads, mailers, press releases, counter signs, creative display ideas and training points for salespeople. Using creatively applied faceting patterns and shapes, Cynthia Renée Co. developed a method to bring out a gem's greatest beauty while bringing the manufacturing Jeweler the ease of calibration. The resulting gemstones have a "one-of-a-kind" feel yet are reproducible.

don't work with the collar-length thong, I wear my Victorian banded onyx locket with snake motif on a long chain. On my fingers, a banded onyx and gold ring (a \$25 flea-market find—the onyx is an old Victorian button), my modern twenty-two-karat yellow gold and mocha zircon ring and, of course, I'm not dressed without my gold cuffs.

What's my next project? Well, one's professional: I want to design a series of striking pendants featuring larger, uniquely cut ametrine, amethyst and/or citrine. I want women to be able to wear the same pendant in a polished restrained way for day and in a dazzling, brilliant way for night.

And, one's personal: I want to have a ring made for my hot pink spinel in matte and high-polish platinum based on the design of an Art Deco fountain. I'm moving into a white-metal phase.