

JEWELLERY NEWS ASIA



The Road to

Luxury

Amidst spiralling gold and oil prices and a sluggish US market that cast clouds over the jewellery industry, the high-end jewellery segment appears to thrive. While it is enviable to be in such a position, it takes more than just offering a 5-carat diamond to the privileged few to succeed. Luxury jewellers who've made it to the top discuss their game plan with Jessica Pang.



From top left: Titanium cuffs set with 69 carats of diamonds and 15.8 carats of tanzanite by Francis Merlens; jewellery in white gold set with Cento diamonds by Roberto Coin; and necklace set with jaspé, diamonds, rubies and pearls by Fabio Solini

"Exclusivity is the big added-value to my creations"

Mr Mertens is not alone in his pursuit of something different. In Rome, jewellery designer Fabio Salini realised that working for big names including Cartier and Bulgari did give him invaluable experiences. However, he still found himself starting his own brand and creating something unique. "Once you



Queen Rania of Jordan wearing earrings in white gold set with diamonds, rock crystal and fancy pear-shaped sapphires by Fabio Salini; a white gold rock-crystal bracelet with inlaid blue sapphires and white pearls; and silk necklace embroidered with diamonds and ruby beads with pendant in satin-finished rock crystal, diamonds and 8-carat cabochon cut ruby

make multiples of a product, you become an industry. My jewellery is one of a kind. It is for a very exclusive clientele. Exclusivity is a big value-added to my production," Mr Salini told JNA.

Borrowing tailoring techniques such as embroidery and using uncommon materials such as silicon leather, Mr Salini's jewellery has won the hearts of very sophisticated customers, among them Queen Rania of Jordan, who has worn the artist's jewellery in both public and private occasions.

The confident Mr Salini is prepared for an even brighter future for his business as he set his eyes on the world map. Apart from holding trunk shows in selected department stores in the US, the Italian jeweller exhibited for the first time in About J, a high-end jewellery fair in Milan organised by Fiera Di Vicenza which was launched in March this year. Mr Salini described the results of the fair as satisfactory. "It is a good show because it brings together many high-end brand. If I have a chance I don't mind going to the Far East... I will definitely expand my business," he said.

However, no matter how big his business becomes, one can be assured that his creations will remain limited in numbers, as Mr Salini believes that exclusivity is the right direction for his business. "In the last ten years there was a big moment of luxury, and now we have a whole lot of luxury goods. But what exactly is luxury? You find the same expensive things offered by big brands in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Moscow, South Africa, the United States... all over the world. I believe there is a growing group of people who are looking for unusual and hard-to-find products. To me, luxury is something that is hard to find. It matches with my strategy, and I think it will be more convenient for me to employ

this strategy in the future," Mr Salini said.

