

## Gemvara - the First Website for Custom Designer Jewelry, Exclusive Interview

by Annie Scott (RSS feed) May 25th 2010 at 9:01AM

Gemvara is "the world's first site for creating custom designer jewelry." You may have reservations about the possibility of ordering custom jewelry online. I know I do. I interviewed the VP of Content and Merchandising Cheryl Kremkow (former editor-in-chief of Modern Jeweler, pictured below) about how Gemvara works, curious about the first of what will surely lead to many online custom jewelry services. Does it save money? What if you don't like the piece? How can one be assured of quality? These questions and more are answered below.

**Luxist:** Do you think it's wise to have jewelry custom-made online? Why?

**Cheryl Kremkow:** What's different about designing jewelry on the Gemvara site is that it's interactive. You find a design concept you like, then you can click to change all the gemstones and metals to create exactly

the look you want. You don't have to imagine how it will look, you can see it. Every design on our site can be made any way, which means you can create jewelry that suits both your style and your budget. We make pieces in platinum and diamonds and pieces in amethyst and sterling silver: or diamond and sterling and platinum and amethyst, if that's what you want. We've done both.

**L:** What if someone gets the final piece and doesn't like it, will you take it back?

**CK:** Yes, of course. We want to make sure people are delighted with their jewelry. Actually, we haven't had any returns yet. I think it's because our customers create exactly what they want themselves and see exactly how it will look. Most people tell us that the real piece looks even better than they expected. Fortunately, our customers have good taste, so the pieces really do look great!

**L:** Are there significant savings associated with buying online?

**CK:** We don't carry inventory since we make each piece to order, just for you, one at a time. So, we are able to offer a really good value, even if you don't consider the added luxury of having the piece made just for you just the way you want it.



courtesy of Gemvara

### Gallery: Gemvara Custom Jewelry



**L:** I know Gemvara employs multiple designers. How do you match a designer to a request?

**CK:** People can shop by designer as well as by gemstone, metal or style. We have about 25 designers now and we're launching new designer collections all the time. We have two coming soon that I am very excited about. We have a new collection by Judy Evans, who has won every jewelry design award you can name, and a fabulous collection of hammered bezel-set pieces by Ruzanna Davtian, inspired by ancient jewelry, but sleek and modern. Of course both of these collections will be customizable in your choice of gems and metals. People can subscribe to see designs before everyone else and have the opportunity to create the first version of a design at a discounted price before it launches on our site.

**L:** Where do you get your stones?

**CK:** We source the stones for each piece from a network of suppliers around the world. When you create the design, we find the perfect stone to fit. Nothing is off the shelf, everything is bespoke. All of our gemstones and diamonds are conflict-free and we use recycled or responsibly mined metals.

**L:** We like that. So, working with multiple designers, as well as custom requests, is there a "Gemvara look"?

**CK:** It's not about us, it's about you. If you love amethyst in rose gold, select it in search and every design on our site will be amethyst in rose gold. We want you to create your own look, not have to settle for someone else's idea of what looks best. Jewelry is the most personal thing you wear; it should express you perfectly. Our mission is to help every person find their perfect jewelry match.

**L:** What trends are you currently seeing as far as custom requests?

People really love our Love Letters initial pendant collection by Ji Hwang (see gallery) because you can order any letter in any two metals with any gemstone. Most people choose their own initial with their birthstone or favorite gem but we've also had a lot of mothers buying their child's initial and birthstone; that's definitely a trend. They look great layered in multiples, too -- you can customize the chain length so they work together. Stack rings are also definitely hot -- it's so much fun to create three or four rings to stack. The same ring can be worn in so many different ways. Beyond that, princess cut gemstones are really popular in lots of different designs. We've also been surprised at the number of colored gemstone engagement rings we've sold recently, especially in sapphire and amethyst. I think couples today are interested in creating rings that are unique, with a lot of personal meaning to symbolize their relationship.

**L:** What's one of your favorite pieces Gemvara has made and why?



CK: It's hard to pick just one! I've bought three Gemvara pieces so far. I have the Double Snake Ring in sterling silver and diamond and Stargazer Earrings in yellow gold and citrine, both by Ji Hwang. She's my favorite designer; all her pieces have a wonderful organic quality. Like the natural world, they are more interesting the more you look at them. I love Ji's Wreath & Berry Band too, that's on my wish list. I also have the Heartbeat stack ring by Jeet Palawwala and I am already planning to buy another one: stack rings are so versatile and easy to wear. I think the most spectacular design on our site is Jeet's **Lotus Ring**, with delicate pave petals surrounding a center stone (shown at left in white gold with diamonds and a blue sapphire). We're making that ring right now in red garnet

with diamonds. I can't wait to see it! (See gallery for all pieces mentioned.)

So, there you have it. By enlisting designers to create basic pieces which can be modified, Gemvara ensures the quality of the design and enables shoppers to create custom jewelry which is both affordable and personal. I may give it a try myself!

<http://www.luxist.com/2010/05/25/gemvara-the-first-website-for-custom-designer-jewelry-exclusi/>