

Glittering India Jewels From Traditional To Contemporary

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Manufactured jewels get a bit of a bad rap and for good reason. Much of the jewelry that is sold in general merchandise, discount and even some department stores often feature basic designs and lower grade materials. It focuses on low priced items designed for quick sales.

India is one of the major producers of this kind of jewelry and it has created wealth and jobs in a country where jewelry has played a significant role in its culture and economy almost from the dawn of civilization. This entryway into the international markets has turned the India jewelry and gem industry into a powerhouse within the international jewelry industry and within its country.

For example, India's jewelry and gem industry is one of the largest in the world and represents [approximately 7% of the country's GDP with a market size of \\$75 billion](#). It employs approximately 4.6 million workers from more than 300,000 companies that populate every corner of this vast and diverse country. In the 2017 fiscal year, gem and jewelry exports totaled more than \$41 billion.



A traditional Indian diamond, gold and pearl necklace by Chokshi Vachhraj Makanji ANTHONY DEMARCO

In addition, India is the largest diamond cutting and polishing center in the world [responsible for about 75% of the world's polished diamond](#); and it is the [second largest consumer of gold used for jewelry \(598 tons in 2018\)](#). With this foundation, Indian manufacturers have been investing in technology and manpower to create manufactured jewels with skillfully crafted designs and high-end materials that are being sold to domestic and international markets. In some cases they created these jewels under separate brand names. The country still has a way to go to reach the level of design to match places like Italy, which is truly the center of high-design manufactured jewels, but the pieces being created in India can easily compete in any market in the world. In fact, some of the techniques being used with diamond jewels outpace the rest of the world. A few of these manufacturers have also turned to hand-crafted jewels. Designs are varied but one thing that these Indian jewelry manufactures have in common is the use of gold and diamonds throughout their collections.



A worker weaves Japanese micro-keshi pearls into a bracelet by the Indian jewelry brand Moksh ANTHONY DEMARCO

Several of these pieces were on display at IJS Signature, a jewelry trade fair in Mumbai dedicated to high-end jewelry manufacturers. The interesting thing about this trade fair is that it was launched 12 years ago as a showcase for independent jewelry designers but manufacturing companies, the bulk of the industry in India, gradually took over.

One thing that's relatively unique to India's jewelry industry is that most jewelry manufacturers began as diamond or gem manufactures (cutting and polishing rough gems) and moved into jewelry manufacturing as a second business, which does seem like a natural progression. This is the case with Tanvirkumar & Co., which focuses on diamond jewelry. The company created the brand, Moksh, headed by Milan Chokshi, a partner with Tanvirkumar. The brand produces jewels that combine manufacturing and handcrafted jewelry techniques with modern contemporary designs based on traditional regional themes.



The finished bracelet with rubies, diamonds and hand-woven Japanese micro-keshi pearls ANTHONY DEMARCO

Among their jewels on display were bracelets and rings with Persian era motifs made with Japanese micro-keshi pearls that were hand-woven into the jewels with diamonds, colored gems and gold. It was the most impressive technique I've seen and one of the most impressive jewels presented at the fair where there was no shortage of quality pieces.



Colorful bracelet with an open-worked design paved with yellow and white diamonds by A' Star Jewellery ANTHONY DEMARCO

A' Star Jewellery produces just 200 jewels per year, each using multiple techniques such as various open-work designs and lots of color with precious metal and gems, and rose-cut diamonds in teardrop shapes.



Large rubies sit on a petal-like gold base paved with multi-colored sapphires and diamonds by YS18 .ANTHONY DEMARCO

YS18, a jewelry brand created by Intergem Exports, combines fancy colored gems and diamonds with smooth textures and finishes. A few pieces featured colors that blend from green to blue and one large necklace was covered with cabochon beads made of rare bi-colored tanzanite.



Ruby and diamond necklace by Sawansukha Jewellers ANTHONY DEMARCO

Another manufacturer, Sawansukha Jewellers, was showcasing a number of bold, elaborate pieces including a multi-layered necklace in a multiple flower motif with petals made of crafted diamonds and white gold and the center of each flower set with a ruby.



An opal, diamond and pearl brooch ANTHONY DEMARCO

Sanskriti focuses on slices of colored gems and diamonds to create flower and leaf motifs for earrings.

The Indian people are a voracious consumer of jewelry, particularly gold jewels (and diamonds) as it serves as a status symbol, as adornment for weddings, as an investment, and as a hedge against a sudden crisis.



Traditional gold wedding necklace by Chokshi Vachhraj Makanji ANTHONY DEMARCO

Indian wedding jewelry is highly important and desirable, particularly high-design elaborate gold jewelry with diamonds and pearls using traditional motifs that represent spiritual symbols that adorn new brides from head to toes.



Gold necklace with elaborate etchings by Vasupati Jewellers ANTHONY DEMARCO

There are manufacturers that deal specifically with this type of jewelry. Among them is Chokshi Vachhraj Makanji, where a number of large gold and diamond necklaces

were on display. Another is Vasupati Jewellers which had a selection of big, bold gold, diamond and colored gem necklaces set in finely engraved high-karat gold.



Colorful necklace by Umrao Jewels ANTHONY DEMARCO

Other manufacturers that create jewels for the domestic market focus on jewels for all occasions and try to incorporate contemporary themes into otherwise traditional pieces. Among them is Umrao Jewels, with colorful large necklaces that are more streamlined, have less gold and more color than more traditional necklaces.



A rough Russian emerald in the centerpiece of this two-finger ring Birdhichand Ghanshyam (BG) ANTHONY DEMARCO

Colored gems in traditional designs is the focus of Birdhichand Ghanshyam (BG) manufacturers, which had on display a large two-finger ring with the barrel-shaped rough Russian emerald as the centerpiece further enhanced with diamonds, pearls, gold and rough rubies.



Traditional multi-gem and pearl necklace by Tara Fine Jewels ANTHONY DEMARCO

Colorful gems is also the focus of Tara Fine Jewels in bead shapes and often paired with pearls, diamonds and gold, particularly noticeable on the company's highly-decorated necklaces.

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