

Sales from the Front

To truly get inside the mind of the new jewelry consumer, we asked designers and retailers to divulge telling tales from the year that was.

IPPOLITA

Lauren Sharfman, CEO Known for its gold bangles [below, from \$595], Ippolita recently introduced a silver line [from \$125]. "We used to have day-in and day-out business at every price point; now our sales are at the extreme ends of the spectrum." ippolita.com.



FARAONE MENNELLA

Amedeo Scognamiglio, cofounder "When we first started [in 2001], our best sellers were all under \$1,000. This year we sold fifty pieces between \$20,000 and \$300,000. But versatility is the key to longevity: The Bikini Line collection [below, \$1,540 each] features gold clasps on interchangeable leather straps." faraonemennella.com.



JANIS PROVISOR

Debi Wisch, co-owner "Our most recent shows in New York and San Francisco were some of our most successful ever, but we sold more [about 30 pieces at each, from \$2,000 to \$12,000] to fewer clients. And they bought bold colors [like the cherry quartz and white jade piece above, \$22,000]—even clients who always go neutral." janisprovisorjewelry.com.

BROOKE GARBER NEIDICH

Co-owner, Sidney Garber jewelry, Chicago "We refashioned many of our clients' South Sea pearls by adding double-sided rose-cut diamond chains in between. And the Feather [right]—at \$10,000—has been an amazing hit." sidneygarberjewelry.com.

TITO PEDRINI

Jeweler and gemologist "I just sold a very rare sapphire to a client who had stopped buying because of the recession. Now he wants to invest in stones. Years ago, people couldn't care less about gemology. That mentality has changed." titopedrini.com.



AARON BASHA

Sasson Basha, president "Over the last few months, we have seen more clients looking for pieces with meaning, like the Baby Shoes [from \$1,000] and the protective evil eye [from \$500]." aaronbasha.com.



BULGARI

Francesco Trapani, CEO

"The overall situation is more encouraging now.

We returned to profitability in the third quarter of 2009.

This month we opened a new store in San Francisco—our largest in the States. Bulgari is known for focusing on the visual impact of a gemstone. We combine unexpected materials with precious ones—like turquoise with amethyst and diamonds

[below, \$25,600]" bulgari.com.



KWIAT

Greg Kwiat, partner "If customers are convinced they're getting long-term value, they buy; if not, no sale. A guy came into the store for a 2.5-carat ring. We talked about how the value of diamonds has held up. He ended up doing a three-carat stone for \$15,000 more." kwiat.com.

DE BEERS

Hamida Belkadi, U.S. CEO

"The Enchanted Lotus Collection [below] combined design and the right price point [\$1,500–\$4,500]. People bought two and three pieces at a time. We had wait lists, which tells us we are going in the right direction." In February, a few new pieces with pink-diamond accents were added to the line. debeers.com.

