

Jewelled with Imprints of Integrity

The world famous branded jewellery of **John Hardy** needs no introduction: Gracing the covers and featured in many editorials in international and local fashion magazines and seen on many celebrity ears, arms and necks from mega media mogul Oprah Winfrey to singing country girl Carrie Underwood.

STORY BY Dewald Haynes PHOTO BY John Hardy Doc.



Although the brand was founded in 1975 by Canadian designer and artist John Hardy himself, it was through the ingenious marketing, business and management strategy developed by French CEO Damien Dernoncourt and the design expertise of French – Italian Guy Bedarida that allowed for the brand to establish an infamous market share from its Bali base. In 2007 they bought the company out and ultimately reinvented John Hardy's reputation and traditional artisan legacy to become the respected brand image it transparently projects to the world today. The Company has firmly established itself not only as environmentally friendly, but also as a fair trade, company where employees share in the prosperity and "Greener Every Day" philosophy of this brand starting from its design and production compound in Bali continuing right through to its stone production factory and center of operations in Bangkok, the office in New York and headquarters in Hong Kong.

In Bali, a healthy green working environment has been established built mainly from bamboo structures. Here

productivity is inspired by focusing on the consistency of a routine that schedules the enjoyment of joined leisured lunchtimes with productive and creative activities in complete harmonious unison. This concept has a liberating effect on the day to day operations. It is this principled process of production, and the people participating in it, that creates the legacy and value of each piece in the various collections of John Hardy, which is still firmly rooted in traditions and skills handed down from a lineage of Balinese artisans since beyond 1975.

Guy has himself a wealth of experience and international exposure, this is clearly reflected in the latest designs. The designs are inspired by his travels and experiences in Asia, Europe, America and many more cultures. The originality and modernity each design displays always reflects this inspiration of some ancient traditional quality or pattern often found in nature, antiques or architecture. The design team is guided by Guy Bedarida's vision and direction, the designs are hand drawn



and from these sketches the beginning of creation starts for the classic wearable art that mixes sterling silver, precious stones and even gold into sought after jewellery.

Before each piece can be made with precious materials, a lifelike three dimensional representation of it is carved out of wax. This intricate task is done with the finest attention to detail. The art, precision and time spent to create this phase of production is probably equal to that of the design sketches, however the lifespan of a wax model is considerably

less. It is from these carved out wax models that the molds for the jewellery are made. This is yet another timely process that requires great skill and imaginative insight into the design. Molds are created of each separate element of the design to maximize productivity and duplication. Although the designs are not "one offs" the handmade quality guaranteed by the manufacturing process makes each piece a separate valuable and collectable item.

Once the molds are ready, the casting of the silver can begin. Great effort is placed to keep the melting and casting process environmentally friendly. The little wastage is managed and properly disposed of, as well as where possible recycling processes have been put into place and are rigorously adhered to. After the castings are done the pieces still needs to be assembled and polished and in some designs the finishing touches needs to get added manually. This is another labor intensive and skilled tasked that only trained craftsmen and artisans within the trade can master.

Communication and understanding of the initial design to successful completion of its production involves over 700 artisans. The entire manufacturing process, from the designing to the interpretations by the artisans involved in making a John Hardy design, is clearly a process of creativity, dignity and ethical demeanor that infuses integrity into each piece. The design process of jewellery by John Hardy is certainly inspirational and of unequalled magnitude. To purchase a piece, is to invest in a greener tomorrow that supports artisans and humanity, while looking beautiful yourself. ®