

# DesignGems

**Buying a piece of genuine jewellery is much more than buying stones and metal. Every piece**

**comes with a strong emotional element: it might be an expression of love, or a celebration of an event or achievement. The best way for it to express exactly what you want it to is to have it custom-made, rather than choosing it 'off the shelf'. Expat Living talks to Vinod More of The Jewel Box about the process of designing and producing customised jewellery.**

**EL: How do you interpret what a customer wants?**

**VM:** We like to start by spending time with the customer. Some come in with very specific ideas – drawings, or pictures. Others have only a vague idea of what they want, in which case we have to talk through the situation fully; we often make use of our library of design books and magazines for inspiration. Our goal is to understand what the customer likes, and then come up with the right design, just for her.

**EL: Tell us more about the design process.**

**VM:** We often work from a stone, or from a customer's existing piece of jewellery. Sometimes, she wants to modify a piece to suit her taste, or modernize it. Jewellery design does follow fashion trends. Indian jewellery is very popular at the moment. Their traditional designs are mostly gold, while many westerners prefer stones. Fair skin sets jewellery off very differently to dark skin. So, by working from scratch, we can take ideas from here and there, and bring them together in something that works for you.



**EL: Why do you charge for design-work?**

**VM:** Jewellery design is a skilled art. It is a time-consuming and sometimes costly process, especially if we have to make revisions. Once we get to know what a customer likes, and what she already has in her jewellery collection, though, it becomes much easier. We have a love-hate relationship with husbands: as much as they hate how much their wives shop here, they love the fact that if they are looking for the perfect gift they can come to us – we know her preferences, and even specifics like her ring-size.

*by Philippa Barr*

**EL: Besides buying a unique piece, why would a customer choose to buy from a private jeweller?**

**VM:** Retail outlets can be quite intimidating. You are faced with a huge diversity of pieces at the same time, and often some quite high-pressure salesmanship. Even if it seems to be a bargain, there may be no assurance of after-sales service or long-term satisfaction.

**The Jewel Box is a private jeweller, providing custom design, repair and restoration services. Its gallery carries both a regular collection of distinctive jewellery, and a fashion collection. It doesn't have a shopfront; instead, it has a gallery in the Shaw Centre, where customers can meet with either Vinod or one of his colleagues to discuss their jewellery needs. The Jewel Box makes a valued contribution to the expat community in Singapore, often contributing jewellery to charity events, fashion shows and exhibitions. Call them on 6733 4100.**

