



COCKTAIL NECKLACE

Set in 18K Yellow Gold with rare Colombian emeralds weighing 24 cts and old cut diamonds weighing 38.30 cts.

Regal Necklace by Vandana Bhargava

■ JEWELLERY DESIGNING ■

WHITE & YELLOW

a tribute to rich Indian heritage by

VANDANA BHARGAVA

by Santanu Ganguly

“My passion is to create masterpieces of rare jewels that mirror the splendour of our Indian heritage yet define emerging global styles”, expresses Vandana Bhargava, who does not need any formal introduction as the famous jewellery designer of the country well known among the whose and who

of the elite society by her signature jewels under her brand name 'White & Yellow'. Vandana describes, “fine jewellery, designed and curated by me, are marked as ‘Signature Jewels by’ Vandana Bhargava.

She mentions, “Come the summers; the market for pearl jewellery, of all kinds, natural pearls and cultured pearls gets very hot. Women in general are mesmerized by the pearls for their innate elegance and classicism round the year. But the demand for pearl jewellery really picks up during the summers. Metals, even noble ones, platinum and gold get uncomfortable to sport during scorching period of summer and women of all ages, the teenagers, the young confident ones and the graciously old, all want to sport a jewellery that is cool, soothing and comfortable and adds to their beauty and glamour. Pearls indeed have a mysterious appeal, perhaps, on account of the magical process exhibited by the nature in making of a pearl. The crux is that they simply enhance women's beauty when delicately combined with the



Lord Ganesha designed and created by Vandana Bhargava



Regal Attitude - Signature Clutch

primary gems of diamond, ruby, emerald and sapphires and add to the glamour.”

About the royal and rich tradition of pearl

connoisseurs, she states, “The Maharajas of India, the Sheikhs of the Middle East, the Kings of Europe and the Noble families in America have treasured pearls for their elegance and classicism since time immemorial. Pearls have always had a royal following. The pearl jewellery simply creates that magic just by a simple combination of their size, shape and colour.”



White and Yellow - Design studio of Vandana Bhargava at Square One Mall, Saket, New Delhi



Vandana Bhargava (2nd from left) her husband Dr. Bhargava (3rd from left), her son Varun Bhargava (1st from left) and her daughter Swati Bhargava

She adds that, “Broadly speaking, two types of pearls are available in the market – the natural pearls and the cultured pearls. The natural pearls, particularly from the Persian Gulf (known in India as Basra pearls) and the Venezuelan pearls are indeed extremely expensive and valuable and difficult to source. These natural pearls are 100% nacre and have no foreign body inside. They are the results of the magical process of nature. Natural pearls of a carat and above can be prohibitively expensive. However, the smallest seed pearls of Persian Gulf and Venezuela are relatively affordable, almost in the range of gold prices and can be used to create lovely delicate strands either in threads or in thin gold chains. These valuable jewellery pieces without doubt enhance your beauty and add to the glamour without compromising your comfort level. They just embrace you in comfort. Similarly, the cultured salt water pearls from the South Sea are very famous and fashionably in demand. They come in different colours and typically large sizes ranging from pure white to golden to grey and black. While

little on the heavier side, these cultured pearls provide you the soothing cooling effect particularly during summers. They are your friends for ever as they are your valuable partners.”

Vandana keeps in her mind every detail for her clientele, as she says, “The teenagers, where affordability is a major issue, also have a wide choice of pearls available. These include the fresh water cultured pearls and the irregular shaped ones obtained through different processes. These types of pearls have been flooded by the China into the Indian markets. They are inexpensive, readily available and carry almost full effect of a pearl on your body since these also contain an extremely thin layer of nacre around a foreign body. It is almost difficult to differentiate natural salt water pearl and the cultured fresh water pearl through a naked eye. These pearls are obviously the choice of teenagers and other women who cannot afford the valuable and expensive ones. They appear as majestic as natural pearls and bind beautifully with other precious and other semi precious stones in a

jewellery set.” She loves to create special edition using inexpensive gems for the teenagers.

“Pearls like diamonds are categorized on the principle of 4Ps, i.e. the luster, the shape, the colour and the size. Size and shape are the most important factors in determining the prices of pearls and the smoothness of the skin and the luster of the pearls are next two important determinants. D flawless of pearls is basically lightly creamy colored base with pink over tones”, described Vandana Bhargava.

Signature Clutches by Vandana Bhargava titled 'Regal Attitude': Vandana Bhargava has made yet another addition to her line of Signature Jewels, limited edition of Signature Clutches titled 'Regal Attitude' recently. These are fabricated in silver and gold using filigree technique. Her collection of Signature Clutches is inspired by the wealth of India's heritage and Vandana takes pride in preserving and promoting the rich Indian heritage.

She has designed and created a limited addition of such clutches of different shapes and sizes, using filigree technique. Each clutch designed and created by her is unique and one of its kind and carries delicate and elaborate spider web work. Tremendous design inputs have gone into highlighting the spider web work to give every piece a distinctive ornamental look.

These designer clutches have been crafted by the traditional precision craftsmen from Cuttack in Odisha. Vandana states that there are only two important centers in the whole country at present practicing filigree craft, Cuttack in Odisha and Karim Nagar in Andhra Pradesh. And even in these two centers the craft is fast disappearing. She feels that the designers have the added responsibility to promote and perpetuate the rich Indian heritage, culture and crafts.

Vandana adds that although the filigree jewellery is an ancient form of jewellery being practiced in India



Signature Jewel by Vandana Bhargava - Sheer Magic into Jade / Diamonds / Rubies



Registered Emblem of White & Yellow Signature Crown and Necklace designed by Vandana Bhargava



Signature Bangles by
Vandana Bhargava - Play of Gems



Signature Bangles by
Vandana Bhargava - Intricate Web Design with Gems

for over 2000 years, yet this delicate craft has suffered on account of lack of innovative designs and poor finishing and marketing of filigree products. She states that she had to work closely with the filigree craftsmen in Cuttack for over a year to understand the intricacies involved in the various processes and to provide design inputs that could be comfortably adopted by the craftsmen in developing the final product. It took her substantial time and effort to provide feasible designs to the filigree craftsmen and in training them on various

motifs and techniques of finishing. Various motifs were designed for these craftsmen with flower/leaves themes to add elegance to the final product. She expresses her deep satisfaction at reviving India's age old craft and in providing livelihood to the families of filigree craftsmen by ensuring ready available market for their products, designed and created under her supervision.

Filigree craft, she states, is a very delicate technique. The filigree work in Cuttack, locally known as "Tarakasi", involves working with a thin metal wire twisted and soldered into a design. The wire is usually of fine silver or gold. The process of fabricating a filigree product is unique and demands rare skills on the part of the craftsman. Fine strings of silver or gold threads are produced by drawing it through a series of consecutive holes of very small apertures. These threads are then shaped into various designs and patterns. Slightly thick wires are first used to fabricate the frame and then small design pieces made from thinner wires called 'Sikko' are pieced together with precision to fit in the fabricated frame. A final filigree product is a result of a series of delicate operations.



Signature Clutch by Vandana Bhargava

The filigree clutches designed and created by Vandana Bhargava are a treat to one's eyes. The intricate designs of these clutches and the craftsmanship achieved are incredible. They are so delicate and beautiful that they decorate even the surface to which they are exposed. They are just glamorous. Vandana shares that it was indeed



Signature Ear hangings in gold by Vandana - Heritage collection



Signature Ring hangings in gold, diamond and rare Burmese Ruby by Vandana

a real joy designing these clutches and a lot of hard work has gone into creating 'Regal Attitude' edition. She states "When I finished my first clutch and held it in my hands, my impromptu reaction was how majestic, royal and regal! It simply developed a royal attitude in me. I have thus titled this collection as 'Regal Attitude'."

Vandana loves to use the natural gems, stones as they are, without any chemical or heat treatment. Most of the jewelers, they use to heat and treat natural gems according to their design, where as Vandana always tries to keep the natural as it is, so that the uniqueness and preciousness of the gems remain intact and valuable. The moment one treats the gem with heat, the original particles loose their own position and unique characters, then it just become a normal valueless piece of object, though it shines more but glitterity is not the only criteria

for a good quality gem, describes Vandana. From her ancestral possession she had a huge collection of unique and priceless ornaments and jewels. She also loves to collect expensive, unique quality rare precious jewels from throughout the world. But the proud designer is very much reluctant to sell any of her priceless collection, whatever money gets offered doesn't matter. She is very keen to save these articles as they are very rare and proud evidence of our Indian heritage. Some of the jewels are so rare that only few pieces of the same quality are available in the whole world. But of course she is ready to make similar design to her elite clients.

It is indeed a long process of wait to complete a fine piece of jewellery as she needs to collect the same quality natural gems over a period of time. Vandana is based in Delhi, where she lives with her IAS officer husband, daughter, who is a qualified leather designer from NIFT, Delhi while her younger son Varun, who has completed his professional course in Gemology and having a deep interest into jewellery design and very much following his talented mother's footsteps. He has started to work under her guidance - another star designer in making . ■



Vandana's fabrication workshop - Her Signature jewels being handcrafted



Santanu Ganguly is a writer on art, culture, lifestyle etc. He is based in Delhi.