

NEW FASHION JEWELRY

***Now at Be Dazzled Beads
718 Thompson Lane, Ste 123
Nashville, TN 37204***



At a recent Jewelry Show in Atlanta, Jayden and Warren discovered a rapidly evolving fashion trend towards reproduction vintage looks using new more recently available materials. These particular new fashion trends were the looks and styles of the pieces everyone there was selling there. A great selection and variety of these looks is now on display and for sale at Be Dazzled Beads.

It is important to understand, however, that, when purchasing fashion jewelry, there is more to consider than how a piece looks. You need to understand something about the materials used and the overall construction. Only in this way can you be sure that you are purchasing what we would call “collectible costume jewelry.”

The reproduction vintage looks are obvious -- a reference to the stylish pieces of the 1930s, 40s, 50s and 60s, using modern materials and construction technologies. Great colors. Strong and soft colors. Lots of faceting and sparkle.

The use of new materials includes higher end acrylics, new metallic composites, specialized glass and Chinese crystal.



These green components, in the piece shown above, are made out of Chinese crystal, not plastic. To the naked eye, you might see a similar piece where the components are plastic, looking like but definitely not crystal. The eye can deceive itself. Simple test: click bead against a stiff surface or front teeth. If crystal or glass, you will hear a sharp click; if plastic, you will hear a dull click.

These new fashion pieces should be considered “collectable” costume jewelry. But, again, it is important to understand what you are buying. There are many lower quality copies – what we’d call “disposable jewelry” -- you’ll find at discount stores and online. You want to be sure you are buying the quality we would call “collectible”. The price will reflect whether the jewelry is “collectible” or “disposable.”

So, You Want Your Fashion Jewelry To Be Made With...

**** Glass, Crystal and/or Advanced Plastics***

Typically, you will find a mix of materials within you piece. Materials you do not want would include enameled or colored ceramics or regular plastic or metalized plastic or plastic pearls.

**** Advanced Plastics, if any components are plastic***

Just like with things like wood or metal, there are many grades of quality among plastics. The differences between advanced plastics and regular plastics can be as widely divergent as between metals like gold and aluminum.

The higher end plastics, even when up close, look very similar to the gemstones or crystals they are meant to resemble. Jade plastic looks like real jade. Plastic opals look like real opal. And so forth.

For high end costume jewelry, the “point-hardness” of these advanced plastics, that is, how easily the material can be scratched, will be much higher, thus less easily scratched, than cheaper plastics.

**** Better metal composites and finishes,
with more substance and realistic finishes***

In these lines of jewelry, whether higher end or lower end, very little is real 100% metal these days. The chains are composites. The settings for the stones are composites.

In the metal-composite chains and settings used in the lower quality jewelry, at close inspection, you will find them to be cheap, flimsy and light-weight. Moreover, the metallic finish-colors are off the mark and look somewhat fake. For example, the actual color that may be representing gold, when compared to other quality pieces, may not look like gold at all.

There may be rough spots that can get caught on clothing or scratch the skin. In higher end pieces, manufacturers check their quality, to make sure there are no rough spots.

But always inspect your jewelry before you leave the store. When purchasing any piece of costume jewelry, you should feel all over the piece to be sure there are no rough spots

**** Better set stones***

Stones are typically glued in. If the setting does not have much surface area, the glue will not hold for very long.

In some pieces, the designs give the illusion of “prong-set” stones. In the lower end, the prongs have very sharp points. In the higher end, the prongs have smooth or balled-up tips.



Things To Do To Increase Longevity Of Your New Fashion Jewelry

After purchasing your new pieces of Fashion Jewelry, you will have the option to do two things to make them more durable and lasting:

- (1) If the piece has stones which have been glued in, and have open settings on the backs, apply some more glue to the backs of the settings, all along the edges. Use a glue like E6000 or Beacon 527. This will keep the stones from ever popping out. Reason: The glue manufacturers typically use dries hard, with no flexibility. If the pieces are accidently dropped or hit against something, the shock can make the stone pop away from the hard glue.

By reinforcing them with the E6000 or Beacon 527, these bonds dry like rubber and act like a shock absorber. Thus the stones are less likely to pop off.



Necklace with stones set in settings with open backs



Open back on set stones in necklace

- (2) On all areas which have metal plated finishes and which will be touching the skin, apply two coats of clear nail polish to these surfaces. This will

preserve the plated finishes for a very long time, yet doesn't affect the shine or sheen of the metal underneath it.

NOTE: This is very generalized advice. Every person's body oils and chemistry have different effects on the metal finishes. A person may be able to wear a piece of costume jewelry for months and years and it may not disintegrate on them; another person might wear it for a few months, and the metal finishes deteriorate.



Cleaning

All jewelry has to be maintained and kept clean. Follow this simple advice for keeping your new jewelry pieces clean and sparkling.

Periodically, give your jewelry a quick bath. In a bowl, mix a very-little-amount of baby shampoo and cold water. Immerse the whole piece of jewelry in this bath, just long enough to loosen any dirt. Take it out.

Under cold water, rinse it off. Take a paper towel or cloth, and dry the piece off. NOTE: "Pat Dry" with the towel. Don't "Rub".

Then, you might take a hair dryer, setting it on the lowest setting, and keeping it 6-8" away from your piece, and blow dry. DON'T LET YOUR PIECES GET TOO HOT. An alternative strategy is to put your piece of jewelry in front of a small fan.

Dry both sides. Leave your piece out in the open air over night, to be sure there is no moisture trapped in closed crevices.

Always remember that the side laying against the towel or cloth may still be more damp than the side facing up. So, before storing your piece, check and be sure it is dry.

Store your piece flat in a zip lock plastic bag. Be sure to push the air out of bag before sealing bag. One simple way to do this is to insert a straw into the bag, and seal the top as close to the straw as you can get. Suck out the air, remove the straw, and finish sealing the zip-lock bag closed.

Then lay your bagged up piece on flat surface. You do not want your piece to be jumbled into a pile. You do not want to hang your jewelry on a stand. The weight of the beads will stretch out the stringing material.

Put your pieces in a cool, dry place out of sunlight. Never store two pieces on top of each other without something to separate them. Don't pile up jewelry on top of other jewelry.

At a restaurant, if you drip gravy on your necklace, how do you clean it off? If it is something that has caked or dried on it, you may have to soak it in a solution of a very-little-amount of baby shampoo and cold water. Use a q-tip to clean away the spotted areas.

Your Reproduction Vintage Pieces Should Be Around For 30, 40, even 50 years

Your goal is to have your reproduction vintage to be around 30, 40, 50 years from now. It will keep its value. These pieces should not be disposable.

Go to your antique stores, ask to see their vintage jewelry from the 1930s, 40s to 60s, and look and see at the availability, quantity and cost of high-end costume jewelry. This will give you an idea of what you're getting with your investment.

In these older pieces, some were made from Lucite or other high-end plastics of the time. And other pieces were copies crafted in regular plastic. Lucite is a glass-like acrylic resin. It has a resilience, a hardness, and a malleability which made it perfect for costume jewelry. Regular plastic lacks the clarity and sparkle, yellows with age, and scratches much more easily.

Your new higher-end fashion jewelry – better made, more attractive, more appealing -- will increase in value over the decades instead of ending up in the trash.