

Jewelry: The Ultimate Gift

Take the mystery out of purchasing fine jewelry



An interview with Nader Ayad, GG, 1986, ISA 1992, (GIA) Graduate Gemologist and owner of Mission Hills Gallery

Nothing brings squeals of excitement or gasps of appreciation quite like a gift of jewelry. The perfect piece of jewelry can express what is in your heart, it can show your appreciation, or it can seal the deal so to speak. Marilyn Monroe sure knew what she was talking about when she said “diamonds are a girl’s best friend.”

But let’s face it, buying jewelry can sometimes be, well, intimidating. There are so many kinds of jewelry, so many styles, and so many gemstones, not to mention cuts and quality. Before you head out to the store to buy up some bling, it’s important to do your homework. To help you get started, we spoke to expert, Nader Ayad, owner of Mission Hills Gallery for advice. Nader is a fourth-generation jeweler and a Gemologist who graduated from the Gemological Institute of America.

Q: What should you consider when purchasing a gift of fine jewelry?

Nader: First, the purpose of the purchase. Budget is also important, but not as much of a factor as purpose. The gift of fine jewelry has a very special meaning to people. It will be used and saved for a lifetime, handed down for generations. Jewelry is artwork in its compact form and can be much more affordable in comparison to wall artwork. In some cases, jewelry is bought as investment to be sold in case of financial need. However, acquiring jewelry is not an investment by definition, but will not depreciate your portfolio.

Q: How do you help someone who is purchasing a gift choose the right style?

Nader: Jewelry designers can be a great help as a guide in choosing, but beauty and style is always in the eye of the beholder. However, after many years helping clients to find the right style, I am still surprised by some of the choices made. I help guide clients by starting with asking questions and then really listen to the purpose and emotion behind the purchase. I then show all the options available while discussing quality and cost. Ultimately, the right style is always the style the client is comfortable with; usually clients have reasons for their decision.

Q: Considering the price of gold has been skyrocketing, what are good alternatives for jewelry metals?

Nader: Silver comes immediately to mind. The cost of silver is approximately \$30 per ounce whereas the cost of gold is \$1,650 per ounce. So silver is a viable alternative, however, consumers should be aware that oxidization, corrosion and tarnishing are not safe for jewelry. Gold has been used for thousands of years due to its none oxidation property. Platinum is also a good choice due to its high melting temperature; however, expect to pay even more, platinum is a higher value alternate to gold. Carbon fiber and titanium are also used.

Q: Is it easy to tell between naturally occurring and synthetic gemstones?

Nader: Yes, and no. Depending on the gemstones being dealt with, a new synthetic material may be difficult to trace and it's not always easy to tell the difference in newer materials. Synthetic gemstones possess the same physical and chemical compositions as the corresponding natural stone. However, by studying the inclusions, or characteristics, within a gem, identifying how it was made makes it possible to tell.

Understanding the characteristics of a gemstone is detailed and can be complex. You can find a short gemstone tutorial course video on my web site at www.MissionHillsGallery.com, click on Gem Info. This tutorial will guide you, step by step, through the characteristics of gemstones.

Q: How do different cuts of gemstones affect the gem itself?

Nader: Cutting gemstones mainly affects their value, shape, and color. Gemstones are mostly acquired for their color, brilliance, and rarity, and they are sold by weight. The best color is achieved in a gem if it is cut so that color is concentrated at the bottom of the stone. Brilliance is emphasized by cutting the best angles for maximum light to be reflected in addition to high polished facets, which contribute to the gemstone surface pleasant appearance.

Q: What's a safe gift if you are unsure of what to purchase or not ready to buy a ring?

Nader: In my opinion, individuals can bond with their partner or upgrade their relationship with the purchase of fine jewelry. I can't imagine someone would reject any gift of jewelry, but something safe and sparkling in a jewelry box can be a birthstone pendant, a bracelet or earrings and these are all very thoughtful. Your gift is a message, so you should put thought into your choice.

Q: What are current trends in wedding and engagement rings?

Nader: Trends are created faster than ever and include affordable silver to very high ticketed items. I have seen the white gold trend coming back from the fifties very strong. White gold and platinum with all around carvings are still very current and are both strong trends.

The most recent trends are very simple solitaires and the personalized ones, designs which are not mass-produced. Most jewelers would assist you in

choosing by asking you have seen and liked and then guide you accordingly.

Internet based searching is increasingly popular, convenient and easy; however, regardless of how interactive the internet program is, it cannot replace the actual touching, the beauty of seeing a piece in person or the experience gained by speaking with a real person.

Q: What should a jewelry shopper look for in a reputable jeweler?

Nader: Trust, but always verify the jeweler's credentials. Also take into consideration the safety arrangement in jewelry store as it often gives you a good idea about the operation. Always look for the accessibility of a microscope in the store, this is *a must* in doing business with a jeweler. If you do not see a microscope in work place, walk out. It is also wise to check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) for the jeweler's rating. And, before purchasing a large gem or diamond, insist on seeing an independent laboratory report, such as (GIA). Above all, the best strategy is to develop a good relationship with a local gemologist.

Nader Ayad, Graduate Gemologist, (GIA) 1986; I.S.A., 1992 is the owner of Mission Hills Galley. A fourth-generation jeweler, he graduated as Gemologist from the Gemological Institute of America, Santa Monica, California. Nader has worked throughout the Bay Area including Union Square, San Francisco, Palo Alto and Fremont. In addition to beautiful designs and exquisite craftsmanship, Mission Hills Gallery also performs insurance appraisals and evaluations, gemstone identifications and gemstone testing, diamond consultations, expert opinions, appraisals and repairs.