

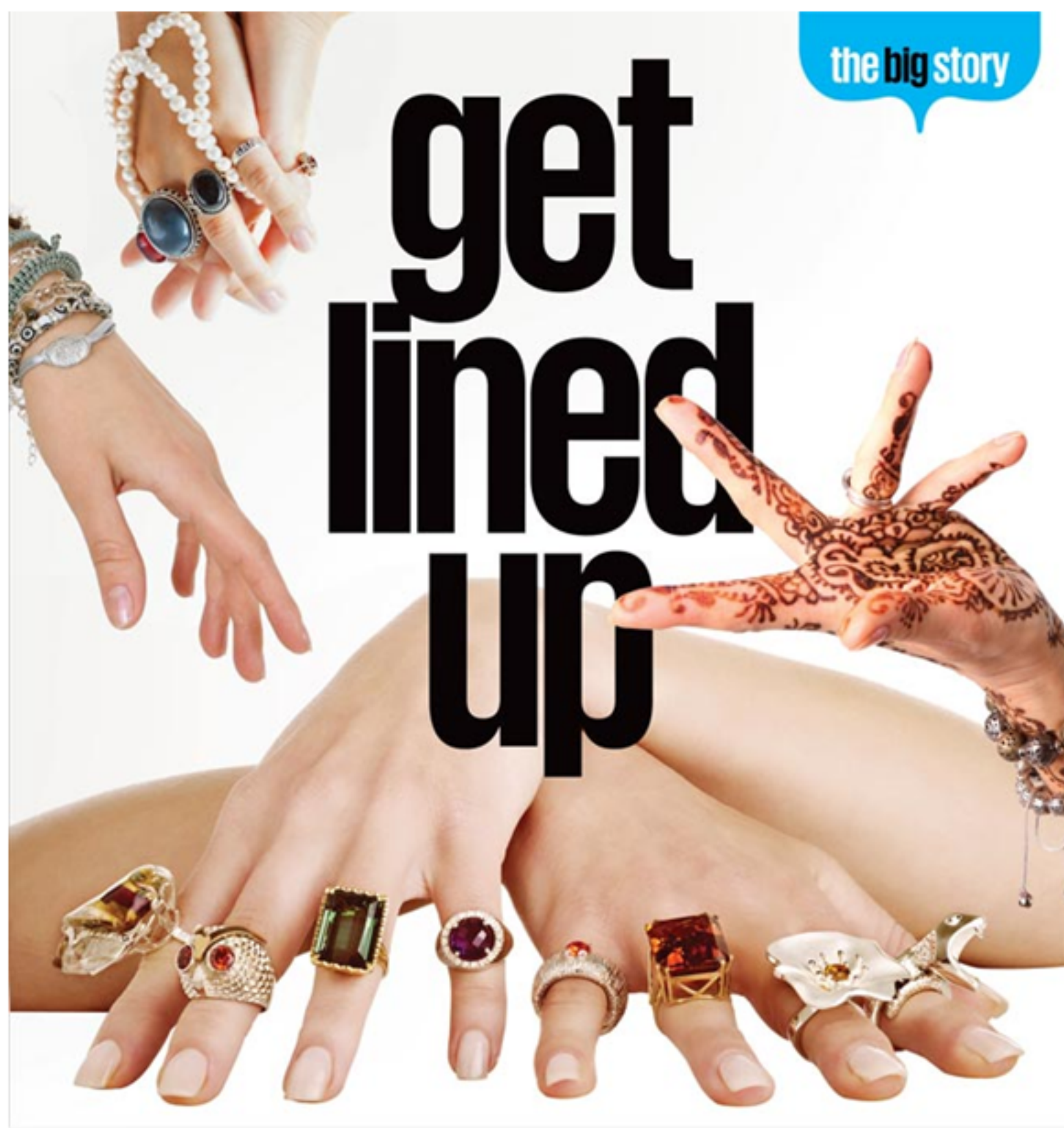
## Get Lined Up

Published:  
18 March 2014

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## Get Lined Up



A new designer line can draw customers and drive sales. But how do you choose the perfect collection for your store? INDESIGN offers 25 questions retailers should ask before buying a new line.

BY TRACE SHELTON

Published in the March/April 2014 issue

**HOW DO YOU SELECT THE PERFECT MEAL AT A FINE RESTAURANT?** Some read through all the choices on the menu and make their decision alone. Others consult their dining partner or their server for advice. Price, quality and the restaurant's reputation can all come into play.

Regardless of how you choose, the worst that could happen is that you're stuck with a bad meal. But when you select a new designer jewelry collection for your store, a bad result could be far more costly — while a good one can mean new customers, more sales, and a happier core clientele.

Retailers often base their selection criteria for new designer lines on a combination of lessons learned over the years and their own personality. Some tend to be more creative, and so they gravitate toward looks that resonate with them. Others are more analytical, focusing on required investment, terms, and exclusivity guarantees. The most successful have learned to do both, gathering all the facts while also trusting their aesthetic instincts. "We don't have crystal balls," says Debbie Klein, owner of Art + Soul in Boulder, CO. "You're always taking a risk, but it can be a calculated and informed risk."

*INDESIGN asked our America's Finest Jewelers panel, "What's the biggest mistake you've ever made when starting out with a new designer line?" Here's a selection of what they had to say.*

## 25.

### CAN I GET THAT IN WRITING?

Sealing a deal with a handshake is great — until the first sign of trouble. Get it in writing so you won't find yourself in a situation like the one in which Susan Eisen of Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry & Watches (El Paso, TX) found herself. "I took the word of the sales rep about details, and when I decided to act on them, the sales rep was gone and the designer would not follow through as we had agreed."