

Retailers poised for strong designer jewelry sales in Q4

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New York—Retailers who spoke to *National Jeweler* say they anticipate strong sales in designer jewelry this year and are either increasing their collections or keeping them level with previous years.

"Anything new always sells well," says Susan Eisen, president of Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches in El Paso, Texas, who has high expectations for designer jewelry this holiday, thanks to an ever-changing selection.

While designer-jewelry customers are usually loyal to brands, they still want to see something innovative, Eisen says, so the store is also creating many of its own custom pieces. She expects cushion-cut stones, including diamonds and colored gemstones, and mixtures with pearls, to be especially popular. Eisen is not, however, expanding her designer offerings for the holidays and is being more selective about what she carries.

"More is not necessarily better," she says.

Holiday customers at Aronstam Fine Jewelers in Indianapolis, Ind., will have an expanded collection of designer jewelry to choose from, including some new names, says owner Marc Aronstam. He expects designer jewelry will sell better or at least the same as last year because non-designer jewelry has become too homogenous.

"We're getting back to the core of working designers," Aronstam says, adding that color and cushion-cut stones will be top trends.

Amanda Gizzi, associate director for public relations at the Jewelry Information Center, anticipates several trends this December.

"Holiday gift trends tend to lead to sentimental and personalized jewelry," Gizzi says.

Popular necklaces will include crests and medallions, as well as updated takes on heart and circle motifs. Gemstones and coin jewelry will sell well, as will bracelets—everything from oversized cuffs to bangles, she says.

At David Harvey Jewelers Inc. in Norwalk, Conn., president Jeffrey Roseman says he feels there is a vital link between a store's reputation and the fine designer jewelry it carries, so this holiday, he will offer even more designer jewelry than last year.

Roseman expects diamonds to do well because they are "tried-and-true" classics, and predicts rose gold will be hot while colored gemstones will hold their own. In terms of shapes, medallions, longer earrings and stackables such as multiple bangles in tricolors are all gaining ground, he says.

Thomas Newcomer, president and owner of R. Bruce Carson Jewelers in Hagerstown, Md., agrees with fellow retailers' projections and believes it will be a fine season in designer jewelry. His store is not adding any new designers but continues to invest in current ones. He projects rectangular cushion cuts to excel and expects circles to remain steady.

Diamond sales are robust for his store, but Newcomer anticipates vibrant colors to do well too. He says trends will

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