



An up-close look at the diamond pave cocktail ring from Kallati that *Breaking Bad*'s Betsy Brandt wore to the Primetime Emmy Awards this year. The ring totals 2.25 carats of diamonds set in 14-karat white gold. Ring photo courtesy of Kallati

jewelry seen on this country's equivalent of royalty. "In a nutshell," says Martin Katz, a Los Angeles-based independent jeweler who has been dressing celebrities since the early 1990s, "the pay-off is brand awareness."

"I never have believed, and I've rarely seen

it, that a celebrity wearing a piece of any substance gets purchased." The majority of the public cannot afford the pieces they see on Cate Blanchett or Beyoncé, but it keeps the brands top of mind, driving traffic, and hopefully, sales of less extravagant pieces. Over time and with consistency, red carpet placements also allow brands to create recognition of their artistry, Katz says. That way, consumers know a Van Cleef & Arpels design from one crafted by Bulgari, the same way people in tune with fashion are able to distinguish Elie Saab from Oscar de la Renta. "If you put a piece of jewelry on the right

celebrity at the right moment it is a fantastic enhancement for your brand," concurs Sally Morrison, managing director of jewelry for the World Gold Council. "It's like the greatest



The 14-karat white gold diamond ear climbers Susan Eisen designed for Lauren Parsekian, wife of *Breaking Bad* star Aaron Paul.

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I kind of broke open the red carpet for all independents in every category of accessories."

Fast-forward 23 years and the red carpet is a place that is indeed crowded with names, and competitive, for a number of reasons. Andrea Hansen, co-founder of Luxe Intelligence, a full-service branding agency for the jewelry industry, was involved in the "very early years" of outfitting celebrities with red carpet jewelry, as she worked for H. Stern in the late 1990s, when the now-defunct Diamond Information Center organized a jewelry suite at the Beverly Wilshire hotel.

She says in those early days, there were

only about a half-dozen stylists, Rachel Zoe, Elizabeth Stewart and Phillip Bloch among them. Many of the brands and designers loaning pieces, Katz notes, still had a personal relationship and direct connection with the stars back then.

Today, the game has changed. Many of the connections now are between the public relation agencies/showrooms that represent the designers—for jewelry, think D'Orazio and Associates, the Luxury Brand Group and MHA Media—and the stylists, which have increased in number exponentially. Stylists cruise into these showrooms when their clients need a

piece for a public appearance and pick out jewelry that will coordinate with their outfits.

The increased number of brands that see value in getting red carpet placements also has expanded the scope of who gets loaned jewelry. It's no longer just A-list stars, like Jennifer Lawrence or Anne Hathaway, donning diamond and gemstone baubles but the spouses of nominees and the entertainment show hosts who conduct red carpet interviews, further providing opportunity for smaller brands, and even independent jewelers, to get their designs seen.

Retailer Susan Eisen, who has a single

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jewelry store in El Paso, Texas, designed four pieces that found their way onto three different personalities on the red carpet at the recent [Primetime Emmy awards](#): the wife of an Emmy nominee, *The Young and the Restless* star Kate Linder and *Access Hollywood's* Shaun Robinson.

After connecting with Michael O'Connor at an industry trade show, Eisen sent a few of her designs to O'Connor's StyleLab pre-Emmys suite, where stylists peruse pieces for their clients prior to the awards show.

There, the stylist for Lauren Parsekian, wife of *Breaking Bad's* Aaron Paul, took a shine to

Eisen's style and asked if she could create a pair of ear climbers, earrings that extend up the ear, for her client.

Eisen said they had only five days to make the diamond earrings, which they did in 14-karat white gold because of the time crunch, but, now, the jeweler has a great story to tell her El Paso-area customers.

The only drawback—besides the thousands she has to spend to legally acquire red carpet photos and clips from the broadcast—is doing so in a manner that doesn't alienate her regular customer base. "We have to do it in such a way that doesn't turn people off, (and

make them think) everything we do is expensive," she says. "If I make jewelry for the stars, am I going to fix their gold bracelet that needs a \$50 repair, or am I too good for that?"

The easiest way to convey that message seems to be to simply tell the truth. Eisen is only able to design red carpet pieces today because the El Paso community has kept her in business for the past three decades. "That is the way we are going to approach it," says the jeweler, who notes the experience has motivated her to focus more on creating her own designs. "Because of you in El Paso (we made it to the