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TALENT SCOUTS

HOW SAVVY RETAILERS DISCOVER DESIGNERS WHO SHARE THEIR AESTHETIC SENSIBILITIES **By Jennifer Heebner**

WAIT-AND-SEE POLICY When considering a new designer for Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches, **Susan Eisen** takes her time—up to three years, in fact. “I study lines,” explains the El Paso, Texas, store owner. “I want to make sure the fit is right, so I watch a person’s progress, how their work changes.” All 16 lines in her store are neither too modern nor too traditional. Another caveat: They

must be run by pleasant personalities—like Philadelphia-based Lagos, with whom she’s worked since 1992. (Firms she avoids: those that abruptly cancel show appointments, don’t honor exclusivity agreements, or have attitudes of superiority.) To find new talent, Eisen shops Centurion, the AGTA GemFair, the emerging-talent sections of shows, and, ahem, the pages of trade magazines. ■

