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DE LA COUTURE ET DE LA MODE DE PARIS

**CRUISE
CONTROL**
VERSATILE STRIPES
NAUTICAL BLUE
TROPICAL PRINTS
LAYERED PENDANTS
WILD CRIMPS

**RUNWAY
TAKE AWAYS**
RITZY SUNGLASSES
PARTY BACKPACKS
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**JESSICA
CHASTAIN**
GIRL WITH A MISSION



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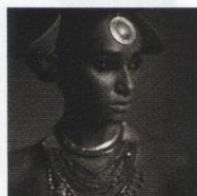
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LET'S PLAY LE BAL

Founder of Payal New York, jewellery designer Payal Mehta, after last year's success is all set to create jewellery pieces for the annual fashion event—le Bal des Débutantes in Paris this year. We ask her about her inspirations and aspirations in the mesmerising world of jewels.

BY CHHAVI PORWAL



JEWELLERY DESIGNER PAYAL MEHTA.



After the culinary world and interior designing, what inspired you to pursue jewellery designing?

Though my mother was a bespoke jewellery designer for few years and my husband is in diamond business, my inspiration to make jewellery came from within. My background in mathematics and physics had invoked in me a keen sense towards detail and mechanics. While I did my interior architecture course in New York, I decided to go into designing as well. And I thought, there wasn't a better medium than jewellery. My inspiration in many ways come from creating someone's dreams and aspirations into something they can hold on to for a long time. I'm lucky to be able to do what I do.

What is the genesis of Payal New York?

Interior designing was always my dream. While I was at the interior design school, one of the projects was to create a store of something that I was passionate about. So I designed a concept jewellery store for six months at school. It just felt right. And that's how I started. When I finished the diploma, I realised that jewellery is where my heart is. In 2009, my fascination with precious metals and hours of sketching on the dining table lead to the creation of Payal New York.

How was your experience at le Bal des Débutantes in Paris last year. What can we expect this year?

It was absolutely flattering and a huge honour to be the first woman to create jewellery for Le Bal des débutantes last year. Le Bal is for outstanding young women and a small group of very selective families,



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which fit my forte for customisation perfectly. Hence, it was a great experience to work with them and create pieces for such enthusiastic, educated, independent and elite girls. I am always reminded by the wonderful le Bal team, how my jewellery highlighted each of the debutant's experience at the ball. And I am exceptionally thrilled to go back. It's going to be a different experience with new a set of young and delightful women.

How easy or difficult was it to design for individual personalities yet keeping the le Bal theme in mind?

My speciality lies in customising, and I find it very enthralling to design jewellery for the talented débutantes. I wanted to bring the experience of couture to jewellery, as previously the débutantes did not get that. When I met some of them last year, I learnt a lot from them. I made a profile for each one of them while studying their likes and dislikes, their personalities and the gowns they'd been wearing and keeping the overall concept of le Bal in mind. However, each of those remarkable girls were different and that was taken into consideration in each of their designs.

It's interesting how you prefer one-on-one connection with the client, while designing for them. Is there a personal experience which encouraged you to do so?

When I was young, every time I went out to buy



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1. BIRD EARRINGS.
2. BIRD CAGE RING.
3. LOTUS NECKLACE.
4. DIAMOND SLICE AND AMETHYST EARRINGS.



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jewellery, it wasn't really a fun experience. I'd buy something and wear it once or twice and forget about them. Only when I used to sit down with my mum and explain to her what piece of jewellery I want, how I want it, the style, the shape, the colour etc, would that piece of jewellery actually appeal to me as it would be customised to match my personality. This experience made me realise the importance and need for a bespoke jewellery experience. Hence, I ensure I sit down with each of my clients and understand their personalities, likes and traits.

Tell us more about your latest collections?

While every collection you design is expected to be entirely different from the previous one, how do you manage to keep your signature alive, each time?

If you put my pieces together, you will see a trend in all of them. The energy from the universe is what feeds my design ethos and my main inspirations are always nature and global living with a focus on being practical. My idea is to create unique pieces of art, which are contemporary and edgy, focused on the tiny details of design and each of which tells a story, has personality, and makes a statement.

Which is your adored collection and why?

It's so hard to answer that. I only design collections that I am in love with. I make many sketches that do not come to life, but as I draw I begin to see which designs will come to fruition and be worn, so it's safe to say they're all my favourites!



5. PEARL & DIAMOND EARRINGS.
6. CONSTELLATION CUFF.
7. MIXED DIA SHAPE BRACELET.

What goes into the making of an ideal masterpiece at Payal New York?

It's a long process from concept to execution. First, I think of a concept which leans on instinct and then I do intensive research around that idea. Assessing my client's sense of style, personality and preferences, I finally, take all this information into account and design a sketch that reflects her individuality. My role is transforming information into ideal designs, so that when someone puts it on, it becomes a part of her.

Your collections talk about contemporary women. What are the qualities you see as a necessity for latter-day women and why?

When designing, I imagine the Payal New York woman to be like you and me. Spirited, passionate and always on the go. A lot of thought goes into creating pieces that she can wear to a cocktail party, an interview or while travelling. It makes a statement, your statement. I want my jewellery to be worn more than once. Since it is all handmade and not mass produced, it is one-of-a-kind and will be different each time it's worn.

How do you see Indian market when it comes to jewellery?

India's love affair with jewellery has been going on since centuries; jewels are woven into our Indian DNA. It's our culture and it's what we take pride in. The significance of jewellery in the country is evident, and it is in fact considered

auspicious for women to adorn jewellery. With my designs, I want to ensure that this part of our culture is always apparent.

What do you keep in mind, while designing for Indian women?

Today's women are constantly on the go and also multitasking 24/7. So my idea is to create pieces that are easy and wearable, something that reflects the individuals' lifestyle, matches their personality while of course keeping in mind the trends of the season.

Do you believe in creating pieces that speak to a woman and reflect her spirit? Which piece of yours is a mirror to your own spirit?

My personalised pendant PM (Payal Mehta) defines my spirit, since I love Gothic architecture and the design of both initials reflect this style. Also, this pendant has a dangling charm of a bird; I love the spirit of a bird-flying high, being free and at peace. My green jade and diamond bangle is another piece of jewellery, which is very close to my heart, since green jade is believed to unblock the heart chakra. It is a zone of love, compassion, trust and forgiveness.

Which are the top-of-the-list gemstones for you and why?

Diamonds are a must. I absolutely adore diamonds. It is also my birthstone as I am an Arian. My collection for le Bal last year had pink diamonds in many pieces, as they bring a sense of royalty to any look. I also selected other coloured gemstones that are not typical, like pink sapphires, blue quartz, and black jades. For my Starburst Collection I've used silver, diamonds, and gold to create a midnight sky. Green diamonds are a dream I wish to achieve someday. I don't just go and buy stones and make a collection out of it. Each piece is given as much time and energy, as if one were doing an entire collection.

What traditional jewellery making forms from India do you refer to while designing?

India is famous for its artistic jewellery which boasts of rich influence from the Mughal and Rajputana era and that has been a home to many different forms of jewellery making. I have always been extremely fascinated with jewels of the maharajas, as they were unique in its design and workmanship. I love to incorporate those intricacies in my jewellery as well.

If not a jewellery designer, what would you have been?

Interior designer. As a child, I always wanted to become an interior architect, which is why I studied mathematics and physics. However, I was always a daydreamer, lost in my own world. I also love to dance, so I'd have probably become a dancer too!

Tell us about some celebrities, who you have worked closely with?

I believe all of the women I design for are celebrities. They are special. They are VIPs. And they all deserve the very best! ■