

# what? **NEW**

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TO BE OR  
NOT TO BE?  
DUBAI'S BUDDING  
ASCINATION WITH  
HETEROBOARDS

KINGS ON HER  
FINGERS AND BELLS  
ON HER TOES:  
NADIA G'S LOVE AFFAIR  
WITH JEWELS

RIDING HIGH:  
LEADING THE CSR RACE

**WIN!**

SEASON TICKETS  
TO STREETWISE  
FRINGE'S  
2006-2007  
PRODUCTIONS  
P-3



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# A Sparkling Success:

A Tête à Tête with Nada G

BY RESHMA MEHRA

NO RELATION TO ALI G, BUT JUST AS AMBITIOUS, NADA GHAZAL HAS JUST BEEN TAKEN ON BY LUXURY DEPARTMENT STORE, HARVEY NICHOLS. PREVIOUSLY A SUCCESSFUL CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT AN AD AGENCY IN DUBAI, SHE QUIT HER JOB TO FOLLOW HER DREAM. WE CAUGHT UP WITH HER TO TALK ABOUT DESIGNING, HOW SHE'S FOLLOWED HER HEART AND HER BIG STEP INTO THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

**W**hat made you want to leave advertising?  
I never wanted to leave. It's not about wanting to leave advertising as much as it is about starting designing on my own. I loved advertising. But I always wanted to be a designer. Two years ago, I found this poem that I had written when I was nine or ten, in a diary in the mountains, and it talks about how I want to be a designer and I want everyone to know the brand. For me, whether you're designing jewellery, a can of coke or a TV commercial, it's about creating something. I wish I could do both, but when it came down to starting something for myself, I had to choose whether I wanted to dedicate my time to advertising or my own designs. I left when I did because the older you get, the more afraid you are of taking risks. I figured, I was single and I didn't have those responsibilities and I could do it.

#### How did you settle on jewellery design?

If you ask me what my first love is in design, I would say shoes. I absolutely love shoes and have done since I was a child. Jewellery would be my second choice and home accessories too. My mother tells me that when she used to buy me a new pair of shoes, I would go to sleep with them in my bed for a month before wearing them for the first time. But, shoes are very difficult to produce because you actually have to have a factory and I wasn't quite sure about having to work with an outside entity and not be in control of production. When I decided to start dabbling in jewellery, I found that I loved the material. I loved the fact that I was doing it with my own hands, whereas with shoe there's no way I could've done that. I got addicted to working with jewellery.

#### How long did it take you to get the hang of jewellery design and how long did it take for you to get the idea off the ground?

Because I started working with wiring, it was a little bit easier to get the hang of it. I used to





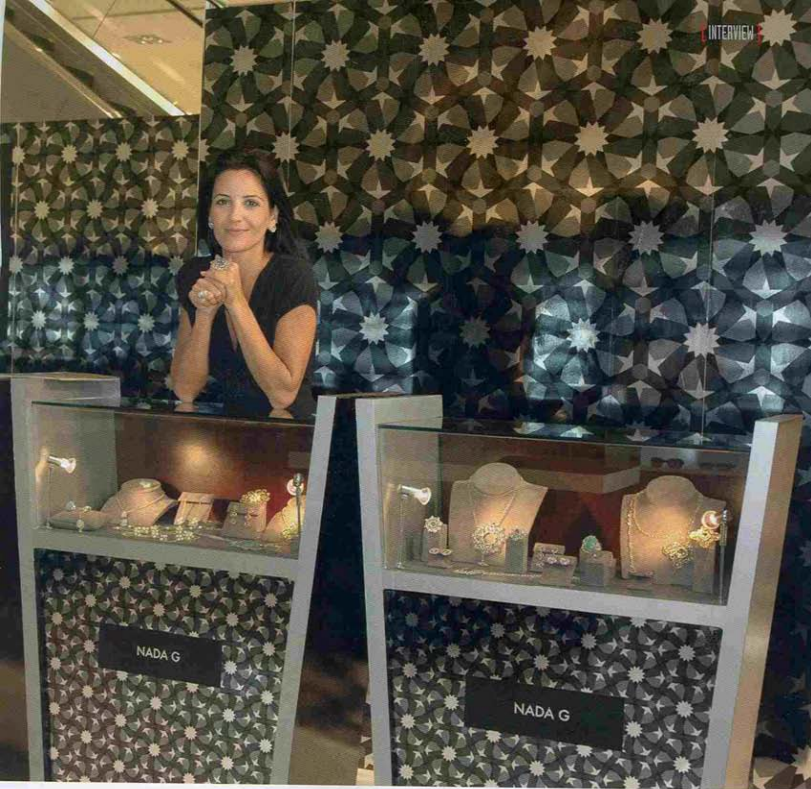
"EVEN BEFORE I STARTED, I ALWAYS KNEW DEEP DOWN THAT IT WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL, NO MATTER WHAT DESIGN BUSINESS I STARTED. AND IT'S BECAUSE I WANT IT SO MUCH."



go to a jewellery workshop and ask them for wires and make sure that they were 18K gold before I worked with them. But then I needed to do much more than that to figure out how to make jewellery. In order to learn, I would take a piece of jewellery with me to a workshop and ask them to make it bigger or smaller and watch them to see what they used and how they used it. I'd go next door and buy the tools and then try the same thing at home. It was completely trial and error for me. It took me 5 months before I could have an open house. I only had 50 pieces in the open house.

**How long was it before you got your first piece right?**

Not very long, actually. I've always loved



making things with my hands. I've always loved needlework. Even as a kid, I would tell my mother not to buy me bedcovers and things because I wanted to make them myself. I used to make them out of clothes, with sewing machines and so on. So, it came naturally to me to work with my hands again.

**When did you know for sure that this idea of yours was going to work?**

When you open your own business, you're scared every day. You have your ups and downs. One day someone might say, 'Oh my God, that's a beautiful ring, please sell it to me and don't make any more,' and you feel like you're on top of the world. The next day, I look at the details of the financials from the accountants and the nitty gritty of running a business and you think, 'God, how is this

going to work? Yet, for some reason, I've always felt in my heart that it would succeed. Even before I started, I always knew deep down that it would be successful, no matter what design business I started. And it's because I want it so much.

**Give us the timeline of Nada G as a brand.**  
I had an apartment in Beirut and I turned one of the rooms into a workshop and I used to work day and night. Once I'd created a few pieces that I could show to people I went to New York. I believe that if you can make it in New York City, you can make it anywhere. I only had a few pieces with me and everyone that I showed them to told me that I had to go for it and start designing jewellery as a business. So, I decided to pursue it and I returned to Beirut with that idea in mind. I



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knew this sculptor who I called to help me out with creating pieces for the open house. One of the people who attended, told me about an exhibition that was going to take place the following month in the Phoenix Intercontinental. When I participated, I got a lot of good press about the jewellery and the brand and that's when I decided to get organized about it. I got myself an accountant, got more people on board. Then, slowly, I started setting it up as a registered company and then I moved on to setting up a proper boutique. Now I have Beirut as my base and try to tie up with agents in different cities and countries around the world.

**Where do you get your inspiration from? Over the years, you've had to pick up and learn information about the industry. How have you managed to do that?**

Well, now I have more people in my workshop, so I learn from them. In terms of design inspiration, I would say from people and nature. When I look at anything, I see different things in it. It's in the way that people dress. This is the same for everyone.

There are always visual stimuli and it depends on how you use them. All the things that I register come together in the pieces that I create.

**The wire-work is almost definitive of your work. What does it mean to you?**

Some people say that it represents the idea that everything is chaotic, but that's not true. For me, it's about connection. I feel that everything in this world is connected and that's why the world is so small, and that's why I use small wires, because everything to connected to everything else in some way. At the same time, it is chaotic in connection.

**Do you like all the jewellery that you design? Which are your favourite pieces of jewellery from all your collections?**

I don't make jewellery that I don't like. There are pieces that I like more than others, but I don't create something that I don't like the look of. I only own a few pieces of my own jewellery. For example, there may be a piece that sells a lot, but I'm not crazy about it. Eventually, I will stop making it







and introduce other designs, although some designs will always remain; they are classics. I have a few favourite pieces – but mostly it is sparkling night and sparkling daizy.

**What should jewellery do for a person, in your opinion?**

At the end of the day, it's just an accessory that makes you feel good. It can be approached in different ways. People buy paintings for three reasons – for financial investment; to make their houses look good; and, to make their houses look good and because the painting makes them feel good inside. It's the same with jewellery.

That's part of what I like. I can bring value to those people who appreciate jewellery for its beauty and for the way that it looks on the person wearing it. There are those that don't care at all about it and I can't do much about that, but for those who do, I think my jewellery adds value and that is rewarding.

**Why did you choose Harvey Nichols?**

Coming from an advertising background, one of the things that I really like to do is build a brand and not just build a business for a few

years. I wanted my brand to be long-lasting. Part of that, is being in a luxury department store, with brands that I would like to be associated with. Harvey Nichols as a brand, besides the brands that it carries are definitely something that I would like to be associated with. I have had other offers from jewellery stores. Maybe I would sell more with them, I don't know, but being in this store with the designers, jewelers and brands that it has, is very important to building a lasting brand image.

**Would you think of setting up your own store in Dubai?**

Yes, I would in the future. Now I can't. I already have a store in Beirut and there is no way that I would be able to take care of opening another one at this point. And when I when I think of doing so, I'll have to think of specific countries and about where it will work. And you never know, sometimes the way things work out, maybe I will open in conjunction with a partner and not just on my own. There are many options with regards to that aspect of business. But I'm where I want to be right now. I can't complain and I'm happy with how far I've come with it. ■

# DRESSING YOUR SKIN



THE EXOTIC IS OFTEN REFLECTED IN THE FINER NUANCES OF DRESS - A SCARF WITH ORIENTAL COINS, A BURST OF TURQUOISE IN A RING, DELICATELY CONFIGURED DIAMONDS TO ADD A TOUCH OF FROST... VIBRANT AND INTRICATE HANDWOVEN SHAWLS AND SCARVES FROM INDIA, BY ISHA AND SHADES OF INDIA ARE COUPLED WITH EXQUISITE JEWELLERY FROM THE NEWBIE ON THE JEWELLERY CIRCUIT NADA G, EXCLUSIVELY AT HARVEY NICHOLS.



