

Rock Solid

BELINDA CHUA, FOUNDER OF LOCAL JEWELLER FLOWER DIAMOND, TELLS **MICHEALLE TORRES** WHY IT'S HER TIME TO SHINE

No one better epitomises Flower Diamond than Belinda Chua. As one would expect of someone at the helm of a luxury jewellery retailer, Chua is every bit as classy and elegant as the brilliant pieces that are found in her store. She has always been a fashion and jewellery aficionado and has a wealth of skills that could only come from years of experience — 14 in her case. During this time, she developed a keen eye for trends and has organised many trade shows all over the world, including Basel, New York and Tokyo. She also gained knowledge from her work with Harry Winston in Singapore and her growing interest led to the opening of Flower Diamond in 1996.

TALKING BUSINESS

I am driven by... excellence. We must be excellent from start to finish.

I owe my success to... the desire to learn and to stay humble.

A diamond is a girl's best friend because... it just is. You cannot rationalise it. Ask any woman and she will tell you that diamonds hold her attention the longest.

INSPIRATIONS

I am inspired by... my family, friends, nature, fashion, colours and life. If you open your heart, you look past the ordinary and find beauty.



PHOTO: SIMON SIM

"I became interested through a friend of mine while visiting Hong Kong," she recalls. "When Flower Diamond started out, it was the first jewellery boutique in Singapore that specialised in semi-precious stones and white gold jewellery. The whole market was doing yellow gold."

When the first boutique opened, Chua

focused on servicing young couples looking for wedding bands and affordable engagement rings. The brand has since expanded its offerings to include fashion-forward jewellery pieces that appeal to a woman's trendy sensibilities.

"We were one of the first to bring in a range of enamel and semi-precious bangles by designers such as Tippy & Matthew, Nouvelle Bague and Stefan Hafner," she says. "Innovation, which ties in to the creativity of the brand, helps it evolve. We have plans to launch a new jewellery line named Sabrina — after my daughter. This line will have the brand's signature look but will be geared towards younger consumers who have the buying power to indulge."

Chua recognises the challenges that the industry has and is bent on facing these head on. "To be different from what you see," she responds when asked about her greatest challenge. "Today, it's all about making a statement and being different. The public no longer cares if you are just good. The jewellery you wear should be a subtle statement about who you are, and Flower Diamond does that." □

My greatest indulgence is... to create and design jewellery that will stand the test of time and trends.

My most precious possession is... my daughter.

SINGAPORE LIVING

My favourite local haunt is... the Botanical gardens. I go there for the greenery and beautiful flowers.

The best thing about living in Singapore is... it is fun and safe at the same time. Not many places have this combination.

My favourite local foods are... chicken rice and chilli crabs.