

A True Gem: Kendra Scott

Written by Joanna Brathwaite

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Family, fashion and philanthropy are the foundation that has made this inspiring jewelry designer a global phenomenon. Kendra Scott has continued to create jewelry that women crave while staying true to her own philosophy of giving back to the community. Read on to hear her insight about upcoming weddings trends, her new Atlantic Collection and how her love for design turned into a business.



AFM: When did you realize you wanted to become a fashion designer and how did you get started?

KS: When I was seven, my aunt was a fashion director of a department store and we used to look through slides together of fashion shows, and I just knew I wanted to be a designer. I started sketching everything from jewelry to handbags and shoes. At 19, I opened my own retail store selling headwear for women undergoing chemotherapy. I had lost my stepfather to cancer so it became really important for me to be able to be in fashion and give back to my community. Making jewelry for family and friends became a stress-reliever for me. I would break apart vintage pieces to see how they were made and try to refashion them into something new and unique. And to be able to turn that into a business is phenomenal. I felt like something was missing in the jewelry industry. I wanted beautiful hand-crafted jewelry in gorgeous semi-precious stones, but that was unattainable and everything in my price point was not well-made or mass-produced. I knew there just had to be a way to make something that is attainable, high quality and in beautiful color gemstones, and that's basically how Kendra Scott Jewelry came to be.

AFM: What kind of community outreach do you participate in?

KS: Our core values of the company are: family, fashion and philanthropy. We do "Kendra Gives Back" parties where we work with charities in the community and give a percentage of the evening's revenue back to those charities. In each of our stores, we host about three to five per week. In addition to that, we give to every nonprofit organization that calls us for a raffle or silent auction. We have a "Just Say Yes" policy; we never say no. My philosophy, even before I started Kendra Scott Jewelry, is that I can always make something; I always have something to give, and that has stayed true for the last 12 years. Giving back is how I measure success. The bigger we become as a company is the more we can impact our community.

AFM: What kind of trends do you see appearing for the wedding season and how can brides stay current?

KS: Well, I'm all about the weddings! We have a wedding blog on our website that I update every Friday, and over the years I've been not only working with brides, but the bridal party as well. One of the reasons we created Color Bar is for our brides. We want her to be able to pick her colors, while the bridesmaids choose the style they want. I wanted a bridesmaid to wear her jewelry not just on the big day, but every day after that. In bridal today, people are being eclectic and fun. They're adding vibrant colors and having the ceremonies at unique venues. Weddings are no longer the traditional theme we normally experience. When you ask a bride about her wedding, the first thing she thinks about is what her colors will be. I think that we are going to be seeing more and more additions of color in the upcoming wedding season. A bride should always remember to stay true to herself. Also, don't be afraid of color. Perhaps introduce a pale blue stone in your earring for that something blue. Brides can create their own unique stamp on their wedding and still be classic, timeless and elegant.

AFM: Will you be creating new jewelry looks for brides?

KS: Our Luxe collection has specific pieces for brides, and we also have exclusive bridal grouping for those. We have also done a "Kendra Scott I Do" collection and a capsule collection made up of favorite pieces from brides and bridesmaids that we put together each year. The styles that we've chosen for Color Bar are really perfect for the bride and bridal party with the various color choices and designs. It's like a one-stop shop.

AFM: Can you tell me more about the new launch of the Atlantic Collection?

KS: I'm so in love with this collection first of all. It was inspired by the ocean—how it moves, the colors and, of course, the stones. When I think of the woman we designed this for, I think of a sexy aquatic mermaid. Every detail in this collection has been over-thought and woven together to create such beautiful and intricate pieces. We used actual coral for some of the bracelets, hand macramé settings, abalones, agates, and crystals that represent the sun setting on the water. We wanted the collection to stay true to the aquatic form inspiration. There are pieces that women and girls 20 years from now will still want to wear which is something we wanted to achieve while creating this collection.