

Retail

In The Pink

FOR JEWELRY DESIGNERS,
ROSE GOLD IS THE PALETTE OF CHOICE

BY SHARON EDRY



FROM ZOELLE JEWELRY,
VICTORIA LACE 18K YELLOW GOLD
WITH ROSE GOLD LACING PENDANT,
EARRINGS AND CUFF BRACELET.

Jack and Elizabeth Gaultieri, founders of Zaffiro, a Portland, Oregon-based goldsmithing studio, often take their wares to retail shows where they show off several pieces using rose-colored gold - and they usually get a strong reaction: "People come and talk to us, and say, 'Oh, my grandmother had a ring like that,'" says Jack. "Or they'll say, oh, I just love pink gold but I never see it."

Once thought of as quaintly Victorian, rose gold is now considered fresh and hip among many jewelry designers. Not seen in force since the 1980's (when cheap, colored gold pieces gave the material a bad reputation), rose gold was seen in display after display at the JCK-Las Vegas show this past June. "Almost all the designers I visited during JCK had some portion of their window devoted to rose gold," says Duvall O'Steen of the World Gold Council. "So the designers are very well aware of this trend."

At Zoelle, a Boston-based luxury jewelry firm, rose gold is used as "stitching" on yellow gold pieces as an added design element to its youthful pieces. "It's almost a lacing pattern," says founder Varsha Rao Poetzsch. "We think it's innovative and distinctive, while still drawing on ties from the past," she says. "We wanted something to make the design a bit younger

and hipper and naturally thought of rose gold. It can appeal to both a younger audience, a more fashion-forward audience, while still drawing from very traditional elements."

Gaultieri agrees that rose gold can hark back to the turn of the twentieth century, when the material was more popular and

prevalent. For Zaffiro, which uses the ancient goldsmithing technique of 22-karat granulation (in which tiny balls of gold are fused to a backsheet), it took a great deal of effort to come up with the perfect rose gold alloy that would hold together during granulation, even with a higher copper content. "I didn't think it was possible, but we finally came up with an alloy

with it," he says, "so it is more limited from our point of view. We try to use colors that accentuate the rose gold and play off of each other, such as pink sapphire and ruby accents."

For Patricia Daunis, a jewelry designer from Portland, Maine, using rose gold is nothing new. "I've used it off and on for so many years," she says. "Obviously, the color is really wonderful. And I find that some women just look fabulous in it, it just makes them glow - which is what jewelry should do if it really works." Using 14k and 18k rose gold, Daunis pairs the pink metal with white and yellow gold as well as red and white stones. However, she admits that the material doesn't look good with everyone's skin tone: "I can't wear it myself," she says, "At least not next to my face - I can wear it on my hand."



HIBISCUS ENSEMBLE FROM ZAFFIRO: THE PENDANT IS SET WITH A PINK SAPPHIRE (.77CTS) AND RUBIES (.40CTTW) IN GRANULATED 22KT ROSE GOLD WITH AN 18KT ROSE GOLD NECKLACE (SUGGESTED RETAIL \$3475.00). THE EARRINGS ARE SET WITH PINK SAPPHIRES (.80CTTW) AND RUBIES IN GRANULATED 22KT ROSE GOLD WITH FRENCH WIRES (SUGGESTED RETAIL \$4300.00).

that worked for the rose gold," says Gaultieri. "No one else had ever done it so it was a major breakthrough for us. But the rose gold is such a warm, rich color that it became a great seller."

But he admits that rose gold can be limiting in terms of color combinations with stones. "Cool colors like blues don't really go

express a two-tone style, which increases any piece's versatility. "It's not the usual platinum-yellow gold combination," she says. "It's a design element that hasn't been done as much, but still gives you a lot of options of how you can wear your pieces. We wanted to build on that because versatility is a trend that will only continue to become more important."