

>newsfront

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Study: Women buy themselves jewelry, but at nontraditional stores

By Beth Braverman

PASO ROBLES, CALIF.—Women continue to buy jewelry for themselves, but they often do so at places other than traditional jewelry stores, a new Jewelry Consumer Opinion Council (JCOC) study finds.

The study also says women don't need a reason or occasion to buy for themselves.

"It's something I have definitely seen in my store," Ron Traxler, owner of Jordan's Jewelry in Addison, Texas, says of the trend. "We often encounter female professionals or mature women who buy jewelry for themselves. Lately, they are even more willing to make bigger purchases."

Chain stores remained the most popular place among women buying jewelry for themselves, followed by independent fine jewelry stores, according to the JCOC study. Sixty percent of women, however, buy jewelry at places other than traditional jewelry stores, and the percentage of women buying jewelry online, at depart-

ment stores and at mass retailers has increased since the last JCOC self-purchasing study in 2005.

Although women have worked alongside men for decades, they are just starting to flex their greater purchasing power, Traxler says.

"Women didn't feel empowered to make choices themselves until the late '90s," he says. "In the last few years, they have been much more vocal about what they want and what they deserve. They'll say 'I want this and if he won't buy it for me, I'll buy it for myself.'"

Survey says ...

A JCOC survey asked women what kind of jewelry they planned to purchase for themselves in the next six months. Here's what they said:

■ Diamond jewelry:	43%
■ Fashion rings:	22%
■ Colored gemstone jewelry:	21%
■ Earrings:	20%
■ Necklaces:	15%



"Classic" ring in granulated 22-karat gold with an 18-karat yellow gold band by Zaffiro; suggested retail price is \$12,200. (503) 236-6735 or www.zaffirojewelry.com


"Crumple Atollo" necklace in 18-karat yellow gold with diamonds; suggested retail price is \$3,435. www.nanis.it

Women regularly spend \$1,000 or more on the custom pieces that Jordan's Jewelry specializes in, Traxler adds.

More than two-thirds of the 2,476 women surveyed reported that they had bought jewelry for themselves in the past, and 16 percent planned to do so within the next six months. Some 78 percent said they buy jewelry whenever they see something they like, and more than half said they buy it while shop-

ping for others or to celebrate birthdays or accomplishments.

At Leighton's Jewelers of Madera in Madera, Calif., storeowner Chris Miller says he has not seen any rise in the number of female self-purchasers, but they remain a key part of his business, especially for sales of less than \$1,000.

About half the customers at Herman Hiss & Co., in Bay City, Mich., are women who are likely to buy fashion jewelry or charms but unlikely to pay for diamond rings, says storeowner Tom Tabor. 

Tips

Host a ladies' night: Invite potential female self-purchasers in for a women's-only night of wine, cheese and shopping. Or bring your products to a local spa or into the home of special customers.

Tell her she deserves it: When women come in shopping for someone else, remind them to treat themselves to a piece, too.

Merchandise for her: Female self-purchasers go for entry-level product, and employ a strong eye for brands and fashion trends. Make sure your sales staff can share the story behind each brand.

Build good relationships: Women respond to and respect solid relationships. Learn their names and ask them about jobs or family.

Don't prejudice: Assume that every woman who walks into your store can buy any item in it. It is much easier to sell down than to sell up.