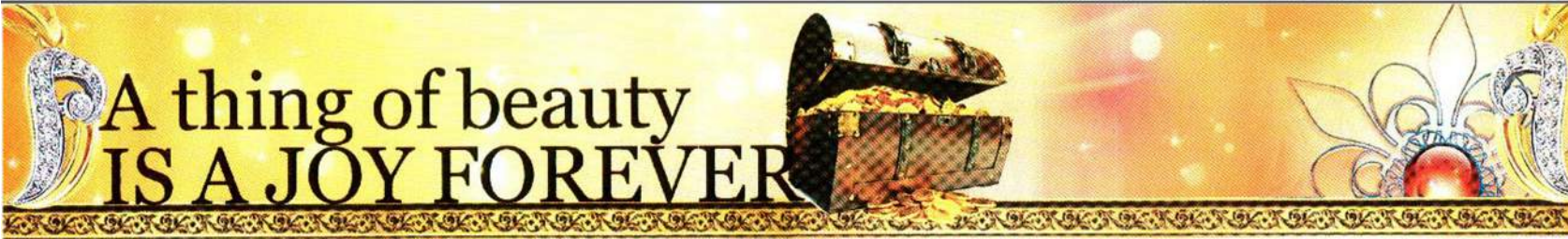


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Karpagam's 'TERRA-FIC' GOLD
 Wows Young and Old Alike



PICS COURTESY: KARPAGAM JEWELLERS

The twain meets in this beautifully unique combination of gold and terracotta jewellery designed and crafted exclusively by Karpagam Jewellers. Managing Director Mr. Balamurugan tells us "We are the only jewellers not only in the country but in the entire world creating this range of fusion jewellery. We have been awarded a product patent for our novel creation in India." Combining gold, terracotta with other gemstones like pearls, corals, semi precious beads, Karpagam's



head honcho tells us that it is the design that reigns supreme in this one-of-a-kind range. "The manufacturing time ranges from a

month to more than a couple of months depending on the intricacy and workmanship. Design dictates the technique used to make the jewellery and our in-house artisans are trained specially to execute these pieces." From pieces as light as half a gram of gold for pendants, Terra Aurum necklace and earring sets can weigh as much as 70-80 grams. Mr. Balamurugan tells us that customers across the globe flock to his store for these special treasures. These light-weight delights promise to enchant young and old, contemporary and traditional with their unmatched charm.

When Meenakari Meets Kundan

Kundan-Meena jewellery evolved from the Mughal-era's colourful style of ornaments

Meenakari is a colorful style of jewelry that flourished during the Mughal era, and was hugely popular with Rajasthan royalty. Over the centuries, Meenakari was combined with the traditional Rajasthani Kundan style of jewelry, where flat or uncut stones were set on 24 carat gold jewelry using lac and fine pure gold foils.

The result was Kundan-Meena jewelry, and it takes twice as many adjectives to describe it.

Meenakari or Enamelling is the art of painting, colouring and ornamenting the surface of metals by fusing over brilliant colors that are decorated in an intricate design. The period of the Mogul era had a great impact on jewelry designs & art of jewelry making in India. The Mogul emperor Shah Jahan invited the Persian artisans who made world famous enameled silver articles to train their master-craftsmen in the art of enameling. For the first time in history, this famous Persian enameling art was employed into making jewelry artifacts and it marked the beginning of a glorious era of enameled 18kt to 22kt Mogul jewelry pieces. The artisans of the Mogul era combined the sophisticated designs & techniques of the Persian art with Indian motifs & colors to



PICS COURTESY: SURANA JEWELLERS

produce some of the finest examples of enameling anywhere in the world.

These jewelry pieces had brilliant colored enamel on one side and magnificent hand-cut rose diamonds, rubies, emeralds & sapphires on the other side. Sometimes the exquisite enamel on the reverse rivaled even the beauty of precious diamonds & gems in the front. Gold has been used traditionally for meenakari jewellery as it

holds the enamel better, lasts longer and its luster brings out the colors of the enamels. All the colors can be applied to it and this is also the reason why the metal is preferred for Meenakari jewellery. The technique of Meenakari requires a high degree of skill and application. The piece of metal on which meenakari is to be done is fixed on a lac stick. Delicate designs of flowers, birds, fish, elephant, lion or

peacock head terminals, etc are etched or engraved on it. This leads to the creation of walls or grooves, to hold color. Enamel dust of required color is then poured into the grooves and each color is fired individually. The heat of the furnace melts the color and the colored liquid gets spread equally into the groove. This process is repeated with each color. As each color is individually fired, colors, which are most

heat resistant, are applied first, as they are re-fired with each additional color. As a rule, white is the first color applied and red the last. After the last color has been fired, the object is cooled and burnished or polished with agate. The depth of the grooves filled with different colors determines the play of light.

The Meenakar often works with a team of craftsmen. As Meenakari is generally done on the reverse side of kundan jewellery, the meenakar has to work with the goldsmith, the engraver or ghaaria, the designer or chitteria and judiya who apply the gems on the kundan or gold. The finished product is a marvel of the expertise of these different craftsmen and their techniques. Both Kundan setting and Meenakari are labor intensive tasks which require the skills of highly trained, specialist craftsmen.