



Bridal collection diamond pendants in 18K yellow gold and platinum. Confetti rings in sterling silver, blue topaz, iolite, pavé diamonds.



A Modern Classic

DAVID YURMAN is as timeless and spirited as his designs. By Lorraine DePasque

TO UNDERSTAND David Yurman, the man behind the mega-brand, you need to know two things: he often multi-tasks and he seldom stops moving. Distinctly soft-spoken with an easygoing demeanor, he's always doing several things at once. Undoubtedly, this trait has contributed to his becoming one of America's premier designers of fine jewelry and luxury timepieces and to his brand reaching its 30th anniversary in 2010.



Yurman's intense blue eyes reflect both passion and impatience as he tries to figure out the Viigo voice-activation feature on his new BlackBerry while answering our questions. Somehow, he

manages to respond with considerable focus and enthusiasm.

"Sybil and I and our son Evan (who is design director of the men's division) will be creating artwork for our new flagship store in NYC, to open in January across the street from our Madison Avenue shop." What kind of artwork? "Sculpture. Pieces that directly relate to the store design," says Yurman.

"Michael Gabellini, the award-winning architect, designed the new store and we thought it would be exciting and different to bring in sculpture to complement the new space."

As a matter of fact, Yurman actually began his career as a sculptor. In the early years, he apprenticed with celebrated

sculptors Jacques Lipchitz and Theodore Rozark. (That's Jacques Lipchitz of the renowned Picasso group of artists in Paris during the early 20th century.) Today, asked about his current inspirations for jewelry and timepieces, his wry sense of humor emerges: "Well I don't take medication for it. And I don't go on vacation to find it."

His candor is refreshing as he openly discusses people from his past who influenced his work. One was a retailer named Jan Becker. Years before the now fabled Yurman cable—a signature motif in his collection—took its place in the history of contemporary jewelry, the designer was motivated by Becker's advice.

"Jan took one look at my collection and said, 'Honey, it's all beautiful, but just make it bigger!' It might have been the Texas talking—Jan was maybe 6'2" or 6'3" tall—but she helped me to think of things in terms of scale. She also said, 'David, especially for you, coming from sculpture, bigger is better.' Jan was the catalyst for me going larger in scale with my jewelry."

Bolder silhouettes are central to Yurman's one-of-a-kind limited edition pieces that he's added for the company's 30th anniversary. Typically, one-offs tend to be more costly, but Yurman recalls words said to him back in the '80s by Julia Kellner, another of his mentors, also a retailer: "Remember, David, don't worry about the price because the price disappears if the jewelry takes my

breath away."

And taking one's breath away is exactly what David Yurman designs tend to do. With boutiques worldwide, from the Caymans to Turks and Caicos, Yurman attributes much of his international success to a universal desire to wear contemporary classics. "Most consumers don't want the 1930s Boucheron piece for everyday. They want a timeless modern classic bracelet, necklace or ring—relaxed personal luxury. And that's what we give them."

Yet the designer is quick to point out the importance of design evolution. "I'm constantly challenging myself to create and innovate." This season, he's focusing a lot on blue topaz, especially in the cushion shapes, which comprise some 70 percent of the designer's cuts. A key collection for fall/holiday is 'Moonlight Ice,' featuring white diamonds in a black field around a moon quartz as well as the blue topaz. "We're also revisiting our 'Thoroughbred X Collection' in a multitude of designs, and we're expanding the men's 'Heirloom Collection.'"

How does he stay excited about each new collection? "By being involved in innovative materials and technologies, by immersing myself in the worlds of fashion and art." ♦



The Classic three-hand automatic timepiece with Swiss Automatic ETA 2892-2 movement. From the Moonlight Ice collection, moonstone cerise ring and cable bangles in sterling silver with pavé diamonds set in black rhodium.



Bolder silhouettes ARE CENTRAL TO YURMAN'S **ONE-OF-A-KIND** LIMITED EDITION PIECES.