

# SOLITAIRE

# THE FINE ART OF JEWELLERY

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## LOVE & DIAMONDS

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# JEWEL TALK WITH MITA VOHRA

*On personal style and passion for jewellery*

*Words by Smitha Sadanandan*

KENYA-BORN, LONDON-BASED INDIAN ENTREPRENEUR MITA VOHRA MADE A CROSSOVER FROM LAW TO HOSPITALITY, and later detoured into jewellery – a circuitous route, no doubt, but one that she gladly took. She first launched her fine jewellery brand Jooal, along with her ex-husband. After they parted ways, Vohra started her own brand, Ortaea, in London last year. “There are moments in life where we are at a crossroad and are propelled forward. After 15 years in the world of fine jewellery, it was but natural that I charter my own course,” she muses. “Jewellery is my abounding form of expression.”

An avid traveller, Vohra draws inspiration for her jewellery from the places she discovers. “When I travel, it is about inspiration, ideas, and perspectives,” she shares. Vohra is also the Director of Sarova Hotels Kenya and a trustee of the Sandy Vohra Foundation, a foundation set up in her brother’s name and provides medical support and rehabilitation aids in Kenya.

The busy designer-entrepreneur lets us in on the various facets of her personal style, jewel care tips, and favourite jewellery houses.





*“Jewellery is my abounding  
form of expression”*

Jeweller and entrepreneur Mita Vohra, wearing black gold Kora/ bangle, ring, and earrings from Ortaea



*“I like to underscore my quintessential style with a modern functionality”*

**How do you pair jewellery with your outfits?**

Jewellery adds that magical touch to any outfit. My style hinges on strong, bold, and distinctive pieces. I love jewellery with a story or a theme that inspires me. On an evening out, I wear statement pieces, so the jewellery definitely come first. Of course, the occasion sets the scene. My perfect cocktail dress is a black strapless Hervé Leger dress with Saint Laurent stiletto sandals. Based on the occasion, I pick either structured large diamond earrings and a cuff paired with a ring, or bold emerald drop earrings with a stunning emerald cocktail ring. I avoid necklaces with an embellished dress. However, on a simple strapless gown, I love wearing a diamond or ruby necklace. For a deeper neck, a large emerald or tanzanite drop necklace or a lariat works beautifully well, while dresses with high necks call for long diamond necklaces or even a spectacular tanzanite pendant.

**What are your fondest memories about jewellery?**

I was quite the tomboy when I was little. My paternal grandmother and my mother – both elegant, warm, and strong women – often wore diamonds and pearls. I would eagerly watch my mother dress up for dinner parties in her graceful saris and beautiful jewels. Her style was her own; her long South-sea and Akoya pearl necklaces were my favourite. As I grew up, I began to love diamonds and pearls myself.

**What does style mean to you?**

Style requires a point of view; it is an innate part of self-expression. I believe that when you feel good, you look good. So, I wear what I love. Owning your style is reflected in how you carry yourself. I like a clean look with a touch of distinctive detail. Beautiful craft and cuts that suit my form are key for me.

**How eclectic is your wardrobe?**

I am a major travel shopper, from beach bags to clutches, from jumpsuits to evening dresses. I find it inspiring to explore designs across different parts of the world. There is uniqueness in the particularities and influences, in both clothing and accessories. Each individual piece, in its own light, is special. I like to underscore my quintessential style with a modern functionality.

**What’s your go-to work outfit and jewellery style?**

For work meetings, I enjoy structured well-cut dresses from Sandro, Alexander McQueen, and even Zara. On occasion, I wear trouser suits and sometimes for an edgier look, I turn to Maison Ullens leather trousers paired with a cream flowing shirt. I favour diamond-encrusted hoops, in all shapes, for daily wear. Such hoops segue from day-to-evening and jazz up both casual and cocktail wears.







#### OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP

Vohra, wearing a layered pearl and gold necklace, which she paired with yellow gold half-layered hoop earrings from Joal and *Armor* bangle and rings from Ortaea

A closer look at Vohra's Cartier rose gold *Love* bangle, Ortaea *Armor* yellow gold bangle and rings, and an all-time classic tennis bracelet

#### THIS PAGE

Vohra's Pro-Hunter Rolex *Safari* watch paired with a classic Chanel black evening bag and an Ortaea *Perspective* gold ring

### Which jewellery brands or designers fascinate you the most and why?

The legendary Harry Winston has been a favourite for many years — the story, the man, the gems, and the elegance. There is quite a list of one-of-a-kind pieces that I think are outstanding. The wreath necklaces are timeless and stunning, a symbol of endless evolution — they resonate with me. I hold sculptor-turned jeweller Wallace Chan in great reverence. The manner in which he uses advanced technologies and pushes his creative boundaries, working with gems and metals is awe-inspiring. There is an organic form in much of his spectacular jewellery. I have always been drawn to Van Cleef and Arpels' magical world of florals, fairies, ballerinas, and butterflies. There is a dreamy, poetic elegance innate to the designs along with a sense of luxury.

### Do you have a fondness for jewellery from any particular era?

Art Deco is one of my favourite periods in architecture and jewellery, for it represented a major innovative shift in design, technology, and structure.

### What kind of styles do you go for when coloured gems come into play?

I love emeralds and tanzanites that take centre stage on the design. I like to wear pieces with one important gem as the focal point, no matter how simple or intricate the surrounding.

### Do you have a favourite watch?

I love watches even though I do not wear them often. My favourite brand is Pro-Hunter, the first company in the world to personalise a range of limited-edition Rolex sports watches. I spent my childhood in Kenya, where my family has been into hospitality business. So I ended up going on safaris throughout the year. Serendipitously, I was drawn to a black and gold watch from Pro-Hunter called the *Safari*. I knew that watch was the right choice for me.

### As a designer and jewellery enthusiast, what is your advice to new collectors?

Focus on what you would like to achieve. Are you buying for yourself to wear or as an investment? If you are collecting precious pieces to wear, buy what you love. Distinctive designs, symbolic messages, or gems that speak to you are joyous buys. Buy something with wearability and style. However, if you want to invest, collect important, unique, and rare coloured gems or diamonds. Timeless jewellery can become invaluable heirlooms and they can be worn many years later.

### How would you ascertain the authenticity of vintage jewellery?

The important vintage and antique pieces are always signed with known origins. Such pieces are highly valuable and often have a provenance. Auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christies have the best of rare collectibles. Yet everything to ensure authenticity. Go for timeless pieces by major designers such as Cartier, Tiffany, or Van Cleef and Arpels. You could hunt out vintage pieces at Masterpiece Fair and Olympia International Art and Antiques Fair. Always buy from an established dealer with a good reputation — Seigelson, for instance, has exciting treasures with the finest provenance, as does Fred Leighton.

### Would you reset a vintage piece into contemporary style?

For me, the story or symbol attached to the vintage jewellery adds to its beauty. There is an art to treasure — I would never reset such pieces. 💎