



Pomellato high jewelry

FIVE TRENDS TO FOLLOW

This festive season and well into 2024, here's a host of ways to add an idiosyncratic – but oh-so-fashionable – sparkle to your ensembles.

Words: SMITHA SADANANDAN

CHAIN REACTION

Whoever told you never to mix metals hadn't the faintest idea that someday that would become the new style code. Warm yellow gold, sleek silver, white and rose gold and platinum are all perfect metals with which to create a happy jumble of chains. Layer up chains on your neck, snap them on to the wrist or wrap them around your ankles. The rule is to play it cool with chains – from oversized, chunky ones to delicate versions, and pearl strands and colourful ceramic-coated chains to gender-neutral styles and links redolent of signature aesthetics. Textural nuances also lend tangible newness to chains. Boucheron knocked it out of the park with its Carte-Blanche More-Is-More collection. It was a "Hallelujah!" moment for jewellery lovers: the *maison's* oversized flat orange and blue links necklace, decorated with blue, white and black hyceram in titanium and white gold, echoed quirky, cartoonish aesthetics, imbuing it with a feeling of lightness and modernity.

On a different register, jewellery houses such as Tiffany, Dior, Pomellato and Messika have increasingly opted to interpret links in fresh ways, and infusing more wearability to earrings, bracelets and necklaces. Contemporary designers, too, are scaling up their collections with links – whether by borrowing motifs from best-sellers, or dreaming up novel forms. Sculptor and jewellery designer Anna Khouri, who showcased her newest necklaces at Christie's this summer, designed them as part torque-part oval links rendered in gold or encrusted with diamonds. Oval forms, according to Khouri, symbolise the feminine. "My work conveys my feelings, my thoughts, my past, my goals for the future – every part of me that makes up my life," she explains.

Independent designers are starting to take links seriously. More than simply using existing link patterns, they've created their own. Vram's sculptural Chrona links, Brent Neale's chubby Knot links, Kavant & Sharart's architectural Origami links, Twist Kaleidoscope links, Fernando Jorge's Sync collection with integrated links, State Property's Markeli links accented with tiny golden orbs or the Bolton series with a twist on the popular mariner chain, Azlee's Greek patterned links, Sorellina's Capri link necklace and tiered earrings with stone inlay, Robinson Pelham's Chroma ceramic coated links in bright orange, yellow, turquoise – all are outcomes of countless narratives inspired by creativity. Walters Faith and Marla Aaron



Ana Khouri diamond necklace with pink diamond



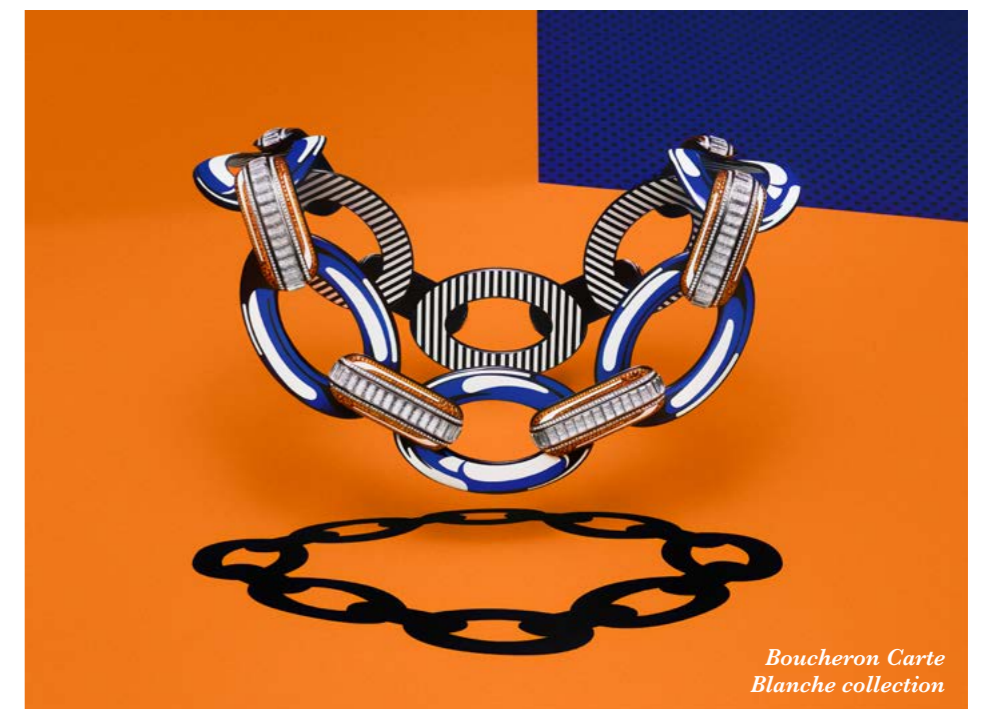
Peruffo



Nadine Ghosn diamond bike chain

have both sought to explore hardware: the Huxley by Walters Faith is inspired by industrial coil springs and bold retro styles, and Aaron delves into her obsessions with bridges, hardware and jewellery to create link chains and playful locks. Elsewhere, Annoushka Ducas has devised a link for her Knuckles collection. "I've often dreamed about designing a chain that's unequivocally Annoushka," she says. Designing a unique chain is surely the holy grail for any jeweller. Bringing this to life with an old friend and the ultimate chain master of Italy was incredibly special to me."

The chain system combines craftsmanship and innovation and is designed with countless styling possibilities, all centred around a curvaceous central joint – or knuckle, which connects the utilitarian links together. Whether you're a fan of the layering trend or not, link chain jewels are a great way to ramp up your style creds a notch.



Boucheron Carte Blanche collection

Tiffany & Co lock bracelet



Ice Cube bracelet from Chopard



THIS IS IT!

Slim bangles have cemented their status as the new It accessory, offering effortless shine from daytime to after-dark. Slim bangles are the perfect excuse to champion a party on your wrist. Stack up gold bangles with diamond- or coloured-gem-punctuated ones – and slide in a few enamelled bangles from a bunch of designers, if you're a fan of those. The It-bangles have become a jewellery staple for many. Roll up the sleeves of your chunky knits to show the sparkle or slide them on to the sleeves and glam up your winterwear.

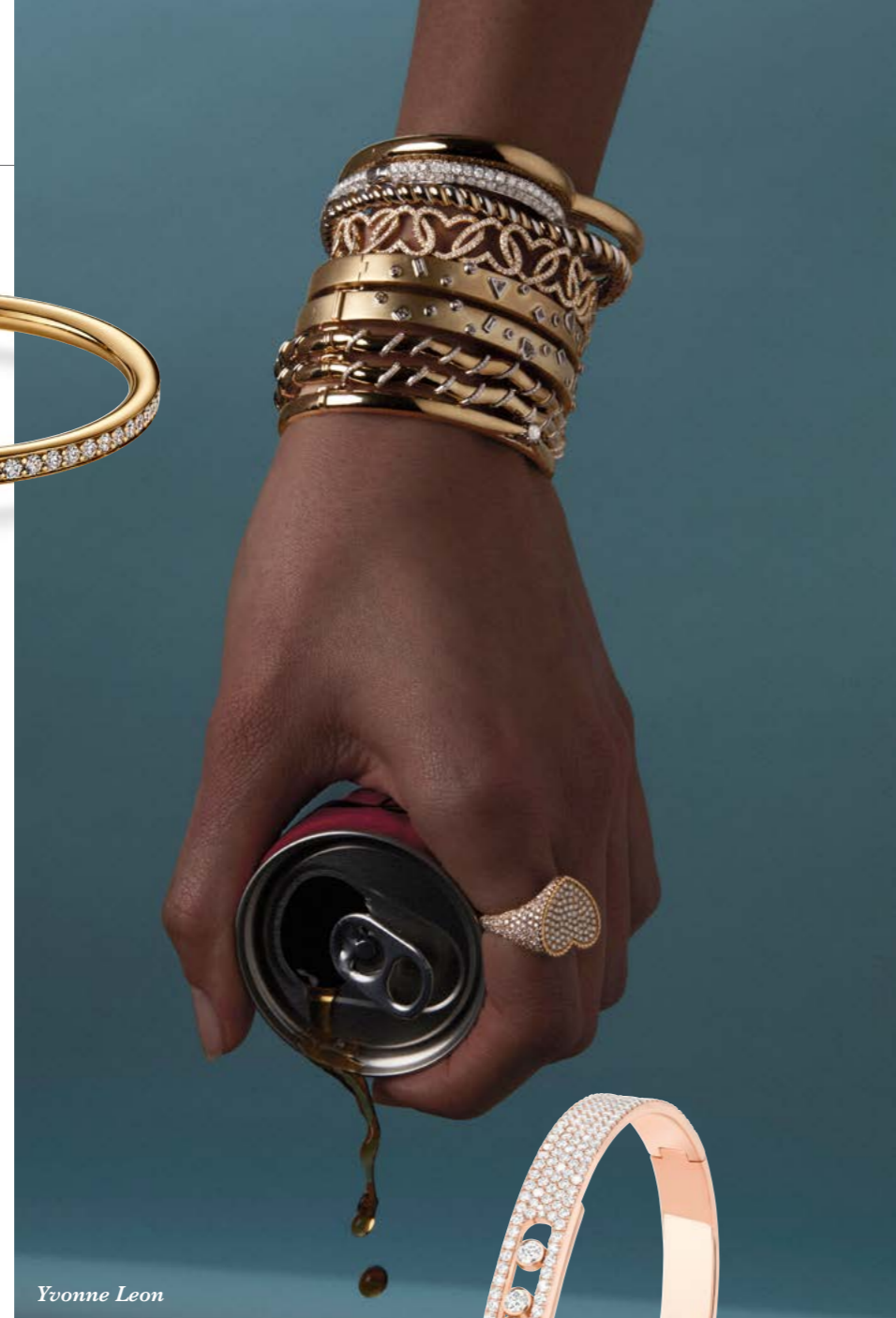
The Cartier Love bracelets that come with a screwdriver, the Juste un Clou, are all-time favourites. Cartier describes them thus: "A love child of '70s New York, the Love collection is a symbol of free-spirited love." Inspired by a padlock, a renowned motif since the 1880s, the Tiffany Lock is a must-have if you love bangles: the design now comes sprinkled with pink sapphires. And be sure to have fun with Messika's Move Noa and Romane collections, Chaumet's Bee My Love bangles, Dior Bois de Rose, Chopard's Ice Cube bangles. Subtle or overly sparkly, the new It-bangles have significant loyalists.

The sentiment matters when you want to keep things personal: diamonds set into morse codes, or secret engravings – take your pick. Designers are happy to customise bangles with birthstones. Yasmin Tjoeng of Maison Tjoeng combines a soulful story with her Midnight Adagio collection. Her asymmetrical ridged bangle is inspired by a New York saxophonist in the 1960s who became jaded with the commercialisation

of jazz and playing in clubs. "He'd take his saxophone to the Brooklyn bridge in the middle of the night and play with abandon out into the night sky, just for the beauty and love of the music," Tjoeng says.

Jamie Books of Mason and Books has translated the idea of a "free-flowing ribbon finding its shape, just as we all discover meaning through the messy disorder of our everyday lives" into a hinged bracelet named Folded Chiffon. Pull your look together in chic slim bangles from Hearts on Fire, Nikos Koulis, Kwiat, Fernando Jorge, Jouer, Ippolita, David Yurman, Melissa Kaye, Yvonne Léon, Rainbow K, Anita Ko, Boochier, Dinh Van, L'Atelier Nawbar, Jemma Wynne, Sorellina and Emily P. Wheeler. Wavy, square, oval, round – choose a shape that best fits your wrist. Or just go crazy with designs you love.

Yvonne Leon



The Move Noa bangle from Messika Paris



Chaumet's Bee My Love diamond bracelet

PEARL POWER

The new tribe of pearl designers rustle up minimalist, sometimes edgy and always uber-cool styles. The new mantra: transform pearls into adornments that prompt exciting purchases. Japanese designers Hirotaka and Yuta Ishihara use pearls in fun and sleek forms. The challenge with pearls, observes Hirotaka, lies in breaking away from their historical association with formal occasions. Since 2013, pearls have been integrated into more casual attire. He aims to blend contrasting values, infusing a rebellious spirit into his designs to make them distinctive.

"My intention is to avoid excessive elegance and instead maintain a street luxury vibe," says Hirotaka, who works with a diverse range of pearls for his namesake brand.

Meanwhile, Yuta Ishihara offers sassy pieces in his Half Pearl collection, where pearls nestle in gold hemispheres. "A round Akoya pearl is encased in a half sphere of gold and set at varying angles, from zero, 45, 90 and 135 degrees to 180, so by playing with

the angles, you can choose to expose more of the pearl or the gold," he says. The Slide series, from his second brand Yutai, incorporates pearls that have been sliced in half and backed in gold to look as if they've slid apart. Ishihara's Modular collection is yet another example of his genius. He uses hollow gold hardware to deftly "break up" the string of pearls, which in turn permits a single string to be transformed into two or three strands within the design.

Another designer with a perennial love for pearls is Melanie Georgacopoulos, whose background is in sculpture and who works with pearls in unseen interpretations. Besides designing for her own brand, Georgacopoulos also collaborates with Tasaki on her M/G Tasaki line.

"Often in the M/G Tasaki pieces, the material follows the design rather than the other way around," she says. Recently, she evolved the very popular Arlequin Collection, by adding a thin layer of yellow gold to contrast with the white of the pearl.



Slide necklace by Shihara

Assael's Watermelon Earrings

"The angle at which each gold cap is placed is a subtle but effective way to create a sense of fluidity in each piece. The eye flows from pearl to pearl effortlessly," she adds. Her latest M/G Tasaki piece, the Double Line Bracelet, is result of her quest for perfect balance in opposing elements. A line of pearls floats on gold disks outlined with diamonds. The hinges, which allow movement, are brilliantly hidden within the gold. For her own brand, the jeweller uses mother-of-pearl in minimalist as well as maximalist ways.

Indian brand Moksh, for its part, taps into its traditional proprietary pearl-weaving technique by using micro-seed pearls (around 0.7mm) for several of its designs. The pearls are deftly threaded, by skilled pearl weavers, using a needle, aided by magnifying glasses and microscopes.

If you're seeking out modern perspectives, Mikimoto, Tasaki, Austy Lee, Yoko London, Peruffo, Persée would be the go-to brands. However, there are others such as Renato Cipullo, Delfina Deletrezz, Sophie Bille Brahe, Pacharee, Sauer, Christina Soubli, Tejen, Kavant & Sharat, Eéra, Mason and Books, Mateo, Zeemou Zeng, Alexia Gryllaki, Marei, Halleh, all of which meld distinct perspectives on precious metals for pearl styles that you'd want to wear now.



Austy Lee



Mikimoto



EÉRA

ON A WHIM

With its eclectic pick-me-up vibe, whimsical jewellery is having a moment. Toys, food, candies, office supplies and school stationery are all turning into muses. Designers are reminiscing fond memories and turning them into inspirations for fine jewellery.

Known best for her spectacularly detailed and witty approach to incorporating quotidian objects into her designs, the late Noma Copley used precious materials to create necktie necklaces, shirt-cuffs and pencil bracelets, arrow pendants and button rings; notable among the art jeweller's works is a bangle in the form of a bent pencil, which has since spawned a series of cool stationery-inspired jewelled wearables.

For some, the inspiration is a slice of their lives. Sally Sohn also designs bright and sparkly pencil pendants, brooches, which she says, are "fond reminders" of her beloved father. Olga Pekarevskaia, founder of Maya Gemstones, developed a triangular diamond cut now dubbed the Maya cut – and diamonds and gems in this new cut now form the focal point of her designs. Her Out of Office collection includes rulers, pencils, paperclips morphing into gold or diamond jewellery; enamel accents make them quite cool.

Designer Nadine Ghosn infuses wit into her pieces: straws, forks and spoons wrap around wrists as cuffs, or settle on fingers as rings. Her earlier collections referencing biker chains, pencils, Lego blocks, headphones, sushi and burgers spurred her into the realm of whimsical design. Elior Mordechai turns pills into cute jewel studs, bracelets and such. Hangers, books and candies for the brand Aisha Baker are cheerful references, whereas suitcases and bags became peridot studded jewels from the Art of Travel series for Zeemou Zeng. And sunglasses and suitcases became part of NeverNot's Travel collection with

Aisha Baker, Ring Book Right Angle



carved stones shaping up the clouds and the sun and mini airplanes hovering on the sunglass frames.

For Aniko Ko, safety pins are diamond-encrusted earrings while kaleidoscopes in bejewelled miniatures transform as pendants for Drutis. Marla Aaron turned tiny inlay boxes into charms and Daniela Villegas came up with tiny blinged up gold cameras to be worn as pendants.

Some of the hottest whimsical creations, though, are from A Win Siu, Marie Lichtenberg and Van. Xiao Xintong, founder of A Win Siu, is a rising star and the designer of delicious candy brooches. The illustrator-turned-designer recalls dashing off to her local supermarket one day to buy some candy (it was December 2019). "It was a type of candy I hadn't paid any attention to," she says. To make the candy wrappers realistic, she used enamel firing. Special effects were also rendered by anodising and using coloured titanium and adding enamel embellishments with sapphire, Paraiba and spinel gems cocooned in the wrapper.

Marie Lichtenberg's Magic 8 Ball reimaged (in collaboration with toymaker

Mattel) as a wearable jewel was a great hit when unveiled at the Couture Show this summer. Tatiana Van Lancker, creator of Van, has always loved robots. "I love irreverence and my Van Robots are created in a light-hearted manner," she says. Hidden internal mechanisms inside the dancing robot's stomach enables the head, hands and feet to move separately, while also working as a whole. And this year, Boucheron's creative director Claire Choise designed yet another set of fantastical high jewellery, deconstructing "the most famous puzzle of the '80s", the Rubik's Cube, and turning it into a necklace that distils, in its shimmering cubes, the happiness of childhood.

A Win Siu

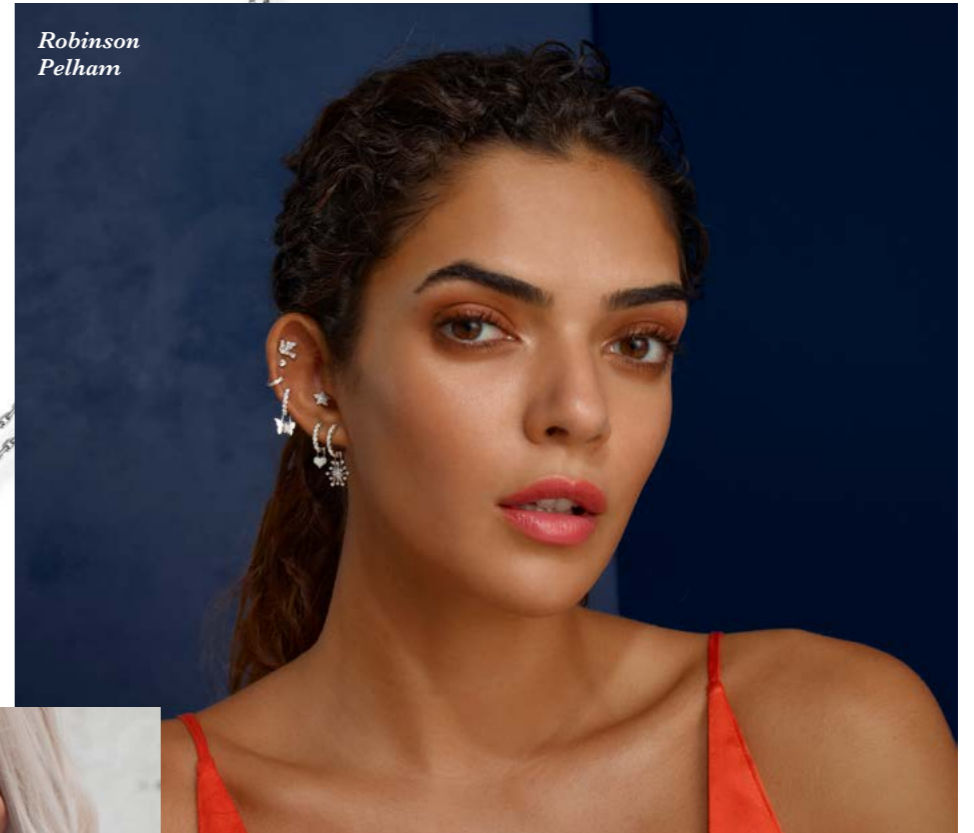


The Denim Van Robot necklace from Van Robot



Anita Ko

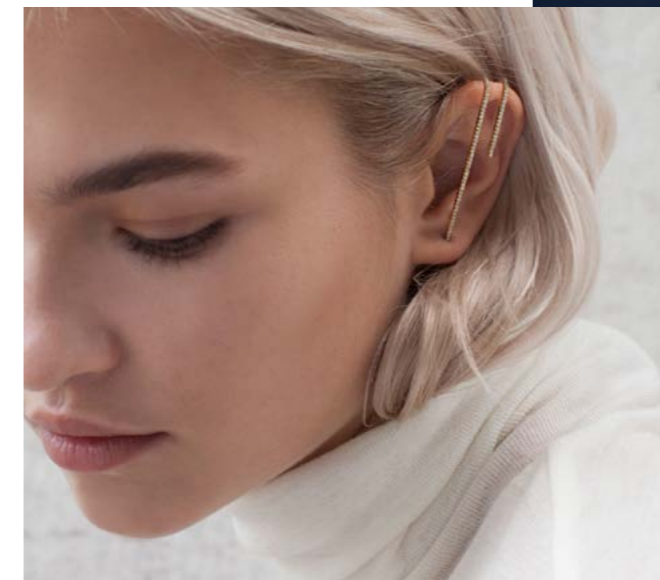
Robinson Pelham



Maison Tjoeng-Bebe Ring



Messika Move necklace



Mono Pavé Ear Pin from KatKim



Robinson Pelham Love is All Around ring

Vela earrings from Hearts on Fire



OUT AND ABOUT IN DIAMONDS

A new breed of designers has made diamonds more mainstream — and they're having fun. And the pretty little diamonds show up in more casual settings. The best bit is that you can get your hands on plenty of shiny treasures that work well as daily essentials. More of a minimalist? Invest in tiny studs fashioned as numbers, letters, emojis and floral or graphic motifs to enliven your earlobe. Maris Tash champions the single-earring look and has a wonderful selection.

Diamond-infused jewellery doesn't have to be staid. Wispy ear cuffs and sleek hoops effortlessly elevate the ear game: ear cuffs linked with chains and floating diamonds

or huggies sporting diamond charms, too, are great picks. Unexplored possibilities can spring up when you mix diamonds in varied styles that build a cohesive story. Add precious nuances to your jewellery aesthetics with two-tone metals, linear bar earrings, ear pins, pendants, sleek bracelets, thumb or pinky rings.

Ear stacks can be symmetrical or asymmetric, depending on how you wish to signal your mood. Delicate ear climbers, body chains, diamond belly chains can effortlessly evolve into style identifiers. Keep things chic to avoid clutter – floral, abstract, geometric. Stack and layer the diamond jewellery; with colour thrown in by way of enamel, rhodium, ceramic, these designs don't exactly scream luxury. While Hearts on Fire and Chow Tai Fook have dainty diamond essentials, Anita Ko, Fernando Jorge, Graziela, Hirota, Persee, Shihara, Nikos Koulis, Messika, Marie Mas, Viltier, Suzanne Kalan, Lola Fenhirst, State Property, Walters Faith, Robinson Pelham, Kat Kim, Mason and Books, Jillian Abboud, Melissa Kaye, Rainbow K delve into contemporary twists that align with their brand DNA. Just enough sparkle will transform you into a diamond devotee. □