

From Gemstones to Fashion Accessories

The Danish jewellery industry has it all

By Helle Rohde Andersen and Mathias Vestergaard, *Gademode.dk*

The Danish jewelry industry as we know it today can be traced back to the early 20th century, when silversmith and sculptor Georg Jensen started his workshop in Copenhagen in 1904. Organic shapes and insects inspired Georg Jensen's early works, and within a few years his designs were in great demand by wealthy citizens all over the world. Genuine craftsmanship has been the cornerstone of Georg Jensen's jewelry throughout the years, combined with precious materials and a classic but uniquely Scandinavian design.

Since the establishment of Georg Jensen, the gold- and silversmith industry has developed radically. Today, new companies are shaping the field and turning the noble craft into a successful branch of fashion. Danish jewelry brands like Arena Copenhagen, Julie Sandlau, Pilgrim, and Dyrberg/Kern have all freshened up the way we wear and think of jewelry.

Brands like Pilgrim and Dyrberg/Kern are promoting a feminine and festive style with colorful beads, rhinestones and silver and gold. The designer collective Arena Copenhagen is based on minimalist Scandinavian design traditions, combined with a clean graphic expression. Julie Sandlau creates romantic jewelry that resembles something you might find in your grandmother's treasure box. Line & Jo's jewelry is luxurious without being pretentious, and made in precious materials like gold, frosted silver and diamonds. Other brands like Fafafa and Zara Voigt use humor and irony as design expressions, with shiny, multicolored artificial materials like plastic and Plexiglas. This great aesthetic variety underlies the industry's growing success.

These new brands may differ in terms of aesthetics, materials, target groups and price, yet they all produce jewelry the way Coco Chanel would have wanted it – as fashion accessories. With four to six new collections each year, these brands resemble fashion companies more than traditional silversmiths.

Jewelry is no longer an indication of wealth and fortune – wearing hideous but expensive jewelry won't get you any style credit from your peers. Instead you have to coordinate your bling with your outfit in order to express your personal style. Designer and partner in the Line & Jo, Jo Riis-Hansen explains: "Jewelry has become a popular accessory, just like sunglasses and bags. This means that the concept of jewelry has been broadened, something the Danish brands have taken advantage of."

This shift is also underlined by a change in distribution. Today, jewelry is sold not only in specialized stores, but is also available in high profile fashion stores around the world. Designer and partner in Line & Jo, Line Hallberg, elaborates: "At Line &

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Jo we sometimes wonder if we belong to the fashion industry or to the traditional goldsmith trade. We make genuine jewelry of gold and diamonds that can be passed on from generation to generation, but



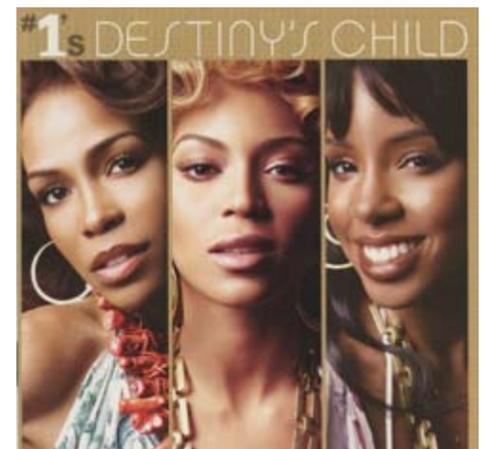
each piece of jewelry is still reflects current fashions." This unique blend of genuine quality and the ability to stay in tune with current fashions and trends is the key to understanding the success of the Danish jewelry industry.

Back where it all started in a small workshop in Copenhagen, CEO and managing director of Georg Jensen, Ulrik Garde Due, is well aware of this development. In the July issue of Danish fashion magazine *Cover* he said: "We need to remember Georg Jensen's roots without being too conservative or rigid – we need to be a bit trendier and a bit sexier." Until now this take has proven successful, with the 104 year-old company still going strong.



Pilgrim

Zara Voigt



Destiny's Child wearing Julie Sandlau



Fafafa

pilgrim.dk
georgjensen.com
juliesandlau.com
arenacopenhagen.com
dyrbergkern.com
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zarahvoigt.com