

Janine Binneman - a gem in local jewellery design

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Jeweller, gemologist and entrepreneur Janine Binneman, the name and face behind [Janine Binneman Jewellery Design](#), is using her thriving Cape Town business to empower women. Acutely aware of her role as a small business owner in creating job opportunities, she focuses her recruitment efforts on employing females whom she then trains and mentors in the craft of jewellery manufacturing.

As [Women's Month](#) draws to a close, Binneman shares the design inspiration behind her ready-to-wear and fine jewellery creations, and her journey to success from humble beginnings as a one-woman show.



■ Tell us about your journey into jewellery design.

My journey was quite unusual. I was working in Italy when I did my portfolio to study graphic design; I was adamant that I wanted to be a graphic designer. The head of the art dept in Stellenbosch, a friend of my mom's, suggested I would be better suited as a jewellery designer. I was not impressed but was told I could cross over if I was not happy after six months.

I am forever grateful for this shove in the right direction. I have loved making jewellery ever since and honestly could not imagine being this passionate about graphic design. Lesson: listen to those in the know!

■ What inspires your designs and how would you describe your aesthetic?

My biggest inspiration is travel – just to be taken out of my normal surroundings makes me see things I am normally too busy to notice. I have just been abroad and a whole new range has been inspired by flowers that I saw, smelt and felt. My ready-to-wear aesthetic is playful and often includes personalised and inspirational text. I really thrive on working with my clients and telling their story in jewellery.

My fine jewellery is heavily inspired by vintage design. I love rich detail that highlights the incredible beauty of the unique gemstones we use in our pieces – often these gems have been found on my travels!

■ How has your business grown since its inception?

The business has grown tremendously. Originally I was a one-woman show, now my team comprises five rock star women.

I have trained and mentored four female goldsmiths who have gone on to open their unique businesses since the inception of JBJD. I believe 'empowered women empower women'.

What has been the toughest business lesson you've had to learn during your entrepreneurship venture?

Never quit, never complain and never stop hustling. Hard work and passion can only be successful.

What do you love most about your job?

I love the interaction with my clients, the energy exchange is exhilarating! If that is not enough, I then have the total joy of designing – playing with ideas, metals and gemstones. I don't think there is a better job out there for me.

How do you think consumers could be encouraged to purchase more locally-made goods?

Consumers need to understand that SMEs are people who create job opportunities, sending money back into our communities and keeping commerce local. We have incredible talent in SA and the support of our consumers is priceless. Every time a piece of jewellery is bought from us, you help us pay school fees, dance classes for our kids and you help us pay salaries.



■ ***What are your thoughts on the local creative scene at the moment?***

We are living in very exciting times. The creative scene in SA is booming, there is so much diversity, individual voices and perspectives. We have a *can do attitude* in SA, creatives believe that the impossible is very possible. We had Madiba who showed us how it was possible to create change beyond belief.

🍷 ***In the spirit of Women's Month, what advice do you have for other budding female creatives?***

You have infinite possibilities! Work with other women, ask, challenge, inform, exchange and collaborate. You are not alone. Empowered women empower women.

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