

# A driving passion



by Shelly Bar-El

**B**lush talks with jewelry designer Irit Goffer Sasson. Irit Goffer Sasson's love affair with jewelry design began some 22 years ago. Sasson always loved jewelry and she designed pieces as a hobby, but it soon became a driving passion, leading her to study in Milan at the Istituto di Disegno. Sasson began her professional journey in 1986 as an independent jewelry designer making exclusive pieces for private customers; in 1999 she began exporting her designs abroad. The Amaro chain of 25 stores, six of which are in Israel, has 18 franchises around the world -- in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Italy and China. Amaro is in 28 countries, which include Italy, the UK, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland, Japan, Australia, the US and Canada. In 2009, four stores will open in the Caribbean. Sasson specializes in adding semi-precious stones to her jewelry, using Swarovski and other crystals, as well as turquoise, pearls and various materials, playing with combinations of textures and colors. All her pieces are handmade. This busy designer is married to Aviad and is the mother of Magali (20),



Stav (23) and Yam (12½).

## What is your view on jewelry?

The wearer should always feel comfortable, and the piece should express personal taste for a holistic, pleasant effect.

## What do you wear most often?

My personal favorite is wearing bracelets or chains, depending on my outfit.

## What are your favorite materials?

The more natural the better, such as stones, bone and gemstones.

## Which gems do you like best?

Pearls, coral and turquoise.

## And your favorite shapes?

I love round shapes. Spiral movement is best for me.

## Do you wear only your own creations?

Of course – only my own.

## What is your favorite color?

Fuchsia and orange. I love the colors of sunset, as well as turquoise. Those are the colors I chose for my packaging because to me they symbolize earth and the sea.

## What about trends?

I am affected and inspired by worldwide trends I see in magazines, but whenever possible I take only what I like, sometimes much later, because it's difficult to contain my own creative ideas as well as everything that's going on in the world.

## What is your most successful piece?

The hamsa, which was among my first designs. It was sold on El Al planes and still appears in its booklet. I've been making them for 20 years. This was the design worn by supermodel Michaela Bercu on the La'isha cover. I feel a sense of closure now that the hamsa is a hit once again.

## What inspires you?

It's never the same source. For example, I designed my Jeans Collection when I was deep into the study of Kabbala. I am influenced by my travels, beaches and by various cultures and historical eras that I research and "archive."

## Who are your favorite designers?

Right now I wear only Gypsy fashions I sell in the store, but usually I'm not interested in clothing.

## Do you travel a lot?

Yes. I have stores all over the world which I visit, and once or twice a year I travel to an exotic location such as the Maldives.

## How much jewelry do you pack?

When I fly to meetings in Japan or Europe, I always take a lot. But if I'm going on vacation, I don't pack any. I usually wear a great deal of coral and turquoise for good energy.

## Which celebrities have worn your designs?

Oprah chose one of my pieces for a cover shot for her magazine, which gave me tremendous publicity. And the princess of Norway wore one of my designs at two different events. Drew Barrymore included a chain I designed in her list of "musts" in a magazine interview.

## What kind of music do you like?

I'm eclectic. A friend of mine makes mixes for me, with Bob Marley, Nick Cave, Leonard Cohen, Tim Morrison, Bob Dylan and Matisyahu.

## How do you relax?

I try to give myself a quiet place and do meditation or be in water, listen to music or read.

## Vacation spot?

It has to have lots of water and be quiet, relaxing and charming – we're a wave-loving family.

## Do you have any collections?

I really don't like formal collecting; I pick up natural objects such as stones and wood. I do have a collection of decorative precious stones for decoration, and I sometimes use them in various ways.