

Gold Rush



Gold is currently fetching its highest ever prices since the US stock market crash in 1987. And in the light of recent fashionista approval, it's more than just a smart investment. Kate Moss notably wears yellow gold jewellery, splashed across this season's H. Stern and Fred advertising campaigns. It seems yellow gold is finally making a glamorous return says *Clare Adler*

Given her recent antics, Kate Moss might not be appearing in jewellery ads for much longer, but there's little to stop her from continuing to be a style icon. She's wearing yellow gold and jewellery lovers the world over are likely to follow.

The steely appearance of cool white metal will always look great. Yet given the sheer ubiquity of white metals in recent years, it's easy to forget that gold offers benefits all of its own.

Gold is versatile and wearable and it brightens the complexion. And given the rush of designers in recent years using semi precious stones in fashion jewellery, the introduction of gold seems the natural next step. Los Angeles based jewellery designer Uyen-Uyen (affectionately known as U2) who works mainly with gold says it is "the ideal complement" to the precious and the finest semi precious stones she uses. U2 has been finding her gold pieces increasingly popular recently. Her latest *pièce de resistance* is a stunning, long woven 14 carat gold lariat belt.

Since it's easier to texture, carve and forge than other metals, especially platinum, gold is also the perfect metal for showing off detailed handcrafting. Victorian gold bracelets and collars (wide necklaces that rest at the bottom of the neck) are currently selling well at Gray's Antiques Market in Mayfair.. The intricate detailing on a beautiful gold bracelet from Beverley Beverley R is finished with grape bunch motifs. Dated circa 1875, its Vatican hallmark means it is the work of a goldsmith probably responsible for making religious jewellery.

Golden Stones, left, and Fluid Gold, right, by H. Stern



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There's a little bit of irony in the modern penchant for Victorian gold jewellery though. Much jewellery from this period is convertible, boasting detachable pieces which transform necklaces into belts and elements of necklaces into earrings or pendants. While in the 21st century we're caught up living a frenetically paced life doing just about anything to save time, many women are seeking out jewellery which works just as well for the day as for the evening. The goldsmiths of the 19th century might have been designing jewellery which offered versatility and a variety of looks, but it's unlikely their female customers were half as time-conscious as those of today.

Gold's flexibility also lends itself well to the present fascination with jewellery chains. In one form or another, different takes on chains in various metals and fabrics will be all over the place in 2006. Lara Bohinc's stunning bracelets and earrings from her Knot collection are available at Harrods brand new fine jewellery room.

The warmth and possibilities of gold are nothing new to the designers at H Stern. “Unlike platinum, gold has flexibility and lends itself to more creative and innovative designs, textures and finishes,” says creative director Roberto Stern. The company has now developed its own patented gold, 18K Noble gold, an intermediary between white and yellow. “It's a perfect shade because it combines the discreet elegance of white gold and the warmth of yellow,” says Stern.

Of course, there's often that white or yellow dilemma, but award winning jeweller Barbara Tipple doesn't agree. “It's such a shame people stick to one metal. Sometimes, a mixed media piece can be the missing link which ties in pieces of differing metal, which could otherwise go unworn,” says Tipple, who has just had her engagement ring “upgraded” by her master goldsmith husband. Made of platinum and set in yellow gold with fine gold detail, the ring is a light fancy yellow diamond (“gold and yellow diamonds are perfect for blondes”).

Meanwhile, when it comes to timepieces, rose gold is the one to watch. But there's still plenty of yellow gold to choose from, starting with Versace's Faubourg de Paris with a huge Greek Medusa on the dial. My favourite for this Christmas is without a doubt the Chaumet ladies rose gold Dandy with its brown satin strap and Chaumet diamond stripes on the dial.



18 ct Gold and opal ring by Barbara Tipple



Faubourg de Paris watch by Versace

Gold Bracelet from Knots collection by Lara Bohinc

