



# JEWELLERY IN CONTEMPORARY IDIOM

Thanks to a new generation of Marwaris, traditional wedding jewellery has undergone a complete facelift. Gemologists-cum-designers Yash Agarwal, Bina Goenka and Rishabh Tongya tell **MARWAR** how they have reinvented their creations with luxury as the new mantra.

Text \* **Preeta Agarwal**

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ODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF luxury have resulted in a makeover of everything from food to fashion. If Marwari weddings have seen an innovative union of tradition with western luxury, then so has bridal jewellery. We spoke to three jewellers—Yash Agarwal of Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jewellers; Bina Goenka, who has her namesake label; and Rishabh Tongya of Diacolor—all masters in their craft, who believe

that traditional jewellery can look as enchanting on Indian shores as abroad.

The most striking change in modern wedding jewellery is, perhaps, in colour. Stones in the conventional shades of red and green have made way for gems in playful hues of—purple, peacock blue, pink and orange—as brides have, figuratively, opened up their boudoirs. However, with the exception of a few



L—R from facing page: Cumberbund in yellow gold with diamonds, emeralds and rubies from Bina Goenka; raw gold and diamond slice pendant necklace; Bina Goenka; emerald drop earrings in yellow gold



predictable floral patterns, contemporary jewellery designed by Yash Agarwal continues to use Rajasthan's architecture, folk art and culture as inspiration. "All our collections, from 'Hunar', the *kundan-meena* collection, to 'Amer' which is inspired by the architecture of Rajasthan, have a strong touch of Rajasthani royalty in them. Within this context, we use a combination of bright and subtly coloured stones and coloured diamonds," says Agarwal. Chokers, bangles and earrings especially lend themselves to this design sensibility,

readily showcasing a riot of colours. So does the ever-popular *kundan-meena*, another colourful yet traditional element of bridal jewellery which also easily falls into step with these sort of aesthetics.

Catering to the market, these three designers have also noticed that the traditional bridal trousseau, coupled with vintage styles and modern pieces, is another must-have for Marwari brides. While Agarwal offers the complete range (necklaces, earrings, *haathphool*, bangles, *baju bandh* and rings), Goenka and Tongya offer bespoke pieces that possess singular identities, yet can gel with other pieces. "More is less for a Marwari bride. A Marwari bridal trousseau consists of various pieces and it is the job of a designer to create a balance while offering something special to the bride," says Goenka. Traditional pieces like *rani haar*, *tagdi*, *borla*, *baju bandh*, *sankhali*, *mang tika*, *nath*, *kada*, *kanotti*, *karnphool*, *hasli*, *pacheli*, *bangri*, *kandora*, *payal* and

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Above: Gold bangle from Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jewellers' Adrishya collection; Right: Peacock earrings from the Aranya collection; Below: Yash Agarwal



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bichiya coupled with statement heirloom and modern pieces have revolutionised the look of the bride in a way that modern jewellery alone could never have done.

The ideal bridal trousseau, for Tongya, perfectly blends the traditional with the modern. “Every bride today wants to look glamorous and, at the same time, subtle and elegant—a tough feat to achieve. Since most Marwari families these days travel the world, they have imbibed global tastes, which gives us the opportunity to explore and create something different,” he says. For him, jewellery is not merely an adornment but akin to wearable art, with focus on original design. The artist’s priority is to make highly-specialised pieces that, first, satisfy his senses, and then his customers.



Clockwise from top: Leaf pendant with diamonds and blue sapphires from Diacolor; Rishabh Tongya; diamond ring with pear-shaped yellow diamond centre from Diacolor; bridal necklace in yellow gold with emeralds and diamonds from Bina Goenka; earrings from Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas' Adrishya collection



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Detachable, multi-utility pieces being a rage today, the designers agree that design is paramount when creating a luxe range that can complement both traditional and contemporary attires and our modern lifestyles. As these designers continue to push the envelope, creating adornments that challenge the conventional bridal lookbook, one thing is certain: whatever their individual specialities or working approach may be, designing for a typical Marwari wedding is never an easy task. These jewellers have had to take time and effort to understand every mega-function (along with its individual theme), be it a mehndi or a sangeet, the star of which has always been the bridal jewellery. Every nuance, be it manufacturing, design, colour combinations, fashion trends or silhouettes, is scrutinised. At the same time, they also have to be in constant touch with the latest international trends, whilst ensuring the best quality of gems and stones. A tall order, indeed—but one that they are certainly serving up.\*



THE TRIO, IN DEPTH

**Yash Agarwal** is the creative director of Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jewellers, a jewellery house that has been patronised by the royalty of Rajasthan for well over half a century now. Possessing an innate passion for jewellery, he has redefined the way *kundan-polki* jewellery is designed and branded, and has played a key role in turning the traditional jewellery house into a leading luxury brand.

**Bina Goenka** is a self-taught designer who has honed her skill through practice and experience. Her eponymous label creates exquisite diamond jewellery that is synonymous with luxury, timelessness and authenticity, with each piece bringing together elements from both traditional and contemporary design and aesthetics.

**Rishabh Tongya** is a third-generation jeweller who hails from a family that has been associated with the diamond and gemstone manufacturing business for years. He has launched the first ever retail outlet of their brand, Diacolor, at the glitzy DLF Emporio in New Delhi. In spite of innumerable jewellers competing against each other to woo customers, this young entrepreneur has managed to win hearts within the first few months of the launch of his fine jewellery brand. He offers classic and elegant collections which also include engagement rings and wedding trousseau.

