

Colors, Religiosity and World Cup Inspire Brazil's Latest Jewel Crop

Contributed by Geovana Pagel
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Jeweler Vancox, which has a factory in Belo Horizonte, is about to close a new contract with a large importer from Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

The most recent contact took place on Sunday, February 5, when a Saudi businessman visited the company stand at the 42nd edition of the National Fair of the Jewels, Watches and Related Articles Industry (Feninjer), which ended Tuesday, January 7, in the city of São Paulo, in the Brazilian Southeast.

"We already sell to him at a small scale. We are now negotiating a larger contract," explained the company marketing manager, Valéria Barbosa. Vancox has been exporting since 1999.

The Arab market has been importing company jewels for five years. "Arab women love jewels. What we have been noticing is that they are more and more interested in the design and style that only exclusive jewels can offer," she explained.

"That is why our exclusive jewels, which have great variety and color in the gems are so successful on the Arab market," she said. The company invests heavily in design. Of the 50 company employees, 10 are designers.

Participation in international fairs on the Arab market is also another of the producer's priorities. Every year the company participates in fairs in Bahrain and in the United Arab Emirates.

"At the fair in Bahrain, for example, which is a retail event, there are women who spend US\$ 20,000 on one purchase," she comments. According to Valéria, Vancox participation in the 2006 edition of Jewelry Arabia is already confirmed.

Vancox is one of the 150 companies exhibiting at Feninjer. Organized by the Brazilian Institute of Gems and Precious Metals (IBGM) twice a year, Feninjer presents the releases of the main jewelers in the country.

Considered by specialists the largest jewelry fair in Latin America, the event attracts domestic and foreign buyers. The Feninjer edition in 2005 generated business of R\$ 101 million (US\$ 46.2 million). The organizers expect growth of 3% this year.

So as to open the year of 2006, the products follow the cycle of tendencies shown on the runways of the main fashion shows in the country, in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and they fill shop windows with novelties for Mother's Day (second Sunday in May) and Valentines Day, which is on June 13 in Brazil.

"Once again the world is after jewelry from Brazil. Brazilian jewels are at the forefront of new foreign tendencies and present innovations in contemporary luxury," stated Regina Machado, style consultant at the IBGM. "Brazil also exports optimism and the joy of life in its jewels," she said.

Faith Fashion

Scapulars, medals and amulets have become a fad among the releases. Various companies bet on the union of faith and mysticism to fashion. Arrigone, from Rio de Janeiro, invested in images of the Brazilian Patron Saint, Our Lady Aparecida, the Holy Spirit and also of other protection symbols like the Greek eye, horseshoes and chillies, among others.

"The themes that recall our culture, through symbols of our plural religiosity are being more and more appreciated on the global market," stated Regina.

And as 2006 is a World Cup year, many producers like Domanni, from the state of Goiás, in the Midwest of the country, seek inspiration on the national passion.

Their Pátria Amada (Beloved Nation) line includes bracelets, earrings and necklace pendants with miniature maps of Brazil, football boots, players and shirts, specifically the number 10.

According to Regina, this year the innovation focuses on uniqueness and, in this respect, Brazilian jewelry is at a high on the jewelry market.

"With the World Cup, international media will intensify the publicity and appreciation of our lifestyle," she pointed out.

Colors and gems

The strong tones of the London Blue topaz, variations of greens of emeralds, tourmalines and the red of the rubies make the pieces happier and attract attention.

Various kinds of quartz are used. The gem may vary from clear crystals to those with special effects, like the labelled ones.

"Many gems with different cutting styles and colors are used. Jewelry in 2006 shows no fear of colors, gems and textures of materials," stated consultant Regina.

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