

THE CITY

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El Paso's Queen of Bling

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Dubbed El Paso's "Queen of Bling", Susan Eisen has built an impressive resume over her 34-year career as a hands-on artisan and owner of Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry. The accomplishments include 11 trademarks, a patent, and two books — Crazy About Jewelry: The Expert Guide to Buying, Selling, and Caring for your Jewelry and The Million Dollar Dishrag — that showcase her impressive creative and business paths.



Recently, Eisen added yet another accomplishment to her admirable profile — jewelry designer for the 66th Primetime Emmy Awards. Four of her stunning pieces made their way down the red carpet on some of Hollywood’s big names to include Lauren Parsekian (wife of Emmy-winner Aaron Paul), NBC Emmy Pre-show hostess, Shaun Robinson, and “Young and the Restless” actress Kate Linder. Parsekian sported 2.25 carats of handcrafted diamond earrings from Eisen’s Diamond Vines Collection with a price tag of \$17,800. “The earrings that Lauren Parsekian wore were designed specifically for her. After she saw our original designs she wanted something that climbed up her ear,” explained Eisen.



Linder shined in not one but two of Eisen’s pieces, which included 3.85 carats of diamond and cultured pearl earrings at a retail price of \$38,000. This was paired with a handmade, abstract gold and diamond ring from the Franklin Rock Collection priced at \$15,800. “The ring that Kate Linder wore is from the Franklin Rock Collection. It’s very interesting because we went to the Franklin Mountains and pulled some rocks down, then we made molds of the textures on the rocks and we cast those in gold,” said Eisen. Robinson hosted the star-studded event wearing five-carat handmade, diamond chandelier earrings priced at \$73,000. As for what inspired the fabulous designs, Eisen explains: “The long-dangle chandelier Shaun Robinson earrings and the earrings worn by Kate Linder both have curves. I chose

curves and movement because it is important when you're wearing jewelry that it moves with you. It's very graceful to the person wearing them."



Before debuting her stunning, handcrafted pieces on the red carpet, Susan Eisen found her calling at just five years old and took an amazing journey to fulfill it. The native El Pasoan began her journey early on with the encouragement of her parents. With a dream to pursue a major in art, Eisen enrolled at the University of Texas at El Paso as a Bachelor of Fine Arts student. Eisen's love for design — along with the skills to cut and solder metal, transform sheets and wires into jewelry — and her passion for creations with gemstones led to her love affair of jewelry design and creation.

Having mastered the skill of jewelry making from two of her UTEP metal professors, Wiltz Harrison and Rachelle Thiewes, she flourished her love for jewelry design into a business — opening her first retail jewelry store and art gallery, Tiara, in May of 1980 in El Paso's Art Museum district downtown. "I was fortunate enough to have gone to UTEP and studied Harrison and Thiewes. I not only learned about fabrication of jewelry, but I learned how important it is to be creative and I think the lessons of being creative were what enabled me to get this far and kept me interested because it's a lot of work owning your own store. Creativity sparks you, motivates, excites, and keeps you very interested in what you're doing."

With a new venture came the difficulty of having little financial assistance, but this was not a hurdle she would be defeated by. She spent the next few years learning the trade, working with customers, and exhibiting at art shows, but it was the necessary geological knowledge necessary in her industry that led her to discover her desire to create more pieces each day. Fueled by passion, she continued her education at the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) in California. Walking through the halls at GIA she knew this was a dream made reality and one she would remain in forever. During her stint at GIA, Eisen learned about gemstones and their properties but more importantly, built a love for the

colors and shapes found in gemstone. Receiving her graduate gemologist degree was only a beginning to her education; she continued her venture at the American Society of Appraisers and International Society of Appraisers to receive education and accreditation in appraising.

Throughout her more than 30-year career, Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches has grown from a small one person jewelry and art gallery to a major player in the jewelry industry. She not only creates and designs her own pieces, but has expanded to carry jewelry by well-known designers and watch brands. And throughout her impressive career, Eisen has gained prominent recognition as a recipient of awards, like: Woman Retailer of the Year from the Women's Jewelry Association, Top 31 Jewelers Named, "Americas Best Jewelers" by National Jeweler Magazine, and Best of the Best Jeweler in El Paso for 10 years in a row.

After gaining knowledge in business and aesthetics, Eisen began creating products to promote better living for others. These have led her to apply for and be granted 11 trademarks and one design patent. She's also pursued manufacturing and marketing. "They're all things we've created here. Its types of jewelry, two books that I've written, and some innovative type things that weren't invented before we got the trademarks on them," explained Eisen.

Among these products are Lifetag Medical ID, which was created with the intention of providing a high-quality medical identification without the visibility, and Eisen's With Love.

List — a special list designed to help organize family heirlooms and divide personal property during the inheritance process. Eisen explains, "With Love List is a list that I've created to help people divide their heirlooms before they die so there are no family battles afterward."

Susan Eisen remains the center of the business. She continues to offer her clients her unique style of design and manufacture, her serious dedication to high craftsmanship in her work, and her desire to make each customer a happy one with jewelry they will cherish forever. "Doing jewelry repairs and working with people on everything from how their jewelry is made, how to improve it, how to add to it, and how to make it last longer — all that information and experience has helped me with the designs and the things that I am doing right now. I will always continue to do jewelry repairs, jewelry re-styling, and custom designs in El Paso. Jewelry doesn't have to be expensive. Not everything is made for the stars. It's the grassroots things that we enjoy doing for the people in El Paso that helps us reach the crowd that we're reaching now, which are celebrities," said Eisen.

So what does the future look like post- Emmy's for the "Queen of Bling?" It means no sign of slowing down as Eisen is already in talks to have jewelry designs featured in future award shows. Susan Eisen explains, "I am working on a couture collection where I can expand on the designs that I make that are

one-of-a-kind. They are very fashion-forward and appealing to the celebrity personality. I'm also continuing to work on custom designs for my clients here in El Paso.”

After all, it is the city of El Paso that Eisen thanks for her success: “It was El Paso that got me here. Being from El Paso, having wonderful customers, having people appreciate what we do and having them support us — that’s who we owe thanks to. I thank the city of El Paso, UTEP, and my parents for this opportunity, without any of them I wouldn’t have been able to do it.”

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