

Be Dazzled



AS AN ACCESSORY THERE IS HANDS DOWN NO PARALLEL TO JEWELLERY. BINDU GOPAL RAO SPEAKS TO SANTOSH BATHIJA THE NAME BEHIND JEWELLERY BRANDS POPLI ART GALLERY, AQUAMARINE AND MINERALI

To join the family business and expand it to different verticals can be challenging. However, this has become second nature for Santosh Bathija who has taken his family jewellery business to the next level by making it more accessible and inclusive.

“I hail from a family of retail store owners, and it was always something I wanted to be a part of. Studying was a struggle as I was more inclined towards creativity and strategy and focused on drama, debate and elocution.” So while he completed his education, Santosh also worked with his grandfather Thakurdas Bathija at his store Amber that retailed exquisite handcrafts, and later with his father Sukhlal Bathija at Popli that retails precious jewellery.

Eventually, he started his own line of artificial jewellery mainly for the export market. “Getting into artificial jewellery was entirely my call and I purely exported it from early 2000 until 2005.” But after he got married, Santosh started Aquamarine with his wife Khushi for the domestic market. Incidentally, Aquamarine had the first mover advantage in artificial jewellery and their stores expanded from Colaba to Bandra and Breach Candy in Mumbai, Khan Market in Delhi, Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad, and Commercial Street in Bangalore.

However, not one to rest on his laurels, Santosh decided (in 2014) to create a platform for designers and thus was born Minerali - a multi-designer jewellery store. “We currently stock over 50 designers. My sister Sheetal, who runs the store, describes it aptly as an eclectic