

STYLE PROFILE

# All that glitters is not gold at Posey

**Bold costume jewelry is the Newport Beach boutique's specialty.**

By **MAGDA LISZEWSKA**  
FOR THE REGISTER

Paige Van Rensselaer-Kunkle's could have been a riches-to-rags story. Just a few years ago, she was a stay-at-home mom of two involved in charity work while her husband supported the family with his career in the mortgage industry. Then one day, they got off a plane from a European vacation into the new, harsh reality of a crashing economy. But unlike some of her friends who were forced to significantly downsize their luxurious lifestyles, Kunkle decided to fight back.

"I'm good at shoes, handbags and jewelry," she told her husband as the couple searched for new sources of income. And just like that, all the time they had spent at jewelers customizing his precious gifts to her became the inspiration and experience leading to Kunkle's new career as a jewelry designer and the owner of Posey Couture boutique in Newport Beach.

"We're a great story because we survived it," she said of the trying times.

It didn't hurt that Kunkle grew up around fabulous grandmothers who oozed style and glamour, either.

"I grew up thinking if you don't wear a cocktail ring, you were no one," she said.

Grandmas would be proud, seeing their own opulent jewelry reimagined into Kunkle's collections displayed in abundance at the chic boutique. It's a place where a fashionista could easily get lost for some time, making friends with the "diamonds," glamping it up in the jewel tones and taking beach and resort looks to a whole new level with a



PHOTOS: EUGENE GARCIA, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER  
Posey Couture's owner, Paige Van Rensselaer-Kunkle, shows off Swarovski crystal stretch bracelets (\$65 each). "I'm a recessionista for the fashionista," she says.



Showy rings go for under \$100. Van Rensselaer-Kunkle started the business when recession left her family struggling for income.

marine-inspired collection. Although Kunkle carries dainty pieces from other brands as well, they aren't really her personal style.

"I'm not 'less is more' - I'm 'the bigger the better,'" she said.

That certainly shows in Posey Couture designs, from large, blinged-out cocktail rings to statement necklaces that can transform anything from a plain

T-shirt to an evening gown into a head-turning ensemble.

Fashion stylist Leslie Christen has used Posey Couture jewels for her clients.

"You can't go wrong with any of Paige's pieces. They make a statement and always help you stand out in a crowd," she said. "Most of my clients like classic style with an edge, so putting on a statement earring or a bib



A multi-strand turquoise necklace from the Gatsby Collection (\$800).

necklace from Posey is the perfect finishing touch to a navy dress, fit-and-flare dress or a black, fitted tux."

Not sure how you could pull off a multistrand turquoise or pearl necklace? Kunkle is more than happy to offer suggestions. She said some of her customers come in with outfits to find the right accessories.

"Statement pieces are always

**Posey Couture**

**Where:** 410 W. Coast Highway, Suite A, Newport Beach 92663  
**Phone:** 949-646-7079

**Online:** poseycouture.com  
**Owner/designer:** Paige Van Rensselaer-Kunkle

**Style:** Midcentury jewelry with vintage accents - '30s, '40s and "Great Gatsby" style

"The 'Gatsby' era was one of the greatest eras for jewelry," said Kunkle, who designs most of the pieces in the boutique. "Nobody else has what I have."

**Target shopper:** Anyone from teens to elegant women, executives and celebrities.

**Price profile:** From \$6 for a fun little ring, \$25-\$30 for a pair of sparkly earrings to \$800 for a statement turquoise necklace. Kunkle said she likes her boutique to be known as a place to get several pieces without breaking the bank.

going to be strong and carry you through," she said. "Every woman is capable of wearing a statement piece of jewelry."

And the best part? They only look like they cost a fortune. Kunkle said the price point is what makes her stand out, and she's determined to keep her line affordable.

"Costume jewelry should not be out of reach for anybody," she said.

The concept is nothing new, but Kunkle's attention to detail from all sides of each piece lets many of her clients get away with making others think they're dripping in real diamonds and pearls.

Although she won't drop any names, she said many of her customers shop at the boutique for what Kunkle calls her "travel bling collection," pieces that look like real diamonds, but won't cause a heart attack should they be lost or stolen on vacation.

"It's always like your little secret," she said.

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