

CEO OF AKILLIS SETS NEW STANDARDS IN JEWELRY DESIGN

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CAROLINE GASPARD, CEO AKILLIS

The AKILLIS success story began when modern day adventurer Caroline Gaspard turned entrepreneur to launch AKILLIS in 2007, her own line of fine jewellery. The AKILLIS philosophy pioneered a new set of laws, revitalizing the conventional forms of enterprise sweeping away the past.

When Caroline first visited Moscow, she discovered Russia and all the possibilities. A country undergoing an extraordinary metamorphosis and an emerging generation ready to explode. It was this generation who were not scared of affirming their desires and differences that inspired the designer. A generation that so loves having fun and twisting its style according to its moods. A generation bursting with colours that has come to terms with life and lusts for it.

AKILLIS, an evocative name, a mysterious name, a universal name AKILLIS refers to Greek mythology and its great warrior, Achilles. It contains the word kill and has been coined by Caroline Gaspard. It's a passionate name both powerful and captivating. A name that was born in Caroline Gaspard's imagination. An imagination bursting with heroic epics, spy films, gangster films and flamboyant bad boys. A place where fiction and reality mix unrecognizably.

The designer has created a universe where her fantasies run wild. It's a sophisticated, glamorous and racy universe where everything is possible. James Bond would be perfectly at home in this universe populated by femme fatales, dangerous seductresses, cosmopolitan spies, intriguing heroines and Amazonians with multiple personalities.

The AKILLIS woman has plenty of cheek, she's a conqueror. Contemporary and informed she knows who she is. And she likes to play on that.

Caroline: I spend half of my time in France and the rest in Moscow. I am 28 years old and studied in a business school in the North of France. I have a passion for jewellery and I have been designing jewellery since the age of five when my father's friends who are in the precious stones

business would bring diamonds and other precious stones in the house and me and my mother would play with it and try ideas in designing a ring or a pendant or design jewellery using the stones. I was always crazy with fashion design and would always read magazines and books on the subject.

Fashion is like religion. After coming to Russia in 2005 I found the women beautiful and I found that they like to live life and everything is possible. I began to design jewellery for men and women and break from the norm of other designers who would often feature flowers, hearts or small animals. Everybody is copying each other, I wanted to innovate and create an image of my own. Our workshop in France has eight craftsmen who translate my vision into Akillis jewellery pieces for men and women and half of the total of our products is sold to men.

I also have a passion for shooting and this is reflected in our bullet series which is one of our best sellers in markets such as France, Russia and Monaco.

Questions:

1. Why choose the Middle East to invest?

In France, we sell a lot of jewellery to the Middle East and in India. People in the Middle East, like in Russia have a lust for life and they like to have exceptional things and follow the latest trends. I create jewellery that is unique and is exclusive to people. The Akillis motto is "Beyond uniqueness."

A brand cannot go global if it is not represented in the Middle East. The region has fast paced economic growth and it is becoming a major factor in the luxury world.

2. What is the unique selling proposition of your jewellery?

Our design is taken from ordinary everyday objects in our daily life. I try to make a statement with every piece of jewellery such as "You, are the missing link in my life" in a bracelet designed like a puzzle piece. Or another design would say "You are my soul mate."

The uniqueness of our product will definitely meet the requirements and needs of new different and exquisite designs our clients are looking for.

3. Could you please tell us your approach to designing fine jewellery and luxury watches?

In the bullet series, the bullet represents danger. The bullet may symbolise that love is a dangerous thing and that danger is part of the seduction of falling in love. There can be a lot of message in my pieces of jewellery. I prefer to dream what I would like to wear.

4. As a designer, who are your main influences?

It is my beloved father, for instance the exclusive and exquisite "King George" bracelet line, brought out recently, holds a special place in my heart. The trend-setting designer of fine jewellery that looks firmly into the future has dedicated the entire range to my beloved father.

I got the idea for the line of flat-link bracelets when I was looking for a bracelet to match my father's watch. This inspired the master designer to come up with "King George" range in 18 karat gold and titanium, encrusted with diamonds. Family has an important place in my heart, and so I did not hesitate to name my very first range "King George" after my father's name. For me, every person is unique and deserves to wear the perfect jewel.

5. What is the trend in luxury jewellery design?

The emerging trend among the big fashion houses is a back to basics trend and they have not really come up with new innovative products.

6. Why would people buy aspire to own an extravagantly priced piece of jewellery?

People who buy into luxury are in it for the image. In our King George" range, I designed the collection in range in 18 karat gold and titanium.

7. How is your company affected by the worldwide challenges?

The people who buy our fine jewellery pieces are not affected by the recession and really do not have problems with money. We actually grew 300 % during the worldwide Economic challenges.

8. How has people's taste towards fine jewellery or luxury evolved over the years?

During the time of our grandmothers and mothers the jewellery were more for investment and are only worn on formal occasions. These jewellery spend most of its time in a vault. The design focus on big stones and they were really heavy pieces and very uncomfortable to wear. Today's contemporary jewellery can complement any wardrobe and are designed to be worn comfortably using new metal alloys. In today's jewellery design we play with new materials such as titanium, white, yellow and blue rhodium used in fashion jewellery.

Twenty years ago yellow gold is very popular and 10 years ago it was white gold. The new trend now is the use of pink gold which became popular two years ago.