

UpClose

RONIT TARSHIS



Personal Ties

Family, love and charity are woven together into beautiful necklaces and bracelets by Lera Jewels

BY JILL JOHNSON

I found these beads I loved and started playing around, putting pavé beads on leather,” says Westport resident Ronit Tarshis, about the genesis of Lera Jewels. A trunk show followed, a few Staples students came on as beading apprentices, and Ronit’s living room began doubling as a showroom. Fortunately, her jewelry—a blend of raw diamonds, leather, earthy beads, oxidized silver, delicate gold and gems in colors of the Caribbean Sea—melds harmoniously with the décor.

Ronit’s childhood living room featured a loom, so the weaving of her creative endeavors into her home life feels natural. “Before it was in vogue to have a craft cabinet, we had a room full of crafts,” says Ronit, who grew up in West Hartford and Israel and has Emmy Award-winning TV producer for Martha Stewart on her résumé. “I love crafts, cooking, décor and flowers,” says Ronit. “To be around that on such a high level was amazing.”

Ronit’s mom, who got her master’s in weaving, lives in the Tarshis’ home, with Ronit’s three daughters, Lily, Evi and Ruby (all crafty) and Ronit’s husband, Andy (whose names form the acronym LERA). “All of my New Year’s resolutions pertain to juggling work

and family,” admits Ronit. “I’m trying to limit my work hours to when the kids are in school, but customers ask to come after work and I can’t say no.” Jill Goodacre stopped by on the day of this interview. Gwyneth Paltrow owns a few, including Ronit’s favorite, a teardrop pendant on a long silver chain. Jennifer Aniston has been spotted wearing the gorgeous oval pendant. Even women as far away as London are clamoring for the jewelry, with its ancient Rome meets New Age flair. “The combination of diamonds and natural materials makes my jewelry very wearable,” explains Ronit. “The same piece can be worn with a T-shirt and jeans and also very elegantly with a beautiful ball gown.” Unique adjustable chain and bracelet features add even more versatility.

Lorin Klaris, photographer for Lillian August and wife of president/CEO Dan Weiss, says, “I wear Ronit’s bracelets and necklaces every day. They go with everything, casual or dressy. They are beautiful, elegant, versatile, and they sell!” In Connecticut, Lera Jewels are sold at Lillian August in Greenwich, Bianca Boutique in Westport and the Mayflower Inn Spa. Prices range from \$175 to \$5,000.

While designing over fifty pieces in two years, Ronit also carved out time to give back. She created “Tali Ties,” named after her sister-in-law who is battling lymphoma. Inspired by the hairbands she wears on her wrists should a daughter need a quick ponytail, Ronit designed 100 bracelets made from shimmering pastel hairbands with a tiny “T” pendant on each for a fundraiser. Since then, Ronit has made Tali Ties for Phoebe’s Friends (to benefit a student who recently had a bone marrow transplant) and 500 Tali Ties with heart pendants for Pink Aid. Westporter Erin Berk, who lost her mom, Lynne, to ovarian cancer, says the Tali Ties Ronit donated for a Lynne Cohen Foundation event were “a big hit. Ronit’s pieces are as one of a kind as she is, as is her generosity.” More at lerajewels.com.

