

Susie Stenmark wears Céline silk shirt, \$2,099, from David Jones. Stenmark's own Chanel pants and shoes.



Above: Stenmark Sun Ray yellow gold pendant/brooch and ring set with diamonds and yellow sapphires.
Right: Mini Gecko white gold cufflink set with red sapphires and diamonds, and white gold cufflinks set with green tsavorites and diamonds.



Above: Basket Weave yellow gold ring set with green agate and citrine.
Left: Monstera dell'Cioca enamelled white gold pendant set with diamonds and green tsavorite.

JEWELLERY NEWS

BELLE EPOQUE

After a long and varied career in fashion and beauty, this tastemaker has founded a fine-jewellery line that combines colour and whimsy with intriguing designs.

Words: *Natasha Inchley*

Somewhat fittingly, Susie Stenmark included the names *Deliciosa* and *Lemon Drop* in her debut collection of fine jewellery, not just for the flamboyant and chimerical shapes but also the wonderful syrupy colours. Her agate and tourmaline rings resemble gumballs and her drop earrings, made from whopping bi-colour shards of quartz, are like boiled sweets anchored by crimson rubellites.

"I have always been drawn to colour," says Stenmark, "equally so jewellery. I love the notion that we collect jewels to mark

significant moments and milestones, and for that reason there are so many emotions attached to jewellery; it's a deeply personal thing. So I wanted to create a collection that at once felt timeless yet unique, bold and whimsical." But while the range is essentially classic and luxurious in feel, it is also as much about flouting the traditions of the trade: take the playful motifs seldom seen in fine-jewellery design – the *Monstera* leaf dotted with diamonds, the palm tree cocktail ring, the lively gecko cufflinks – and a

painterly palette of unusual gemstones, from cognac diamonds, green chalcedonies and berry-coloured sapphires through to milky jades, turquoises and ghostly-looking opals.

Although it may be Stenmark's first collection, she is no newcomer. Before turning her hand to design, the statuesque businesswoman worked in communications for Chanel in Sydney for more than a decade, brand-managed a leading hotel before that, and is most likely the only person in the industry who has hosted a children's television show, modelled for a string of beauty campaigns and run a restaurant in Bondi. Stenmark can even hold her own in the gemstone grading rooms of Jaipur in India and Chantaburi in Thailand, having completed her qualifications in gemology.

The result is a 25-piece collection of rings, bracelets, earrings, necklaces and cufflinks, with a starting price of \$2,000, all masterfully created and presented in handsome dark wood-grain boxes. Stenmark says: "My idea was to create a kind of jewellery wardrobe that one can build on, with new pieces added every six months to complement the classics." Her philosophy when it comes to wearing these bold gems is simple: "I like the idea that you should be able to add something precious and forget it. Jewels worn casually by day with cashmere and denim appeals to me more than with ballgowns. I think if you own something special, it's a shame to leave it in a safe." ■