

beautiful
BAUBLES

JAN LOGAN HAS CREATED ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST RECOGNISED FINE JEWELLERY BRANDS. SHE TELLS HER STORY TO NICOLE MADIGAN.

Jan Logan the brand is worn by stars around the world. Naomi Watts, Jennifer Lopez and Rose Byrne have been seen sashaying down red carpets dripping in the elegant designs. The woman behind the jewels is less known, but equally as elegant. Approaching its 25th anniversary, Jan Logan Fine Jewellery is an international success story. Jan launched the business in 1989 at age 50, proving that it's never too late to follow your dreams.

It all began in the country town of Narrabri, in north-western NSW, Jan's home before she moved to Sydney in 1986.

Jan says she spent most of her childhood living in her imagination, playing with her mother's jewellery box, but never dreamt she'd make a living from it, let alone go on to achieve the level of success she has.

A lover of movies and musicals, Jan initially believed she was destined to be a performer, but life had other plans.

Marrying young, Jan went on to have three sons. Then, in the early 1980s, life took a new direction when she answered an advertisement in the local paper for a job as a promotions officer for the Narrabri Chamber of Commerce. The job involved dealing with stock and station agents, newsagents, publicans, Rotary and Apex.

THE EMPTY NEST

"After my three sons had grown and reached high school, I applied for a part-time job as a promotions officer with the Narrabri Chamber of Commerce," says Jan.

"I was paid \$1000 a year and my job was to build up the Chamber membership and to promote Narrabri as a community."

It was here, she says, that many of the skills she now uses were set in place, and her passion for marketing became evident.

The turning point in her career though came through her friendship with the president of the chamber who just happened to be the main jeweller in town. Jan was drawn to his work and found herself spending a lot of time in his shop.

"I was continually playing with the jewellery and making suggestions," she says.

"He eventually offered me a 20 per cent partnership so I took out a personal loan and that was my serendipitous start in the industry.

"This led me to hold private jewellery exhibitions and sales in country NSW and Queensland which were very successful."

EMPIRE IN THE MAKING

Jan learnt on the job, organising jewellery shows and travelling around the country to promote and run them.

As a result of her diligence in keeping names and addresses of the women who had bought



TOP AND LEFT: THE VAMPIRE DIARIES' PHOEBE TONKIN WEARING JAN LOGAN. TAYLOR SWIFT IS ALSO A FAN.



from her, Jan already had quite a following by the time she set up her own store in Double Bay in 1989. "In the mid 1980s the family moved to live in Sydney and I opened our first store in the Royal Arcade, Double Bay in October 1989," says Jan.

"It was a small shop and I had one employee, Louise Herron, who had a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and had studied at Sotheby's in London.

"Louise was a marvellous find and was instrumental in helping get the brand recognised. The first year was fun, the learning curve was a challenge and dealing with the press was rewarding. During that year we had slow and steady growth, and based on this progress we decided to move to larger premises in Cross Street, also in Double Bay."

Exactly one year later, in October 1990, Jan Logan officially opened with a small launch event. "From the beginning we started to get editorial attention which was very exciting and encouraging and in many ways instrumental in growing the business."

BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL BRAND

Over the last 20 years, Jan Logan has evolved into an international brand and it seems only

fitting that Jan is now designing jewellery for the stars. Many international actresses wear Jan Logan's unique designs and she is also a great supporter of Australian fashion design and has contributed to the parades of our finest designers, including Collette Dinnigan, Akira Isogawa, Easton Pearson and Leona Edmiston.

She believes the key to her success was her keen awareness of the importance of working with the media, which became instrumental in building recognition of the brand. "We didn't do much advertising as word of mouth from customers was very consistent," she says. "I was also very diligent in collecting customer names for our database, handwriting them into a book and eventually using this list as a basis for the mail out of our first print catalogue in 1993."

Part of her appeal, she believes, is that she designs for herself, so to speak. "If I'm not comfortable in something, how could I expect anyone else to be?"

MY STORY

Designer Akira Isogawa says he enjoyed every minute of working with Jan and would happily work with her again.

"She has an ability to accommodate the style of others within her simple, elegant styling," says Isogawa. "I admire her versatility – she always comes up with the goods, she never disappoints. There's something, too, about her attitude."

There's little doubt, Jan is truly passionate about her craft. Jan says what she loves more than anything about jewellery is simply the fact that it's durable. "There's intrinsic value in the metal and stones, so if you get tired of something you can always rework it."

In 1996, Jan Logan became a family business, with son Angus returning from London and joining the team.

Her other children are Michael, who is a farmer based in Narrabri, and Andrew, a sculptor, based in the US. At the same time, Jan took over the space next door to the Cross Street premises to expand the Double Bay store.

"The growth of the business is due to Angus's leadership," says Jan. "We also took on our store manager Frank Robinson around the same time. Frank came to us with extensive experience in the jewellery industry, he is highly respected and inspirational in his management style."

The new team then opened a Melbourne store in South Yarra in 1998 and subsequently moved to its Collins Street premises two years later. There are now five Jan Logan stores open for business. "We have a concession in the David Jones Elizabeth Street store in Sydney, opened a store in the IFC Centre, Hong Kong in 2003 and opened in Perth in 2008," says Jan.

JEWELLER TO THE STARS

Angus initiated the affiliation with the Australian movie industry by each year featuring an up and coming Australian actress in Jan Logan's annual catalogue.

It began in 2001 with the beautiful Rose Byrne who featured as the first face of Jan Logan.

"Previously we had often used family in the catalogue and this transition was very reflective of our business and the desire to support Australian talent, whether it be film, fashion or the arts.

"Rose has gone on to achieve international success. Our association with film has been a successful positioning for our business and has led us to work with so many wonderful people, actresses Rachael Taylor, Teresa Palmer and Phoebe Tonkin are just a handful of beautiful women that we have worked with."

It's easy to envy the passion and drive Jan has to continue to hone her craft and to create and build a flourishing business. "I love the



"I LOVE THE CHALLENGE OF DESIGN AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTNER WITH OTHER CREATIVE PEOPLE."

challenge of design and the opportunity to partner with other creative people," she says.

"We have worked with many Australian fashion designers over the years, a highlight being Collette Dinnigan's Paris Show in 2000, for which we created quite dramatic bespoke brooches. I find much reward in seeing our jewellery worn by our loyal clients with pleasure and having the opportunity to work with many charities."

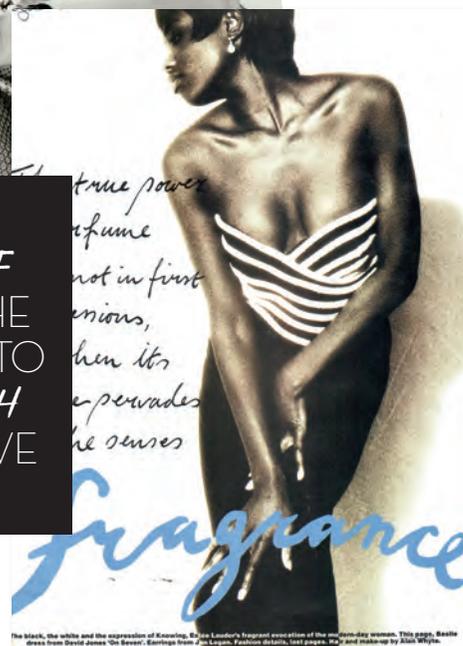
CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS

Despite Jan Logan's success, the business still faces many challenges. "The challenges we now face are the changes to retail due to technology and finding the balance between the pace of communication and our focus on personalised service.

"Our website has been up for five years and we are interested to see the way online shopping is changing the retail environment.

"We enjoy the involvement of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram and the opportunity to interact with our customers and also introduce new people to Jan Logan."

Now a single woman – Jan separated from her husband 14 years ago – she says her family has been instrumental in her success, both in business and in life.



The black, the white and the expression of Kwaning, by Jan Logan's personal evocation of the contemporary woman. This page, Rosie stars from David Jones 'The Beauty' campaign from Jan Logan's Fashion catalog, last page, 'I' and making by Akira Isogawa.

"My family situation has allowed me some flexibility. I enjoy time with family. I have five grandchildren in Sydney and another three in USA. They are my passion."

When Jan isn't working or spending time with friends and family, she finds the time to enjoy the food scene, movies and the theatre.

But despite her hectic schedule, growing business and expanding family, Jan has no plans to slow down.

"Professionally and personally the future holds more of the same. I hope to continue making a contribution to both the business and family as long as I can."

With this in mind, Jan has this advice for other entrepreneurial women who aspire to build their own businesses and follow their passions.

"My advice to others would be to stay true to your vocation, maintain your integrity, be persistent and to love what you do.

"I opened the store in Double Bay in 1989 when I was 50 years old and next year we will celebrate our 25th anniversary.

"My message here is – it's never too late!" ❖