

Jewellery handcrafted with passion



THE *Leader* could not help but notice a box of eye-catchers on show inside a Cronulla cafe last week.

Aida Guirguis was halfway through her coffee with an admirer of some statement jewellery pieces, which had women at the beachside suburb stopping to glance.

The Cronulla designer is the face and name behind Scarab Rouge – her 2001-established label that epitomises more than stylish and luxurious jewellery. Aida's fascination with precious and semi-precious gems and diamonds set in gold, platinum or silver also reflects personal style and tells a story.

Aida was born in Egypt and grew up in the French quarter of Alexandria before she immigrated to Australia.

Her heritage inspired the idea of developing a brand that delves into a passion for tradition combined with modern aesthetics.

"In ancient Egyptian mythology, a scarab is a potent symbol of rebirth," Aida said.

"This symbol was the ideal fit with my background and the designs I wanted to create.

"Rouge is the colour of passion, and I love everything to do with French culture.

"I love the visual appeal of luxurious materials and working with them in a very simple way.

"I'm also inspired by architecture, interiors, music and



Glittering: Sutherland Shire jewellery designer, Aida Guirguis (at left) delves into her background and blends it with some individual elements. **Pictures:** Jane Dyson

nature – especially the ocean."

Aida's chunky rings, bangles and necklaces are handcrafted in Sydney.

After studying science, then history at university, Aida went to the International School of Colour and Design, where she was able to consolidate her business knowledge with a focus on jewellery.

What triggered the direction towards producing recycled materials was a realisation that jewellery was often an emotive purchase.

"A lot of people have jewellery they never wear, but the pieces have inherent value," Aida said.

"Our styles change, and when you are older you look for something exclusive and not mass-produced."

Scarab Rouge also supports charities and has helped raise money for cancer stem cell research.

The company has attracted international retail interest from Cannes, France.

Search "Aida Guirguis" on Facebook or keep a lookout for the soon-to-be-launched website. Her latest collection will be available in March.

Details: aida@scarabrouge.com.

LIFE'S STYLE

New star is rising

YET another fashion design graduate from St George TAFE is rising to new heights.

Erin Grant of Narwee has been working on her latest collection from her 2010-established label Voyageur, a brand she created to reflect "fashion for a savvy jet-setter" (at right).

Her vision for simple and contemporary elegance with a versatile and feminine edge is refreshingly similar to the soft drapes and willowy flows of Céline or Bassike.

The multi-design award winner did not go unnoticed by the industry, which named her as one of the best up-and-coming young designers in the 2threads awards last year.

She showcased her spring/summer 2011 range – "Havana Affair" – alongside nine other designers at the Audi Sydney Fashion Event this week.

Inspired by Cuban ceramic tiles, the collection fuses soft bamboo jerseys and subtle pieces with crisp collars and fitted tailoring.

Details: voyageur.com.au.



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