

# A Category of Its Own



An Interview with Adria de Haume,  
Haume Inc.

**EDITORS' NOTE** A sculptor and jewelry designer of growing renown, Adria de Haume established her namesake company in May 2000, having come from a background in both business and fine art. Her jewelry designs have been collected by heads of state, industry leaders, and an impressive array of social register luminaries.



**COMPANY BRIEF** Haume Inc. ([www.haume.com](http://www.haume.com)) is a premier jewelry design company based in the New York metropolitan area. Haume offers a range of jewelry-related services, including custom designed jewelry and redesigning existing jewels; providing wardrobe consultation for refined jewelry and accessories; furnishing corporate gifts from one extraordinary piece to multiple purchases; and providing jewelry, accessories, and gifts for special events such as weddings.

## What motivated you to start Haume and what made you think the timing was right?

I founded the company in 2000, because a major high-end department store came to me and asked me to design a line of products for the home that would be sold exclusively by them. Prior to that time I had been a painter and sculptor, and several of the store's executives knew me and appreciated my talent as an artist. I loved the challenge of creating a cohesive line for the home in sterling silver, crystal, linens, semi-precious stones, and home fragrance.

I thought the timing was great, but by the time I had my sample line assembled, fate sadly intervened. The tragic events of 9/11 brought the store to a standstill and our meeting was postponed for six months. By that time, the executives who wanted my work had left the company. I thought my company would be over before it began. While waiting for the store meetings, I had taken the trademarked Haume knot – our logo, which is an ancient symbol of blessing and protection – and applied it as a clasp for necklaces that I would wear daily.

My perceptive 12-year-old son wisely suggested that I turn my focus to designing only jewelry. Many of the mothers of my son's friends at school, who saw me wearing the necklaces, wanted to own them too, and this was the genesis of my jewelry business.

## How broad was your focus at the beginning?

The focus was very narrow at the beginning and limited to only necklaces at first. I also offered one-of-a-kind handbags, each of which incorporated the Haume knot logo. Since I had the samples from the home product line, I was also able to give clients customized special order sterling silver and fine crystal gifts as well, but the focus was initially simple.

## You say it was simple, but starting a collection is not always that easy.

True, it's not that easy. It helped that I had been in retailing earlier in my business career, and also that I had a great appreciation of jewelry from a historical perspective. Combining commerce with art was exhilarating. I enjoyed the challenge of making jewelry that was steeped in historical significance and yet was totally modern in appeal. My background in fine art and art history was a wonderful support in exploring the art of jeweled adornment. The National Portrait Gallery in London was one of my favorite haunts, and I studied that great collection of paintings to better understand the way women and men wore jewelry historically. I have always been fascinated by the meaning of adornment, by the significance of stones, and their mythological properties. As a child I collected rocks, sea shells, and treasured most things created by nature. Mother Nature has been my greatest inspiration.

## What is your target market – is it just the high end?

Since my work is available only by private invitation or a personal introduction, and at Neiman Marcus, it is fair to say that the target market is high end. To qualify as truly luxury level merchandise, it should not be a generally available commodity. There must be a quality inherent in the product that makes it exceptional, exclusive, and not readily available.

## Have you made any corporate gifts?

Yes, I've done many wonderful limited-edition corporate gifts for several leading CEOs. One favorite was a trophy cup with a hand etched message that the owner was famous for quoting to motivate his team. The gift meant so much to his successful key executives. For other executives, I have done hand engraved sterling silver boxes, bowls, cornucopias, and jewelry,

and all carry a message to mark a significant event or achievement.

## Have you created cufflinks or other products for men?

Yes, I have created wedding bands, rings, necklaces, dog tags, bracelets, key chains, and cufflinks for men. It is something I really enjoy creating, as the men who commission or receive them are always grateful. Several men collect my one-of-a-kind Ganesha cufflinks. Ganesha is the figure of a man with an elephant's head, which is a Hindu symbol for God, and is also considered "the remover of obstacles." There is a famous New York lawyer who has told me that every time he wears his Haume blessed Ganesha cufflinks in court, he wins. Whenever he forgets to wear them, he loses. What can I say. He covets that pair of cufflinks. I have other clients who will not leave home without wearing their deeply significant Haume jewelry.

## Many companies that have become successful think about giving back. But you started out thinking about it. Was that just a part of your nature?

Yes, it was part of my nature, because I was raised by parents who taught me this from the earliest age. Giving help to others was an important priority in our family. Both my mom and dad set many admirable examples. My parents always supported charities, and I remember as early as the age of 10 years old helping my mother while she volunteered at Planned Parenthood, and assisting while she raised funds for the March of Dimes, the United Way, the Salvation Army, and a host of other worthy causes. My father taught me to give charitably from the heart, and he personified the meaning of this until his death almost four years ago. His lifetime's worth of philanthropic deeds were mainly done anonymously. He wanted no ego gratification for any good deed. Just doing good and helping another was fulfillment in itself. He instilled a deep sense of what this means in me, as he came to this country as a 12-year-old boy escaping the pogroms of Russia. Although he spoke no English when he arrived, and worked to help support his family, he graduated from both college and law school with highest honors. He became a successful and esteemed business leader. I was so fortunate to have him as my father, and all that he taught me about charitable giving has lived on after him. ●

*A selection of brooches from Haume Inc.*