

## Celebrating Life

An Interview with Sasson Basha,  
President, Aaron Basha

**EDITORS' NOTE** *The son of Aaron Basha, who established the brand that bears his name, Sasson Basha knew from a young age that he would go into the family business. Particularly effective in the realm of marketing and public relations, Basha provides the inspiration for many of the company's charitable initiatives.*



Sasson Basha

**COMPANY BRIEF** *Established in 1906 as a pearl dealership, family-owned and -operated jeweler Aaron Basha ([www.aaronbasha.com](http://www.aaronbasha.com)) was housed on London's prestigious Berkeley Square until 1990, when the company moved to its flagship store on Manhattan's Madison Avenue. Among Aaron Basha's innovative products, which are also available in high-end department stores, such as Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Harrods in London, and fine jewelers worldwide, are the popular baby shoes pendants and charms and feature pieces made from 18-karat gold, platinum, fine enamel, diamonds, and other precious gems.*

### How much of an impact has the challenging market had on Aaron Basha's growth?

Growth is being achieved, and we are very optimistic about our results this year compared to last year. When the going gets tough, our products seem to shine all the brighter. They become even more special to people.

#### How broad is your target market?

We have a very wide range of customers, both male and female, young and more mature. Because the symbolism of jewelry can be appreciated by a wide range of people, our client base is very broad. And, of course, our market is global.

#### How important is that global reach to the growth of the brand?

It's very important. Celebrations are global, and the love of family is global. Our products have proved popular throughout the world, from Tokyo to Dubai, from Athens to London, and from New York to Mexico City. It's all because of the design of our products, their artistic quality, the humor they convey, and, naturally, the emotion that sits behind them. That makes them appealing to everyone around the globe. So not only are they beautiful, but they also symbolize emotions that are important to everyone, no matter where they live.

#### How do you distribute your products overseas?

In some markets, we do have distribution arrangements, and the brand is promoted and marketed by professional distributors who maintain the retail stores, shop-in-shops, and other aspects of retail distribution. In other markets, we sell directly to retail partners.

#### How broad are your distribution channels in North America?

We are steadily growing our distribution here. We have a limited number of retail partners around the country, but we are very proud of all of them, including Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue.

#### Aaron Basha has created a niche in the market. Has it been challenging to get your message across to retailers?

We see our retail partners as an extension of our boutique on Madison Avenue in New York. Our sales representatives are involved in training all of our associates, so our message and our style are represented appropriately.

#### You mentioned that you have male and female customers. What products appeal to them?

The male market is quite limited, but we offer men the chance to buy the ultimate gift for the women in their lives. After all, our products reflect the lifestyle men share with their loved ones. We also offer products designed specifically for men that reflect that same lifestyle, like our cufflinks and shirt studs, which are very colorful and humorous.

#### Your well-known baby shoes look like they would appeal to a young clientele. Do older people like them too?

The age range of our customers is very broad. The baby shoes could be a gift for a grandma, to represent all her grandchildren. They would also be suitable for a girl celebrating her Sweet 16. Our products can grow with the family and celebrate all their special moments, from birth onward.

#### Are you planning to extend your product range at all?

We have enormous potential to expand the assortment of products that we offer. At the moment, it's limited to jewelry, but we are looking into many other types of products that relate to what we do, which is celebrating life.

#### As the business has grown, has your father, Aaron Basha, been able to stay

#### involved, or has he had to give up some of his control?

This business is his passion, and we all live it every day. It doesn't matter where we are, we are always busy creating and communicating.

#### For Aaron and for the family, it has always been important to give back to the community. How important is it to be a brand that makes a difference?

We feel very blessed, and giving back is definitely part of our philosophy. It's part of our culture, and the fact that we deal with highly emotional symbolic products gives us the opportunity to be involved with, and donate to, many different charities around the country, especially through our retail partners in local markets.

#### In today's volatile market, has it become more important for you to be able to strategize in a long-term manner?

We feel like we are becoming a part of culture and society and that our products are not popular just as a trend or a fashion. We think they represent a lifestyle that is adopted by a very high-end consumer who appreciates the quality and the philosophy of our brand.

#### If you walk into your boutique on Madison Avenue, you are almost guaranteed to see one of the family members, if not Aaron himself. How important is that client interaction?

It definitely gives us an advantage to understand our consumers and their needs. We are a third-generation retailer, and we have always considered it important to develop relationships with our clients, to understand what their needs are.

#### We hear so much about the challenges of working in a family business, but the dynamic works for your family. You each have your area of specialty, and you each know and complement each other. Does it really work that well?

We concentrate on what is the right thing for the business. We each take our responsibilities very seriously, and we try to do our best. Naturally, we all believe in the same philosophy – we're all surfing the same wave. It's just that each one of us has a different style, but we have the same ideas in mind. There's no trying to outdo each other. It's basically about always being fresh and exciting for our consumers. ●

A pair of Aaron Basha cufflinks