

DESIGNING LIVES

► AWARD-WINNING DESIGNER CONJURES UP NOSTALGIA AND ANCIENT TECHNIQUES IN HIS DISTINCTIVE, INSTINCTIVE TAKE ON JEWELRY

alex sepkus

AN ARTIST with a dry wit and a unique style that can't be duplicated, Alex Sepkus never wavers from who he is or what he believes in. Self-taught, Sepkus has mastered the art of creating mosaic-like sculptures of jewelry in high karat gold and refreshingly unexpected mixes of gemstones, cultural influences and natural forms. There is always a surprise or secret that lies within a Sepkus design, which is part of his humor and his aesthetic: "Always leave them wanting more."

— STORY by BETH BERNSTEIN

18K gold center
stone oval ring
with diamond
accents



18K gold dome-shaped ring with various shapes in the metal and round gemstones and diamonds



18K gold circular Omega clip earrings with gemstone accents



18K gold and diamond flexible bracelet



THE BEGINNING "I came from an artistic background. My father was an architect and a graphic designer in Kaunas, Lithuania, where I was born. He taught me drawing and calligraphy at a very young age. I was also introduced to all forms of culture from being dragged to the symphony and opera (which I now appreciate so much more). As a child, I had Polish, German and French lessons, and was also given an education in art and old books, as my parents believed that children should grow up with culture around them."

VENTURING INTO JEWELRY "I studied industrial design at the Vilnius Art Institute and found it very boring. I was more intrigued by painting and other more creative subjects. I began making jewelry in my third year as a hobby, but I found that I was pretty good with my hands, especially while designing more simple pieces. I am mostly self-taught; I learned from books and by trial and error (and there

were plenty of those). Once I graduated, I made jewelry, little painted and thematic sculptures, spending a month or two on one piece — some whimsical and some with more dramatic themes."

LAUNCHING THE COLLECTION "An older jeweler friend said that I was born a jeweler. So it seemed that making jewelry, for me, would be the easiest way to make a living. I started my own business in 1990 with an idea to make handmade jewelry that would completely be identifiable as an Alex Sepkus piece and to sell those pieces. My collection is a mosaic of elements from various cultures, time periods, nature, and what I find beautiful. I continually want to revive something familiar yet something totally new so that when a potential customer or collector looks at a piece, it evokes feelings and a lasting impression. Personally, I love putting together interesting collections of elements — like keys on a wall or medicine bottles on shelves, but in a totally unique and evocative way."

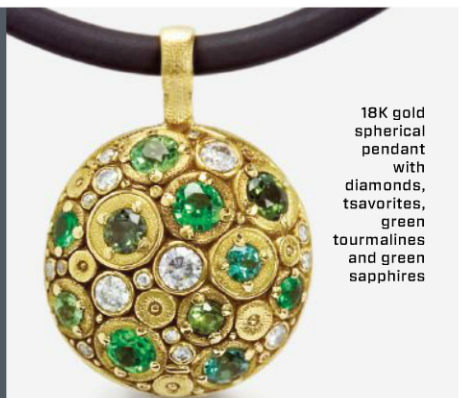
THE WOMAN HE DESIGNS FOR "She is artistic and sensitive. Could be any age, but well educated and cultured. And, I like to say that I don't want customers who don't read books."

IN JEWELRY SPEAK "A woman's jewelry says so much about her taste, even more so than her clothes. I think it's because with jewelry, you are making more of a commitment and have to think about it more. With fine jewelry, women get to tell a whole story about themselves."

INSPIRING STYLE "Anything can influence me and a collection: a book, a movie, an illustration, oddly shaped rocks, even good wine."

EVOLUTION AND GROWTH "My collection does not really evolve. I go from intricate shapes to simpler ones and then back again. And, I have no idea what I will make next year, or even tomorrow. Design to me is an adventure."

DESIGNER'S PICK



18K gold spherical pendant with diamonds, tsavorites, green tourmalines and green sapphires

"This 18K gold round pendant is a study of circular shapes, textures and colors."

"Every single circle in metal or gemstone has its own purpose in the composition."

"I have planned it as a piece of chamber music, with two or three tiny lines between the round notes, like small scratches on an old LP."



Q&A WITH ALEX SEPKUS

FAVORITE PIECE OF JEWELRY TO WEAR?

"I only wear a wedding band, and only because I have to."

FAVORITE VACATION SPOT?

"I've been to very few."

The eastern Baltic coast was great in my childhood, but now we go to Lake Garda in Italy every summer. I traveled on a road trip with my wife from Phoenix to Las Vegas when the Couture Show used to be in Scottsdale. It was truly beautiful, and I would recommend this trip highly."

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANOTHER CAREER?

"A painter, a printmaker, a writer, even a singer if I had a better voice."

SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF THAT NO ONE KNOWS?

"There is a large pink rabbit in my bathtub. And that is all I am giving away."

ANY HOBBIES?

"I sing in a choir in church. I am a total amateur, but I continue to learn more and it's an extremely satisfying experience."

