

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report



The **California** Issue

A window on the cars, wine, food, art, and people that define the dream

APRIL 2019

Diamond Do-Over



JADE LUSTIG has just returned from a house call in Palm Beach with a bag of diamonds in tow. She collected 15 pieces on her trip, including a massive 50-inch diamond necklace with dozens of stones—all from a client who simply had no use for them anymore. “Like so many women today, her style is more casual and her jewelry too formal,” says Lustig, a fifth-generation diamantaire in New York.

Why should all those sparkling baubles go to waste, hidden away forever in drawers and safes? That’s where Lustig comes in. Like a trusted tailor or therapist, she has become the go-to jewelry fixer, transforming chunky and dated designs into light, stackable, and actually wearable pieces.

Six years ago, after a decade of dealing stones, Lustig had grown tired of looking at the sea of generic pieces that ruled

Like so many women today, her style is more casual and her jewelry too formal.

her trade, so she established Jade Trau (jadetrau.com), a custom jewelry house that specializes in turning antiquated styles into modern expressions. One of the first pieces she made was personal: Her grandmother’s 5-carat marquise-cut diamond ring, which she refitted into a contemporary east-west setting surrounded by tiny diamonds. It didn’t take long for word to spread, and soon clients were shipping Lustig heaps of old jewelry for similar makeovers. Classic tennis bracelets and three-stone rings were broken apart, and the diamonds were divided between chain links for new bracelets and necklaces; pear-shaped stones were set askew in striking rings; and round diamonds were positioned in a grid bracelet resembling an abacus.

Redesigning family heirlooms can come with emotional baggage, Lustig

admits, “but it’s better to take those precious stones and make them into something you enjoy rather than keep them tucked away.” A client recently brought in her mother’s engagement ring, which she had kept in a safe for years, to create a modern piece she could wear all the time. Lustig set the six-carat pear-shape stone on a simple choker-length gold chain to give the appearance of floating on the neck. It became the woman’s wear-anywhere necklace.

As for that Palm Beach stash, Lustig is working on a range of designs in sketches and 3-D renderings that will be executed in her workshop (a process that takes from two to four weeks). The long necklace alone has been made into several stacking bracelets, necklaces, and rings—none of which will be going back into a safe anytime soon. **Jill Newman** 