

**When shopping for earrings and necklaces makes them beady-eyed, some people can get pretty crafty. Here are three Twin Cities women at various stages of the DIY jewelry-selling trend.**



## Jewel-it-yourselfers

By SARA GLASSMAN • sglassman@startribune.com

**S**tanding at the checkout counter at Quince, a boutique on St. Paul's Grand Avenue, Anna Lewicki Long clasped a delicate white-thread necklace with dangling opalescent sequins and readied her sales pitch.

"I actually had a dream about this one and was, like, I have to make it," she told then-manager Natalie Quinn, adding that her mother taught her the crocheting technique she uses.

Quinn's assessment: "It's like a celebration around your neck." She obviously meant that as a compliment, because she agreed to carry Lewicki Long's pieces and give her half of retail prices ranging from \$25 to \$65.

When customers pass the jewelry case at Quince, they often say, "I could make that," Quinn said.

But would they? Well, to judge by the business that bead shops are doing, an increasing number of home jewelry makers are getting started.

Interweave Press, which publishes a number of beading magazines,



JOEL KOYAMA • Star Tribune  
Liz Oie makes jewelry at home in Burnsville. At right is one of her designs: freshwater pearl earring (\$88) at Epitome.

estimates that beading has become an industry with more than \$2 billion in annual sales. Minnesota, considered a hotbed for crafting of all sorts, has dozens of stores devoted to nothing but beading, including shops in smaller towns such as Owatonna and Virginia.

The Bead Monkey, with locations in Edina and St. Paul, has more than doubled its number of classes in the past four years, including "knotting and French wire finishing" and "elements of beading."

"Once people start, they get hooked," said Anna Karina, manager of the Edina shop. "They see something they think they could make and come in and see if they can do it. Once they have a small amount of success, it's instant gratification. Making a pair of earrings takes five minutes. You could make earrings for every outfit every day."



**Jewelry continues:** Tips for the would-be beadster. **E6** ▶

**Top left:** White coral earring (\$80) by Holly V of Minneapolis, Q. **Top:** Necklace with beads (\$50) by designer Anna Lewicki Long, Quince. **Top right:** Glass earring (\$39) by local artist Cari Johnson, Quince. **Below:** Raw coral necklace (\$180) by Holly V, Q. Shopping resources, **E6**.



## When focal dystonia strikes musicians, careers end



KYNDELL HARKNESS • Star Tribune  
Alison Young has dystonia in her hands, which ended her career as a flutist.

• Dystonia, a perplexing neurological affliction, is the third-most-common movement disorder in the United States, behind Parkinson's disease and essential tremor.

By KAY MILLER • kmiller@startribune.com

Flutist Alison Young was rehearsing Mozart's "Requiem" for a Houston Ballet Orchestra concert in 1999. She lifted the flute to her lips — something she had done thousands of times — but couldn't remember where to place her fingers.

"My hands felt like they weren't my own," she said.

Over time, as the movements in Young's left hand grew more erratic, she blamed herself. She must be slacking off. So she practiced more. Things got worse.

Four years ago, Young was diagnosed with focal dystonia, the perplexing neurological disorder that ended the careers of pianist Gary Graffman, Tokyo String Quartet violinist Peter Oundjian and Chicago Symphony Orchestra oboist Alex Klein. Pianist Leon Fleischer played one-handed for 40 years until starting Botox injections, famously reviving his two-handed career

at age 75.

Young saw a neurologist, rebuilt her flute, changed her technique, practiced slowly, underwent physical therapy and had Botox injected into her hands. She'd fix one problem, only to have another creep in. Three years ago, she quit her 20-year career as a soloist, recording artist and principal flutist of the ballet orchestra, where she had been for 13 years.

Now, at 41, she's putting her knowledge and love of music to work as a classical music host at Minnesota Public Radio in St. Paul.

"I didn't think I would want to have anything to do with classical music. The heartbreak was too extreme. It was like the baby had died and I didn't want to be around children anymore," she said. "But I discovered you can't get away from the exhilaration of music."

**Dystonia continues:** No one knows what causes it, and it doesn't seem to matter if musicians play for one hour a day or 10 hours. **E4** ▶

**Withering Glance finds 'Dreamgirls' dreamy E5** ▶

**Party planner Colin Cowie offers holiday advice E3**

**Safety tips for running in cold weather E4**



## style

PERSONAL SHOPPER  
SARA GLASSMAN

## LOOKING AROUND

Pajama Party!  
Get cozy in soft, fun and fabulous sleepwear.

**Jenni** at Macy's  
Robe, \$45; tank, \$18; pants, \$28.  
Check out this new line of  
sleepwear, exclusively at Macy's.



**PINK** by Victoria's Secret  
Thermal top, \$33; flannel pants,  
\$37, www.victoriasecret.com.  
This is as festive — and mischie-  
vous (there's a logo on the bum)  
— as it gets.



**Frankie & Johnny**  
Sleepy sheep pajamas, \$78,  
www.sleepyheads.com.  
These are a celebrity fave. Note  
the tailored top.



**PAMPER YOURSELF**  
Laura Mercier bath and body  
www.lauramercier.com  
Neiman Marcus, 612-339-2600  
Nordstrom, 952-883-2121  
Sephora (at Ridgedale), 952-  
513-1306

There's something very appetizing  
about this bath collection in  
three good-enough-to-eat fla-  
vors: crème brûlée trio (\$65), cle-  
mentine duo (\$50) and almond  
coconut-milk trio (\$50). The  
duo includes a honey bath and  
souffle body cream and the trios  
also have a scrub. Perfect for  
pampering yourself or someone  
else. Then slip into your p.j.s.

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## Jewel-it-yourselfers



Anna Lewicki Long, center, in July showed some of her jewelry to Natalie Quinn, then manager of Quince in St. Paul.

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## ◀ JEWELRY FROM E1

Karena has a theory on the growing popularity of hand-  
icrafts: "The world has become technology-oriented; peo-  
ple have lost the human touch. They're craving to create  
things by hand again."

## Turning passion into profit

For Liz Oie, jewelry making began as a way to save mon-  
ey, not make it.

Ten years ago, when Oie was working at Epitome in  
Edina, she admired the boutique's expensive jewelry but  
considered it out of her price range. She decided to try im-  
proving on what she saw, using higher-quality semipreci-  
ous stones, gold and silver, and making clasps more se-  
cure with supplies she found at retail shops such as the  
Bead Monkey and Bobby Bead.

Soon, other Epitome employees asked Oie to make them  
pieces, which in turn drew the attention of customers.  
Eight years ago, after Oie sold some pieces to the store, her  
necklaces and earrings were outselling more established  
lines.

Now her work is prominently featured at several ar-  
ea boutiques, at one in California and on a new website  
(www.oiejewelry.com). Oie was commissioned by the  
Minnesota Vikings a year and a half ago to make citrine-  
and-amethyst necklaces for the players' wives.

"[Other] people can make jewelry, but they don't know  
how to develop their own style. Look at Liz's pieces and  
you know it's Oie," said Michelle Abramson, one of Epito-  
me's jewelry buyers.

To keep up with demand, which can be up to 50 items  
a week, Oie sits in her family's sunroom after dinner and  
works into the wee hours while watching "The Mary Ty-  
ler Moore Show."

"Once in a while, my fingers get sore, but not too terri-  
ble," Oie said. However, all of those hours manipulating  
wire do take a toll: "I could never have good nails, but I  
don't have time for manicures anyway."

Despite her success, Oie herself has remained under the  
radar. "Sometimes out in the public I tell people I like their  
jewelry and they say 'It's Oie. I love it.'"

## A worry-bead beginning

Another local jewelry artist is not so anonymous: KMSP-  
TV (Channel 9) anchor Robyne Robinson. In the past four  
years, she has spent much of her off-air time  
making jewelry under the label Rox Minneapolis.

She started by making worry beads for her  
Greek boyfriend, then made more as gifts.

"One day I was offered money for a brace-  
let. I realized I needed to start making it a line  
instead of giving it away," she said.

Now her chunky bead and sterling-silver  
creations, priced from \$40 to \$400, are sold  
in six local boutiques (see www.roxmpls.com), at ano-  
ther in New York City and recently in three Macy's stores;  
Southdale, Minneapolis and State Street in Chicago.

She uses her den for doing paperwork, does her design-  
ing in her bedroom and keeps shipping orders in a hallway.

Robinson, whose former moonlighting passion was a  
now-closed art gallery, takes her jewelry seriously. "I never  
considered it a hobby. I'm going to do the best I can to make  
it successful," she said. "I'm in it for the long haul."



**Robyne  
Robinson**

## Where to shop

## OIE JEWELRY

www.oiejewelry.com.

Epitome, 3395 Galleria, Edina, 952-920-2978.

Rosie Posie, 14020 Hwy. 13, Savage, 952-226-5240.

www.rosieposie.net.

## ANNA LEWICKI LONG (A.L.LURE.)

Quince, 850 Grand Av., St. Paul, 651-225-9900.



Gemstone and sterling brace-  
let (\$100) by Robyne Robin-  
son's Rox Minneapolis, Macy's.

## HOLLY V

Q, 3825 Grand Way, St. Louis Park, 952-465-0100.

Robinson knows that having name recognition has helped  
her, as has her habit of wearing her own earrings and brace-  
lets on the air.

## Taking artistic pride

After making her first professional sale to Quince, new-  
bie artisan Lewicki Long took her check for \$409 and put it  
in the bank. "I didn't make very much, but I wasn't expect-  
ing to. I had to make more of an investment to buy a few  
things in bulk."

Supply cost is the biggest drawback for many artists try-  
ing to get a jewelry business off the ground. Overhead isn't  
much when you're sitting at your dining room table, but the  
expense of buying materials adds up; an ounce of sterling  
silver is \$39, and strands of turquoise range from \$6 to \$60.  
Artists often end up doing the work for nothing in order to  
keep prices down.

It's also a challenge to balance a day job with a labor-  
intensive side business. "At one point I was sitting at our pool  
at our health club, crocheting," Lewicki Long said.

She hasn't returned to Quince with a second round of  
jewelry, yet.

"To really make money at it, it would have to be a full-  
time venture. Right now, I'm just looking forward to walk-  
ing down the street and seeing someone wearing something  
that I've created."

Robinson also said there's great satisfaction in the cre-  
ative process and the feedback: "I love hearing women make  
ooh and ahhh sounds. When they pick up a piece, you can  
hear them draw a breath."

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Glass and sterling-silver  
bracelet (\$165) by Amy  
Lambert of Minneapo-  
lis, Quince.



Necklace with gem clus-  
ter of black onyx, citrine,  
chalcedony, green onyx,  
garnet, moonstone, car-  
nelian and smoky topaz  
(\$176) by Liz Oie, Epitome.



Gold-filled necklace  
(\$80) by Bari Sodikoff of  
Minnetonka, Quince.

## Tips for the would-be beadster

Cathy Jakicic, editor of BeadStyle magazine  
(www.beadstyle.com), offers aspiring jewelry  
entrepreneurs some ideas for getting started.

## 1. WEAR IT.

Be a walking advertisement for yourself. If  
people (and boutiques) like what they see,  
they'll approach you about it.

## 2. TELL A STORY.

Artists featured at the St. Paul boutique Quince  
have "romance cards," describing the basis of  
their aesthetic. For example, Anna Long's jew-  
elry was inspired by a trip to a fly-fishing store

with her husband. There, she saw gold and silver  
thread that reminded her of necklaces her mother  
made in the 1960s. She bought the thread (with a  
confused husband looking on). Now she uses it in  
many of her creations.

## 3. SET REASONABLE-BUT-FAIR PRICES.

Find a way to balance sellable prices while not  
undervaluing your own labor. "I think a lot of people  
misprice their work, because they feel guilty and  
end up not charging enough," said Bead Monkey  
manager Anna Karena. If you're serious about  
starting a business, look into buying materials  
wholesale.

4. BE PREPARED BEFORE  
APPROACHING RETAILERS.

It's rare to just call and get an appointment at a  
store. First, you'll probably have to send an e-mail  
or drop off some pieces. Many boutiques will also  
require a line sheet with photos, descriptions  
and prices before setting up a meeting.

## 5. TRY SELLING ONLINE.

For an easy way to dabble, Jakicic recommends  
selling on a website such as www.etsy.com,  
which features a variety of handmade crafts.

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