

## TownStyle

## Don't buy that dress

Ring in the new year with  
easy glam &  
loads of bling

KELLY GADZALA  
Town Crier

Glam, undoubtedly, is back. Open any magazine and you'll see a gown-clad celebrity twirling on some red carpet, long filmy entrails of material gliding behind her.

And while the glam pot in every gal wants to shine as bright as those stars on New Year's Eve — arguably the only night of the year we can fulfill our dreams of looking like a true glamour girl — the idea of blowing our cash on a full-length gown or even a cocktail dress we'll wear once or twice a year seems downright silly.

So this year, here's an idea: don't buy that dress.

Instead, hit your closet and pull out one of those little black dresses you've had for years, or per-

haps that ruffled blouse and satin pants you bought for last year's holiday party. Then give them new life with a flash of gleaming statement-piece jewellery.

In other words, go big with the bling, but think glam all the way.

"Holidays are the easiest time to step outside the box," says Terri Michael, Toronto-based jewellery designer and creator of Terri Michael Stoned Originals. "If you can't be a little over the top, when can you be?"

Michael, who often helps her clients accessorize their new jewellery with outfits, agrees that "the whole glamour thing" is huge now.

But you needn't buy this season's glittery gold dress or black beaded number to be in style or look swishy, she says.

For Michael, updating an

already-worn dress or outfit can be as easy as adding a "big and bold" statement piece.

"Small is easy," she quips.

Michael, a staunch proponent of empowering women and making them feel good about themselves, claims there are no rules anymore about "what goes with what".

If you put on your outfit with your jewellery and you look in the mirror and you feel good, then you should walk out that door with confidence, she declares.

Even so, there are some things even Michael recommends staying clear of.

"Matching is outdated."

So for that jewel-toned dress you bought last year that's still in style this year, opt for clear crystal pieces, like the sterling silver and

crystal pendants Michael makes as part of her "funky elegant" collection.

Matching a jewel-toned earring to the dress is overkill, she suggests.

Another outdated, slightly *Dynasty* look she worries about: wearing gold jewellery with a black dress.

She prefers large pearls with black, like her signature cluster pearl necklaces that can be worn wrapped around the neck or dangling long to the waist.

The creamy coffee and toffee colours look rich with gold, she adds.

One glam look Michael herself

uses often is pairing one of her many ruffle-collared blouses with several long chain necklaces and pearls.

In the past, the look was to wear a necklace in the vee of the ruffle, she says. Now, she wears several strands of chains and pearls right over the ruffle and all the way down to the waist.

She wears the chains with a simple pearl-drop earring to create a finished, yet non-fussy look. Anything larger on the ear could be too much, she warns.

After investing in a jewellery statement piece, are you stuck wearing it just once a year?

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## Dare to go for 'dramatic bang' with accessories

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No way, says Michael. Integrating it in your everyday wardrobe in the new year is totally acceptable, so long as the statement piece isn't too flashy or diamond-looking.

Big statement pieces such as faceted cut crystals, she says, look fabulous with a suit.

Cheryl Fraser, owner of Zilberschmuck Art-Jewellery gallery in Toronto, regularly helps clients pick out special one-of-a-kind jewellery pieces to match special outfits for fancy occasions.

She agrees it's sometimes hard to leave one's comfort zone when it comes to selecting a piece of jewellery that will really stand out.

"You have to try it," she says of the larger pieces women feel may not be for them.

She tells the story of clients who have gravitated towards more traditional pieces, saying that the larger, chunkier pieces aren't their style. Once they try the big piece on, though, they change their minds.

Popular jewellery pieces with loads of colour found at Fraser's gallery are the necklaces and bracelets



PHOTO COURTESY TERRI MICHAEL STONED ORIGINALS

**CLUSTER BUSTER:** Designer Terri Michael often wears her signature cluster hanging long with a ruffle blouse, but the piece can also be roped around the neck as it is here.

by jewellery designer Yael Krakowski.

The multi-coloured ball creations, made of tiny beads knitted over Styrofoam balls, are fun and elegant at the same time.

"With the mixed coloured bead pieces, I suggest a solid coloured outfit with no pattern or distracting weave," says Fraser. "The piece needs to stand out and show off."

For pieces with beads that vary from light blue to dark blue, for example, Fraser recommends wearing an outfit in the same colour family for unity.

Either that or make a

"dramatic bang" by matching your necklace or bracelet with a dress whose shade is on the opposite side of the colour wheel.

"A bright orange dress can look smashing with a blue neckpiece, a green dress with a red necklace," Fraser says.

One look she suggests that is simple yet pure elegance: pair a long-sleeved blouse with a high-polished silver bracelet directly over the cuff of the sleeve. The look creates a dramatic effect, especially with black.

So is there such a thing as too much jewellery or

bling?

Sometimes less is more, Fraser admits.

"A very large, ornate neckpiece can stand on its own without more," she says.

But there are many small

elegant sets consisting of earrings, a pendant, and a bracelet that are beautiful together, she adds.

Final word: Fraser cautions not to forget the coat as you make your way to your party. While you may

not be able to afford a new one this year, you can spruce up your existing one with a glitzy brooch.

"Your host will be curious as to what other pieces you are wearing under the coat," Fraser says.