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**FIRST CUT**

## A true gem!

*Jewellery designer, PREETI AHUJA, talks about her first signature collection.*

### **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

Jewellery designing happened to me by chance. I am from a fashion and textile background and was always attracted to colours. I used to trade gem stones to earn my pocket money. While selling a unique stone, I would always voluntarily sketch a design and present it to the jeweller or customer so as to describe its best use in jewellery. To my surprise, the customers would actually follow my suggestions. That's when I seriously looked at jewellery designing as a career.

### **FIRST BREAK:**

My first break came unexpectedly. I was with my sister when we visited 'V N Jewellers' in Mumbai, who showed my designs there. I was offered a job right away. I worked there as a designer, dabbled in operations for over a year and received my informal training. For my formal training, I went to GIA (USA) in 2002.

### **FLYING SOLO:**

In 'Su-Raj', I started as a Works Manager for their Mumbai factory. Later, I was promoted as General Manager — Handcrafting Division. All the while I was designing unique, one-off, exclusive, highend pieces for a few select clients. The success that followed opened gates for my signature collection. — **As told to SAVIA RAJAGOPAL**



