

The fashion plate

Second-best friends lend sparkle



Cubic zirconia stud earrings are 3 1/2 carat, priced at \$112. The 1.35-carat solitaire in a bezelset on a 16-inch, 14-karat gold serpentine chain is \$83. (Staff photo by Steve Cantrell)

By RUSTLE SHAND

Does she or doesn't she wear diamonds? Only her gemologist knows for sure. Those gems sparkling at her ears and throat may be cubic zirconia, elegantly set in 14-karat gold. It's hard for anyone but an expert to tell the difference.

Now for around \$100 you can look like a million-dollar baby, sporting a girl's second best friend, two-carat zirconia stud earrings.

The cubic zirconia stones mounted on rings also are popular. But Alton Lazar, who along with his wife, Sema, own the newly-opened Gold Gallery in Franklin, believes the primary use should be for earrings.

"A woman who uses hairsprays and perfume will cloud a diamond in her ear anyway," said Lazar. "So it doesn't really matter whether she wears a cubic zirconia or a diamond. To the untrained eye they appear the same."

The woman who prefers the low-key sparkle of diamonds in her ears can expect to pay \$500 for the smaller diamond, explained Lazar. "The same size stones in cubic zirconia, made up into stud earrings, will cost about \$40."

SIMULATED diamonds have been around for years, said Lazar, but those made of cubic zirconia are said to be the most fabulous fakes available.

"It's the best diamond imitation we've seen yet," he said.

"Real diamonds, which have tripled in price, can retail for \$30,000 a carat if they're fine. The price of a carat stone of cubic zirconia starts at \$30."

The duplicate diamond was developed about 12 years ago by Russian scientists, Lazar said. It's a compound formed by melting zirconium dioxide at 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit and adding nitrogen and a rare-earth metal called yttrium oxide.

The process was brought to America by Joseph Wencus, who learned the details while visiting Russia. Since he set up production in Massachusetts, several new firms have sprung up, and there are at least four varieties of the stone, the best of which is considered to be the Russian cubic zirconia, said Lazar.

"The Russian cubic zirconia is the best because the refraction index is higher than that of a diamond," said Lazar. "That means that it has more fire, life and sparkle than the diamond it imitates."

ANOTHER DISTINCTIVE facet of the Gold Gallery is that gold jewelry is priced to reflect the weight of the gold. A gold chain is weighed and priced at \$12 to \$15 per gram of gold.

"It makes it more reasonable to buy the weight," said Lazar. A customer came in Saturday with a ring she had purchased, she said, for 50 percent off. She said she paid \$116 for the ring. We sell the same ring for \$92.80, based upon the gram weight of the gold piece."

Based upon this system of weight, Lazar said, a serpentine chain that is generally sold for around \$30, is sold by us for \$14. The piece weighs 1.2 grams.

"But," continued Lazar, "If I went to buy that particular chain at wholesale prices today, it would have to sell for more money because the cost of gold has gone up."

Even though old jewelry is offered at bargain prices, Lazar said the store will give cash refunds if a customer changes his mind. "I can't lose," he said. "The price of gold just keeps going up."

LAZAR ALSO does appraisals for which his charge is based on percent of the value of the appraised item. The appraisals fully describe the item, include a photograph and are based on today's current replacement value, he said. A second appraisal within a few years time would merely update the original appraisal, based on current market value, and would involve only a minor fee, he said.

Sema and Alton Lazar have a long background in the fine jewelry business. He is a trained gemologist while she is an experienced buyer. Many of their gold pieces are purchased in Italy, he said, which permits them to sell the items at a lower price than if they were purchased locally.

Before opening their new retail shop in Franklin Village, the Lazars operated for a time from their home in Oak Park.

Volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of volunteer opportunities. Further information about these and other volunteer needs at more than 200 agencies may be obtained by calling the bureau at 642-7272. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may also call the Bureau.

ACTIVITY ASSISTANT — Volunteers with an interest in the elderly are needed by Bortz Green Lake Village, a nursing home in West Bloomfield. Duties vary depending on interests of the volunteer and could include teaching some arts and crafts, serving coffee, writing letters, showing films, and playing bingo with patients. Time commitment is three to four hours a week.

CASE AIDE VOLUNTEER — Adults who are able to love children who may not love back are needed by the Camp Oakland Youth Program. Volunteers provide activities for a child or teenage resident of the camp once a week. They may also take the children into their own homes for a day or weekend outing. Training is provided.

TELEPHONE REASSURANCE — A daily call to elderly or handicapped citizens living alone is the goal of "Service With Love," a program of Pontiac General Hospital. Volunteers must be able to talk gently, briefly, and politely and must commit themselves to calling at a specific time each day.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT — People-oriented volunteers are needed to work in the hemodialysis outpatient service at Henry Ford Hospital in Troy. Volunteers visit with patients during dialysis, play simple games, and teach short courses under the direction of the therapist. Help is needed 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday.

Consumer mailbag

1977 Clean Air Act is tougher

What is the Federal Clean Air Act?
T.C. Rochester

In 1970, recognizing that expanding urbanization, industrial development and growing use of motor vehicles in this country was increasing air pollution to levels that endangered public health and welfare, Congress passed major clean air act legislation.

To protect the public health, the act called for a national program of pollution emission control and air quality management. To ensure continued success of that program, Congress in 1977 set new and more stringent requirements for pollution controls that will require creative solutions and cooperative efforts on the part of states, local governments and all segments of the American society if air pollution is to be reduced to acceptable levels.

What is process cheese?
SUSIE M., Birmingham

Process cheese is made by the grinding and blending of one or more natural cheeses.

The cheese is heated and mixed with water and emulsifier to create "a homogeneous plastic mass," according to the Standards of Identity under the Code of Federal Regulations.

The emulsifier added may be one or any combination of 13 different chemicals appearing on the label along with optional acids, mold inhibitors and flavoring ingredients.

Eco-Tip: Plant trees with energy conservation in mind. In summer they provide us with shade from the sun and transpire cooling water into the air. Deciduous trees, trees that lose their leaves, should be planted on the south side of the house near enough to shade it in summer. After the leaves have dropped, the sun's rays will strike the house to help warm it during the winter months.

Consumer Mailbag answers your questions on environmental issues. Address letters to Consumer, Inc. Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy 48068.

Grace R. Gluskin
Executive Director

China is topic for mission group

"Now What for China?" will be the subject discussed in a meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 24, in the headquarters of Far Eastern Gospel Crusade, 36200 Freedom Road, Farmington.

Donald Douglas, longtime student of Chinese affairs, will focus on the implications of the diplomatic relations with the Peoples Republic of China for the work of missions in Asia.

Douglas has worked closely with Chinese while a missionary for 10 years in the Philippines.

He has completed graduate work in International Relations at the University of Michigan and was chairman of the Evangelical China Committee sponsored by two major mission associations. A former teaching staff member at Missionary Internship in Farmington, he now pastors the Huron Hills Baptist Church in Ann Arbor.

Far Eastern Gospel Crusade has recently appointed Douglas to serve its China desk. As a resource person to the general director to stimulate interest and prayer on behalf of all Chinese people, he will also research any future thrust FECC should have in the overall evangelism of the Chinese people.

AFTER COLLEGE . . . THEN WHAT?

Chiropractic — A Career With a Future!!

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- Sherman College is one of the leading chiropractic colleges in the world.
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- Sherman College offers a 4-year program leading to the degree of Doctor of Chiropractic. Admission requirements include 2 years of college.

YOU ARE INVITED TO CAREER NIGHT

Tuesday, July 24, 1979 at 7:30 pm

A Sherman College Representative will present a program at the Tooms Chiropractic Clinic

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