

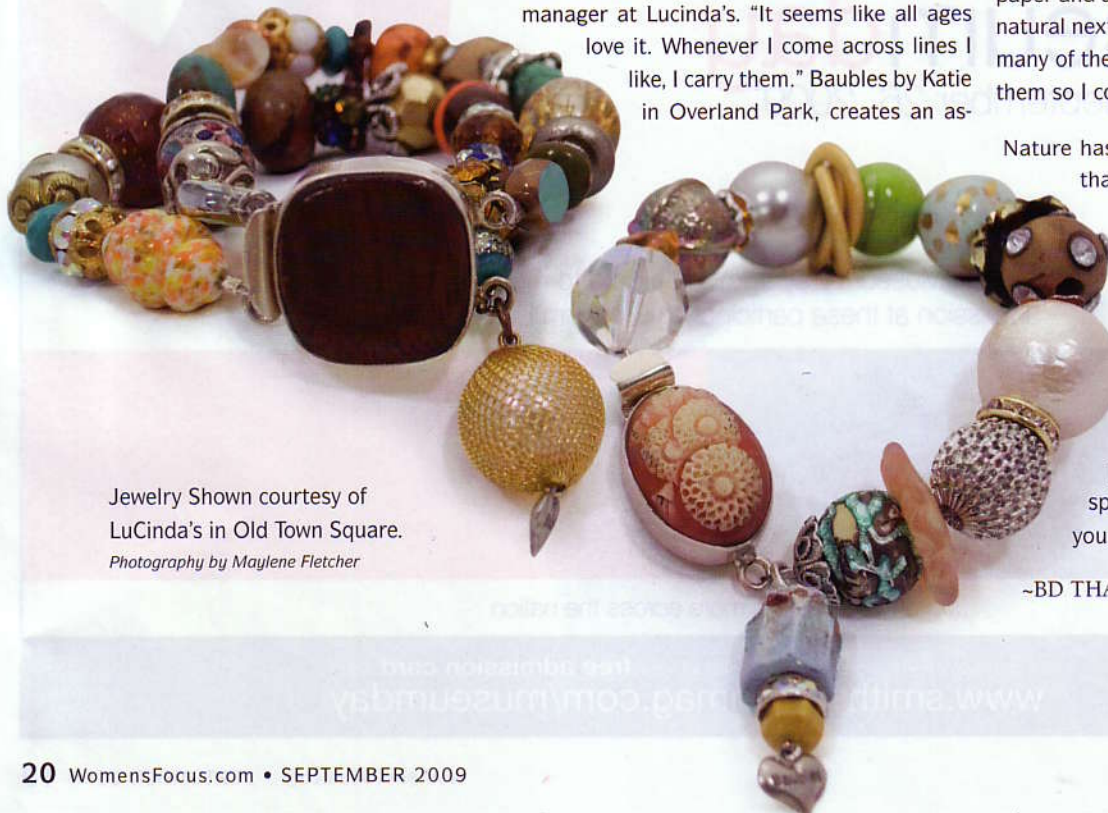
Jewelry That is Sure to Free the Spirit

In our family, no one remembers what happened to the box of broken and loose pieces of jewelry and beads that my grandmother meant to restring someday, but I will never forget her eclectic jewelry collection that included tiny hot dog earrings, dangling spiders, crackled marble ear bobs, stones and glass beads of every size, shape and color.



There are designers who take the remains of the broken jewelry sets and re-use them to create wonderful new pieces. At one of the Women's Fairs I met Melinda Hutton, who owns Closures and Remnants of Newton. She creates unique jewelry fashioned from antique buttons and cufflinks as well as remnant beads and baubles. Prior to mass production, buttons were carved by hand from wood and bone, and the wealthy displayed their affluence through jeweled clasps and buttons made with gold and silver. With antique button jewelry you get the distinctiveness that women of any age can appreciate.

Lucinda's, in Old Town Square, carries a nice selection of free-spirited jewelry, including Katie's Baubles, JOLi, Vintage Sarovski Crystals, and Heather Ramsay Recycled, just to name a few. "I love vintage and unusual jewelry," says Valerie, manager at Lucinda's. "It seems like all ages love it. Whenever I come across lines I like, I carry them." Baubles by Katie in Overland Park, creates an as-



Jewelry Shown courtesy of
LuCinda's in Old Town Square.
Photography by Maylene Fletcher

sorted mix of colorful beaded items: necklaces, bracelets, earrings, hair clips, chandeliers and do-dads. Ramsay Recycled uses colorful cast off materials, like aluminum cans, to make her hand-made earrings that swing and make tiny tinkling sounds.

One of my favorite pairs of earrings is made of rolled strips of red and pink paper. The idea of rolling paper to make jewelry is beyond cool to me. Gretchen Fleener at www.junkmailgems.com is an artist who designs and creates useful items like beads for jewelry, refrigerator magnets, buttons, wallets, bookmarks, hang tags and even her own business cards from junk mail, catalogs and business reply cards.

"I've always been a creative person, being an artist and designer," says Gretchen. "So I tend to notice artistic things around me, including interesting patterns and textures in every day life. One day I was flipping through yet another catalog and really liked the unique patterns in the photography. I wondered how I might be able to turn these interesting patterns into something useful." She started making magnets by gluing pieces of glass over the patterned paper and attaching a magnet to the back. "The natural next step, being that I could only use so many of these items myself, was to start selling them so I could continue making my creations."

Nature has an abundance of beautiful stones that make lovely adornments or interesting accessories. When my husband was a little boy he found a piece of Sheen Obsidian in the grass. It was polished on one side and fit perfectly in a silver setting, making an awesome gift for his mother. So, keep your eyes and imagination open to the possibilities and let the creative spirit move you when discovering your own style. 🍀

~BD THARP