

ALICESUNDERLAND, FROM MUSICAL STAR TO DIAMANTAIRE



‘AND THEN IT CAME TO ME: A CALENDAR RING WITH 365 DIAMONDS’

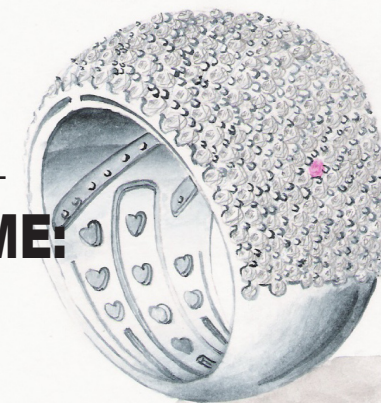
After her youth in the Frisian country side and her careers as show jumper and musical star, Alice Sunderland (32) finally found her passion: diamonds and jewellery. And it has brought her great success, her designs have been slowly conquering the world.

TEXT: MARGREET HAGDORN. PHOTOGRAPHY: HERMAN VAN GESTEL

“The musical scene brought me to Antwerp, where I spent several years playing in various musicals by Joop van den Ende, including Mamma Mia and Saturday Night Fever. I lived there and because Antwerp is a true diamond capital, I automatically came in contact with the business. At one point I was done with the musical scene and I realised I didn’t want to continue doing that until I was thirty. That’s when I enrolled in the diamond school. I spent the next two years on diamonds, full time. And I loved it! Afterwards I was lucky enough to be introduced to the secluded Jewish diamond business by a diamantaire friend. Without an introduction nobody gets in. Which didn’t mean it was easy going afterwards, on the contrary. I was young, a woman and blonde and I had to earn their trust little by little. I was tested on all fronts. All and all that took me seven years. I worked in the diamond district of Antwerp as a diamond sorter and later on in the sales. Everyone thinks this is a glamorous business, but they couldn’t be more wrong. Hard work in shabby back alley buildings. I learned a lot there and made priceless contacts there which benefit me to this day, because along the way I earned that respect.”

EVERLASTING MOMENTS

“While I was working I also started contemplating on an idea for a piece of jewellery which was easily customisable by anyone, because eventually I wanted to start my own line. I saved up small diamonds from every extra penny I



had to create my own ring.

Once I had collected 320 of them, I thought how lovely it would be to reach 365, one for each day. Et voilà, the idea was born: creating a calendar ring with 365 diamonds, set in 12 rows. This allows the owner to accentuate a certain date, for instance the birth of a child, with a diamond in a different colour. And later, for instance to celebrate the birth of a second child or another occasion, diamonds can be replaced. Currently I am working on selling this line to jewellery stores and slowly expanding my company. Diamonds and gold are so expensive, and I personally stand for all the financing, so it’s all step by step.”

CUSTOMISED UNIQUE JEWELLERY

In addition to the Everlasting Moments collection Alice also creates custom design jewellery. Because she is able to purchase the gold and diamonds close to the source, her prices are attractive. Nowadays she jets across the world to meet people and discuss their wishes for their own personalised jewellery. “I just came back from Monaco. I met several women there whom all wanted something special. I take their wishes and budget into account and create a design the same evening in my hotel room. Then I meet them the next day to discuss the design, take their measurements and determine which quality of precious stones the customer is interested in. This is followed by the final design and quote, and the jewellery is created in Italy. This system is working great right now. In the near future I will be collaborating with a Dutch fashion designer. After seven years of hard work and building everything from scratch it is now finally time to reap the rewards. And to continue building of course, I still have great plans for the future.”