

# Vail Daily



- Special to the Vail Daily/Carolyn Tyler



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#### Meet the artist

What: Trunk show with Carolyn Tyler  
When: Saturday, Sunday and Monday  
Where: Karats in Vail Village  
More information: Call 970-476-4760

## Jewelry artist visits Karats in Vail Village Saturday through Monday

Vail Daily's 7 questions with jeweler Carolyn Tyler

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VAIL, Colorado — Jewelry designer Carolyn Tyler, who will be in Vail this weekend, believes jewelry is a form of therapy, a source of happiness. For Tyler, that happiness comes during the creation process at her Bali studio. For her clients, it's the color of the stones or the way Tyler's designs incite compliments from onlookers.

Tyler visits Vail Village Saturday, Sunday and Monday for a trunk show at Karats in Vail Village. Tyler works in high karat gold (18-22 karat), which gives her pieces their signature warm glow, a color reminiscent of gold nuggets found in the panning days. Her designs are whimsical, featuring painstaking embellishments, and have an ancient-treasure feel. And almost all of her designs, be it rings, necklaces, pendants or earrings, bear exotic and rare stones; gems that possess unique qualities of light refraction.

1. Vail Daily: Last time we spoke, you're inspiration was blossoming out from a recent trip to South America, where you spent time hanging with some Amazonian shamans. What is your recent inspiration and how is it affecting your jewelry?

Carolyn Tyler: I went to Egypt and Jordan recently and got a big dose of ancient history. One of the first pieces of jewelry I did, in 1993, was a "double-duck" motif ring that was inspired by the gold and lapis arm cuff of King Ramses II. I went to see the original bracelet in September in the Cairo Museum.

My group had limited time, so I called the curator and asked where it was, and he said no such piece existed, even though I described it in detail and told him I first saw and read about it in the Cairo Museum Book of Artifacts 20 years ago. He insisted that I was mistaken, but the proof existed right on my hand. So I ran through the two buildings of royal jewels and finally found it at the last moment. Much to my surprise, there were two of them, one for each arm ... The motif of twin Nile geese had spiritual significance for the Pharaoh. It was believed that the birds were the guardians of the soul, and would keep him safe during his journey to the other world. I have been wearing my opal "double duck" ring every day for 17 years, and I must say, I believe it has some major mojo because my life has been full of what my sister calls "epic synchronicity."

2. VD: Describe the collection you'll be showcasing at Karats while you're in town.

CT: I am bringing a veritable cornucopia of mouth-watering designs — all exquisitely handmade in 18-karat and 22-karat gold and set with beautiful and unusual gemstones, coins, and pearls. If I have any theme this time, it's a rainbow of color. I think the turmoil of the last year has made people contract and feel there's been a dark cloud hovering, and I think a little color therapy helps lift that.

There is solid science behind this — beholding something beautiful causes pleasurable sensations because our neurotransmitters respond by flooding our system with endorphins. Endorphins reduce stress, which boosts our immune system and creates a sense of wellbeing.

3. VD: Lately, clients have asked you to breathe new life into their old, and sometimes heirloom, jewelry with a fresh design. When do you recommend people do this? Can you describe a "recycling" success story?

CT: I can take the valuable stones from an heirloom piece and custom-make something the owner cherishes and wears, knowing that "grandma's stone" is still with her.

My favorite recycling success story is when a newly divorced woman who owned a six-carat, nearly flawless round diamond

wedding ring gave it to me to re-do into a pendant. I took it to Bali (in my bra, because I could not afford the insurance for something that valuable) and asked the village priest to ritually cleanse it in a Hindu ceremony, to remove all the old karmic history of the stone. He put it in saltwater on Purnama (full moon) night while he recited Sanskrit prayers banishing all bad vibes from the priceless jewel. I created an exquisitely simple setting for it, and returned it to my delighted client, safe and sound, two months later. She stopped by my show at Saks in Atlanta two weeks ago, proudly showing it off.

4. VD: There are a couple pieces of jewelry you personally wear everyday, never leaving home without them. For those of us who don't know you, can you describe the pieces and why they are so special to you?

CT: It's a bit paradoxical — I'm a prolific jewelry designer who feels such joy and inspiration in the creation process, yet I don't "own" much jewelry myself. I am lazy about looking for pieces to compliment my outfits, so I wear the same things almost daily. I have an earring style called Zanzibar, which is one of my jewelry "wardrobe staples." It is a wide 22-karat gold cuff with an intricate wirework and granulation pattern I took from an African textile, and it's my best-selling earring because it is so comfortable, wearable and affordable. I always wear my super-comfortable Ramses ring, on the middle finger of my left hand, and I wear a 32-carat lavender-blue opal on my other hand.

5. VD: You are someone who is very well read, particularly about spirituality. What are you reading now?

CT: I love historical fiction — stories that describe and inform about interesting times and places in history. Two that I have recently enjoyed are "The Physician" and "Shaman," both by Noah Gordon.

6. VD: As far as the fine jewelry world goes, what's popular right now and how does your jewelry fit within the trends?

CT: Truthfully, I have no idea what's popular or trendy right now. In fact, if I knew, I would consciously avoid it. I am a contrarian/iconoclast by nature.

7. VD: What are you wishing for this holiday season?

CT: Besides world peace, an end to global hunger and disease, and prosperity, health and enlightenment for all? I think Santa can skip me this year, because I have already gotten what I was wishing for when I began my holiday trunk show tour eight weeks ago — this has been my most successful tour in my 17-year history! There has been overwhelming response to my traveling collection, which I was not expecting at all. I think people have 'frugality fatigue,' and are simply fed up with scrimping. Perhaps they are also realizing that gold is a good investment, especially when it is a piece of jewelry that gets worn a lot and has the added benefit of the 'jewelry joy factor.'

Cassie Pence is a freelance writer based in Vail. She also does marketing work for Karats. E-mail comments about this article to [cschnell@vaildaily.com](mailto:cschnell@vaildaily.com).

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