

Whimsical Collections



An Interview with Sasson Basha, President, Aaron Basha

EDITORS' NOTE From a young age, Sasson Basha knew that he would go into the family business established by his father Aaron Basha. He handles marketing and public relations duties for the company and provides the inspiration for many of the company's charitable initiatives.



Aaron Basha and Sasson Basha

COMPANY BRIEF Family owned-and-operated jeweler Aaron Basha (www.aaronbasha.com), established in 1906 as a pearl dealership, was housed on London's prestigious Berkeley Square until 1990 when the company moved to its flagship store on Manhattan's Madison Avenue. Aaron Basha's innovative products include their world-renowned baby shoe collection of pendants and charms, as well as many other designs and styles made from 18-karat gold, platinum, fine enamel, diamonds, and other precious gems. The Aaron Basha collections are available at high-end department stores such as Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Harrods in London, in addition to several fine jewelers worldwide.

Has your market come back strong and what have you seen in terms of demand for Aaron Basha products?

There has been a big improvement in the performance of our brand since the height of the recession.

We have remained on course in terms of providing the highest quality products with the strongest designs and they are still made in Italy by the finest craftsman. So we have maintained the feel of the brand to cater to the luxury collector.

You have a strong presence in the U.S. with your new flagship on Madison, as well as through your distribution. Have you focused on continuing to build overseas and how broad is that distribution? Is the U.S. still offering growth or is the main growth coming internationally?

We see the market stabilizing and growing in the U.S. We have naturally changed some things around. We have analyzed where we need to be and how we need to look, and

where we need to promote and target a specific client base.

On the international end, we are still expanding and opening new distribution points around the world, particularly in the Middle East and Asia.

Later this year, we will also be targeting Latin America.

You recently moved to a new location on Madison Avenue across the street from your old

store. How did you benefit from the move in terms of modernizing the look of the location?

We are fortunate to have found a location that is exactly across the street from our previous location and we have made it our new home. It has given us an opportunity to relaunch our whimsical collections within a space that is contemporary, bright, colorful, and a pleasure to shop in.

Those who think of Aaron Basha think baby shoes. Is that still the core of the brand?

We started with the baby shoes as our first product line, but we have grown tremendously since then with products celebrating everyone's special moments. Our collectors choose products that represent their whole life – the love, the good luck, the best wishes, protection against bad energy, and family can all be represented.

Your primary market is women but you have also expanded to offer cufflinks and studs for men. How important has the

male market been and is that an area where you expect growth?

Absolutely. One of our biggest growth opportunities is the male market. We offer a beautiful collection of cufflinks and shirt studs that are available for the whimsical and confident gentleman. We can also customize most of our charms to fit any gentleman's wishes.

In terms of bringing customers to the Aaron Basha brand during their early years, do you also have a junior collector's focus?

Yes. Our brand has a rainbow of consumers to whom we offer a wide range of products that are very whimsical in nature and very child-like rather than childish, and that retain fine design and quality elements.

If one walks past the boutique on Madison Avenue, you will often be seen

there talking to customers and selling. How important is it for you to meet with customers?

It's very important that we connect with our clients and collectors personally as we are the ones that introduce and create the designs, and getting feedback and reactions on our magical items is quite important when we're dealing face-to-face with clients who are looking to celebrate their happy moments.

How has the family dynamic worked so well for the business? Do you try to complement your father and sisters or do you all work in different areas? How much overlap is there?

We give each other space to work our magic and we bring it altogether under one umbrella where it all connects. So we're all responsible for different elements of a successful formula.

At this stage, is Aaron still involved in the design process?

We are all involved in the design process. Aaron is orchestrating the final designs, but it is a family effort and a family affair. ●

A selection of Aaron Basha's bracelets and pendants

