

...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

THIS DAY

Style

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2018

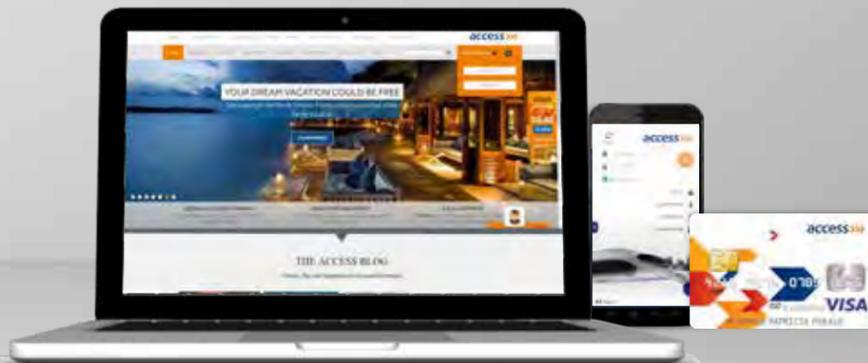
AMINA SIJUWADE @50

THE 'UNCONVENTIONAL NORTHERN WOMAN'

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COVER

Amina Sijuwade impressive resume prior to entering politics, is just one of the many reasons the Kaduna state Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources, is flying the flag for professional women in Nigeria. In a refreshingly frank chat with **MERCY AJISAFE**, she shares her thoughts on Feminism, being an 'unconventional Northern woman' and life after divorce.

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THISDAY STYLE

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Have you ever had an event to attend and you look at your bulging wardrobe and 'see' absolutely nothing to wear? Most women actually do not give enough mileage to the clothes they invest so much in. In fact, you will be surprised to learn that as much as some women love to shop, that's where the thrill ends because as soon as they purchase the items, and put it amongst an overly full wardrobe, they promptly forget about it until they see someone wearing something similar and they are like 'I have that! Where did I put it again?' Don't get me wrong, true clothes horses actually give their investment a good run for their money. They know exactly what to wear, how to wear it and when to wear it. They are never caught unawares and can rustle something up as fast as a brilliant chef can do food in the kitchen. Most of these women have a good eye and are naturally stylish and on point at all times. On the flip side, you also have those who sadly just shop without learning the art of how to shop properly. They should make a mental note on what to avoid and what to acquire. In 7 Wardrobe Essentials Every Woman Should Own, you at least get the general picture of what items you must have that can take you anywhere whether night or day. What is saddening is when you don't even get to enjoy the clothes you have. When you don't know how to get good mileage from them without looking like you are 'repeating' all the time. Social media has put undue pressure on clothes not being worn twice. This is totally ridiculous. So what to do? You play around your outfit. Change accessories. Wear it to a place with different crowd. You spent so much so why give it so little exposure? Obviously the time gap between repetitions must be long. But it makes no sense to just keep buying new clothes for every single event... unless you print money in your backyard that is.

Besides, at the very worst, after at the very minimum, several wears, you can sell the said items on eBay and at least get something back for your investment. I really believe the time has also come for 'clothes for hire', which can be returned after each wear. Makes a lot of sense actually. So that, sometimes when you want something new, you just 'rent' the outfit, enjoy the thrill of wearing it then promptly return afterwards. Imagine how much money women will save just by doing that?

After all when you want milk, you don't have to buy the whole cow do you?

Ruth

FASHION DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE EDITOR



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ROLEX

Scene and be Seen

BELLA VEHIDA LAUNCHES IN LAGOS

Bella Vehida, a unisex ready-to-wear and couture fashion brand owned by Vivien Okafor, launched its brand located in Lekki Phase 1 to the delight of fashion enthusiasts.

According to its founder, the fashion brand aims to promote the Nigerian Fashion Industry globally through quality fashion pieces; exciting designs and consistently making clothes that not only make one look good but also feel good.

Bella Vehida will be offering clients a wide range of sizes with made-to-measure service options to ensure each piece compliments the figure.

Bella Vehida is available for purchase in store and online at reasonable prices and aims to make your shopping experience stress free and enjoyable.



CARNIVAL FOR CHRIST

It is unusual in our part of the world to have religious organisation using a carnival as a means of evangelism.

Recently, Catholic Church of Divine Mercy Lekki with large colourful costumes possession, rolled out drums, funfair and walked around the Lekki phase 1 area of Lagos State with over 100 placards with scriptural messages.

The church, in what looked a bit unconventional, regarded the Carnival for Christ as an essential part of its annual Harvest activities.

This year's carnival was an improvement from the inaugural edition a year before; with more stylish costumes, gospel concert, all for the call for salvation and also reach out to the needy in the society.



BY FUNKE BABS-KUFEJI

What's not to love about this Style Temple Skirt? More so when worn by three fashionistas translating it to their own style. We can't tell you who looks best but what we can tell you is that they all look absolutely fabulous in this hot yet so versatile skirt.

THRICE AS NICE



Og Okonkwo: A style rebel and the designer of this beautiful skirt, she looks absolutely stunning with her own style of wearing the skirt. She pairs the it with a dress, making it look like a one piece outfit. The result is super sexy!

OG OKONKWO



Ozinna Anumudu has paired her bow skirt with a wrap around crop top with billowing sleeves, a simple Perspex sandal and a mini lady Dior bag. Her smile is heartwarming and brings the look perfectly together.

OZINNA ANUMUDU



Chioma Ikokwu's interpretation is a little more sophisticated. It might be her choice of shoes but she definitely brings this look to life with a strong pose.

OZINNA ANUMUDU

Now, after seeing how hot these ladies look, who won't want to own this skirt?!

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FUN WAYS TO WEAR DENIM

BY KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR



Take inspiration from the ultra-chic Fiolakemi and leave the hems on your jeans raw, then pair it with a tee that's equally as cute.

FIOLAKEMI



DAMILOLA OWOADE



This fashion lover takes the jean jacket to the next level with its oversize fit, frayed edges, cute patches and a plush quilted texture

After seasons of strutting in high heels, prints and textures, street style stars are fully embracing the comfort, versatility, and laid-back feel of denim. But, don't expect them to just wear straight-leg jeans or a boyfriend jacket the standard way. These fashion pros, have infused denim pieces with their own flair and pro-styling touches. Think vintage tees tucked into raw-edged jeans 90's styled dungarees.

For a street wear-chic vibe—swap your traditional jeans for a slouchy pair with ultra-tattered hems.



ALERO



Bring back the 90s with a pair of distressed denim, then, counterbalance the vintage-casual vibe with strappy sandals.

STELLA UZO

Take the denim dress up a notch by pairing with a distressed denim jacket. Fun accessories like this green pair of socks, would ensure you stand out

MARY



BY FUNKE BABS KUFEJI

MINI BAGS

THEY GO BIG, WE GO SMALL



CELINE MINI TOTE



GABRIELA HEARST



MINI LADY DIOR

LOUIS VUITTON CROC BAG

CHLOE NILE BRACELET



TOKE MAKINWA



KEKE OLISAEMEKA

Isn't always cute when mothers sometimes wear similar outfits to their kids? Not all the time but now and again. Of course, most times, the styles of such duos differs to be age appropriate but it's much cuter when they are actually the same style where one is a smaller version of the other. The same concept and appeal is what mini bags also have. They are different from clutches but just as durable and attractive. They also take more room. Mini bags started as a trend a couple of years ago and haven't died down just yet. The beauty of these small bags is that they are lightweight and easy to carry. Most come with a strap that you can turn into a crossbody or shoulder bag so your hands are free. With their versatile styles, you can wear them with almost any outfit, from casual denim to a fancy night out.

RULES FOR CARRYING MINI BAGS

1. It's not about things that spark joy, it's about the things that are absolutely vital to the function of your life.
2. Reduce your keys to only the keys you use to get in the door.
3. If you have two phones, leave the other at home. Anyway you can only talk on one at a time.
4. You only need a lip balm or lip stick for a quick touch up so make sure to carry one of the two.
5. Good thing is, they are usually made in leather like their 'mummies' and stand the test of time.



OG OKONKWO



LISA FOLAWIYO



ARISE NEWS ANCHORS // FRONT ROW L-R: IDIA AISEN; OJI OKPE
BACK ROW L-R: MODELE SHARAF YUSUF; OLANIYI OYELOWO; ARON AKEREJOLA; VICTORIA PEPL E; NDEE AMAUGO; MAERCY AJISAFE; ADESUWA OMORUAN, REUBEN ABATI; VERONICA ODEKA

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The unbeatable combination of beauty and intellect, coupled with a quiet and confident elegance, has earned Amina Dyeris Sijuwade the respect and admiration of many.

Her impressive resume prior to entering politics, is just one of the many reasons the Kaduna state Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources is flying the flag for professional women in Nigeria. In a refreshingly frank chat with Style Correspondent, MERCY AJISAFE, she shares her thoughts on Feminism, being an 'unconventional Northern woman' and life after divorce.

You're a lawyer who served as the Attorney-General, and the Commissioner of Justice for Kaduna State, from 2015 to 2017, under the present government. You're now the Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources. As a young woman growing up in the North, did you think a career in active politics would be on the cards?

Upon hearing of my Governor's intention to run for the office, and understanding clearly that he was the best option to bring progress for the people of Kaduna State, I independently ran a campaign for his election in Southern Kaduna, my constituency, using several platforms. He got to hear of these efforts, invited me to serve on the Transition Committee and I guess the rest is history.

How would you define your responsibilities as the Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources?

I drive the state's effort to protect the environment, and the management of our natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Before being called to public service, you worked extensively in the private sector. Notably in Investments, Property and Mining. You were also a practicing lawyer. How, and why, did you make the progression into public office?

It was certainly never on the cards and no crystal ball hinted of this. My legal background has been a common thread throughout my career. I have had a very unusual but interesting path in my work life. This appointment arose out of my principal, the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El Rufai, identifying me as one of those that have the capacity and competencies to help actualise his promises to the people of Kaduna State. It was a call to service and it has been a great privilege to be part of the effort.

You were the Country Manager/Executive Director of Northern Numero Resources Ltd (NNR Ltd), a gold exploration company deeply involved in the Nigerian solid minerals sector. Considering your background in Mining, I find it interesting that you're now the Commissioner of Natural Resources. Would you say that experience has helped you become a more proficient Commissioner, in regards to natural resources?

It definitely was a factor in my redeployment to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and has helped a great deal in my work.

Law, Investments, Property, Mining and Politics are areas that have traditionally been dominated by men. As a woman, did you deliberately set out to dominate these fields?

I agree when you say "dominated". Even though the number of females that have enrolled and been called to the Bar has notably increased, the number of women that have risen to the highest levels of the Bar and Bench is incomparable. Today we only have about 20 women who have been conferred with the rank of Senior Advocate, as against over 450 men. That is roughly 4% of the total number.

In Politics, even though women are the most active, especially at the grassroots level, you find that the gap is disturbing when you look at elective positions.

In the Mining Sector, again women are very active in artisanal and low level mining projects, eg in gemstone mining in Kaduna State. However only 2% of Licensed Miners are women. Needless to say they are absent in the Mining boardroom.

So the reality is that we need to develop and help



Again hard work and the avoidance of frivolities has never failed me. It is the best strategy to counter the assumption that a good looking woman will most likely have nothing else to offer. It is gratifying to see the reactions when one debunks such assumptions.



women rise through the ranks in male dominated sectors to levels of leadership. Hard work in any position has distinguished me, but I have been fortunate to be able to take advantage of opportunities to occupy leadership positions.

Although it's 2018, there are still a large percentage of people who believe that women shouldn't be involved in active politics. What are your thoughts deal with such opinions?

It will be absurd to hold that opinion. As women, the compassion and passion that we are genetically blessed with, and the fact that we bring these virtues into any task we are given, makes us the preferred choice not just in active politics but in every sphere of service to humanity.

You are the very definition of beauty and brains, at the risk of sounding cliché, how have you dealt with the challenges that arise from operating in such male dominated arenas?

Thank you. Not taking these divine blessings for granted is fundamental.

Again hard work and the avoidance of frivolities has never failed me. It is the best strategy to counter the assumption that a good looking woman will most likely have nothing else to offer. It is gratifying to see the reactions when one debunks such assumptions.

Political season has officially begun, with just a few short months left until the Presidential election in February 2019. Do you feel like your party, the ruling APC, have done, and are doing enough to warrant another term?

In Kaduna state the developmental strides achieved in education, health, and other sectors are known and published. Improvements in infrastructure particularly in rural areas so that "the masses" are the beneficiaries are there for all to see. We have no worries that elections will reflect our people's appreciation. At the federal level a lot of success has been achieved in particular in areas like agriculture, youth empowerment, job creation. Diversification of our economy generally, has shown our commitment to get the country back on track. There is still a lot of work to do but this is the message we have to pass across before the 2019 elections.

We have a few female politicians who have emerged as candidates for the Presidential seat. Do you think Nigeria is ready for a female president?

Nigeria is not an easy country to govern, whether by a male or female. What is important for a leader is the sincerity of purpose, commitment, a supernatural capacity to identify and manage competent hands.

I say supernatural because without a dependence on divine guidance this last aspect is impossible. If a woman can present these qualities, she can do the job.

It's clear you lead an incredibly busy life with the many hats you juggle, the most important hat being a mother to your daughter and son who are 21, and 19 respectively. What sacrifices would say you've had to make in order to balance your family, with your professional ambitions?

Fundamentally, there is a time for everything. Even before I got married I decided I was going to be a stay at home mother until my last child attains the age of three years. I felt this was crucial to set a strong foundation for my children. I only started considering demanding jobs after my last child had started secondary school. I would then plan my leave around holidays. I was very fortunate that when I was called for this job my son was already on his way to start his A level studies or else I might have been constrained to decline. The only sacrifice has been time spent with my children. But thankfully the strong foundation set in the early years and technology has helped bridge the gap. Family and close friends have been very helpful too.

I'm intrigued, as a young woman from Kaduna, how did your father, a Military man no less, take the news that his daughter wanted to marry a Yoruba prince? Must have been an interesting conversation.

My father was a very well read, exposed and cosmopolitan gentleman. Very strict but pragmatic. It will surprise you to know that my father even secretly hoped that I would marry a non Nigerian. My mother was from Akwa Ibom and he subsequently married my stepmom who is from Erunwon in Ogun State. He had absolutely no problems with my marrying a Yoruba man.

You and your ex husband have a very close amicable relationship, which is not always the case after a divorce. How were you able to achieve this?

Prince Tokunbo Sijuwade is a very unusual man. Despite our differences and mutual decision to end our marriage, we always were united in one cause; to provide a stable and loving upbringing for our two children. That was top priority above whatever we felt about each other. And he has always trusted me as a partner in this regard. I will always be grateful to him for that. A divorce is always regrettable, and as far as I am concerned, a failure on our part, but our children have always seen mutual respect between us, and this has helped them greatly in making the adjustment. In addition for me, my in-laws are heroes in this regard. It is very possible that I interact with my brother in laws more than Toks does. Those are the ever present parents my children fall back on a lot. I am truly blessed.

Would you consider getting married again?

Well I don't want to be alone in my old age, that's for sure. I have put that decision in Gods hands and trust that He will sort me out.

What are the common misconceptions of women from the North?

That we are housewives or stay-at-home mothers only. That we generally do not engage in any professional undertakings. This has been proven to be very far from the truth. A good number of Northern women are contributing greatly to society and development either through their line of work or even through volunteer work.



AMINA SIJUWADE

You've been dubbed an 'unconventional Northern woman' for many reasons, including, but not limited to your professional success. Are there other 'unconventional northern women' that have caught your eye due to their unwillingness to accept the status quo?

Just to name one, Aloma Mariam Mukhtar became the Chief Justice of Nigeria in 2013. She made history as the first ever female Chief Justice of Nigeria. This was of course after many "firsts" in her career.

During your time as Attorney -General and Commissioner of Justice, you fought for harsher penalties for the perpetrators of sexual abuse, due to in large part, the increase of reported cases of sexual abuse against a minor. As a politician with a legal background, what can be done to curb the alarming rate of pedophilia and sexual abuse in Nigeria?

We not only fought for harsher penalties but I chaired the Committee of Attorneys General of the Northern States which reviewed the Penal Code which covered criminal offenses in Northern Nigeria, a legislation that had been in force since the 1960s. One of the key improvements was setting life imprisonment as the maximum punishment for rape. This is definitely one among many other steps we hope will act as a deterrent.

As a woman in power, do you feel duty bound to protect and help other women?

Definitely, where required and if I am in a position to do so.

What are your thoughts on the feminist movement? And do you consider yourself a Feminist?

Have to be careful here. I am quite traditional and this presents a problem with feminism. But do I believe in equal rights, benefits, etc for women?

I believe in a fair deal for women in all spheres of society to be measured by our contributions, and the challenges we encounter in this. Especially with the contributions women are currently making, the unfair balance of consideration, compensation and acknowledgement men are getting is unjustified.

What do you do with your downtime? How do you relax?

I am such a homebody. True confession, a couch potato. I can be indoors happily for one week busying myself somehow. I watch a lot of TV, I read (not as much as I'd like). But I love to travel when I can get some time off. Wandering the streets, restaurants, and of course the shops is relaxing for me.

Speaking of a love for travelling, where are your favourite holiday destinations?

London is almost home because it's familiar, I like Dubai because I feel safe wandering around most places. On the other hand, sometimes I want to switch it up. I have good memories of multiple trips to Las Vegas. To say more will be telling...

(Laughs) I guess what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas. How would you describe your personal style

Classic elegance with a hint of drama.

22. Are you a fan of Nigerian fashion designers?

Yes, yes, yes! In my photos I insisted on wearing outfits using fabrics from Patrick Ayanski, one of our local fabric designers. The outfits were also made by Hudayya, who is Abuja based, and House of Kaya, a Kaduna Home grown designer. All three are quite popular up north. I occasionally wear other Nigerian designers too.

What is the career moment you're most proud of?

Without a doubt being called upon to serve as part of the Kaduna State government. First, that is my home state. Second even though my father is late, I felt it was an opportunity to show the world what he invested



“I believe in a fair deal for women in all spheres of society to be measured by our contributions, and the challenges we encounter in this. Especially with the contributions women are currently making, the unfair balance of consideration, compensation and acknowledgement men are getting is unjustified.”

in me. After all, it's the upbringing, the training and education he gave me that laid the foundation for all this.

At the end of your tenure, how would you like to be remembered? What impact would you hope to have had?

You make it sound like I am retiring. In all my duties I have tried to not only deliver on the mandate given to me (that is the projects and results that advance the relevant sector in the state), but I have also tried to inspire people to commit to this with a passion.

I hope the reforms I brought in not only the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Environment, but also those that I helped bring in other sectors will guide continued progress for a long time to come.

Would you consider yourself to be religious?

Most definitely. My personal relationship with God has been my anchor and my sanctuary throughout my adult life. I strive daily to get closer to God.

What advice would you give to other women hoping to become active in the political sphere?

They need a supernatural amount of patience and a healthy cache of money to make the needed impact. Note, not to dole out or buy votes but even primarily to engage, mobilize support and establish a platform to compete. I kid you not, at the point where you need to compete against the better known male opponent, your "passion and commitment" alone will not get you across that line. Nigerians are not that politically sophisticated yet.

What is the single most important lesson life has taught you?

Trust your hustle. We all have unique paths laid out for us by the Almighty. Work hard and focus on what makes you happy. In your hustle don't be afraid of failure. You won't be the first.

I am so comfortable with that now. And you know why? Because I know my strengths, which so many others don't have.

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7 WARDROBE

ESSENTIALS EVERY LADY SHOULD OWN

BY KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR

When you find that perfect white T-shirt, that one sharp blazer, and that dependable LBD that you can wear for any and every occasion, you never have to worry about "not having anything to wear." That's why the concept of a wardrobe staple is so enduring: A closet built on a streamlined selection of items that make day-to-day dressing infinitely easier. The seven items listed here ahead are those you can mix and match to your heart's delight - whether you're getting dressed for work, for brunch, or for anything that might come up in between. If you don't know where to begin when it comes to building up the "essentials" section of your closet, these pieces should serve as an excellent primer

Your Perfect Jeans

Whether they are flared, cropped, skinny, or boot cut, every woman needs a pair of jeans that makes her butt look good. Instant mood-booster.



VERONICA BEARD

FRAME

ASHLEIGH HUTCHINSON

by Konye Chelsea Nwabogor



ROLEX



RADO

A Classic Watch

A classic timepiece is something you'll not only own forever, but can pass on to future generations.



TRACY NWAPA



DENIKE BALOGUN

Strappy Sandals

Strappy sandals not only give the illusion of longer legs, they are sexy and go with almost any outfit. Pick a neutral colour, that way you get more mileage out of each wear.



CALVIN KLEIN



ISABEL MARANT



BALENCIAGA

Denim Jacket

A denim jacket - one with no fraying, holes, or acid-washed rinse - should be daytime standard. Between this and your trusty moto jacket, you'll find no use for other lightweight outerwear.



STELLA UZO



J.CREW



IDIA AISIEN



GIVENCHY



CHRISTOPHER KANE

Midi Skirt

The midi is a grown woman's skirt. It is flattering, work-appropriate, but still gives your figure a subtle vavavoom silhouette.

Delicate Fine Jewelry

You've owned your share of statement jewelry, but a gold necklace with a simple pearl is the kind of thing you can wear every day for the rest of your life.



DIANE KORDAS



BROOKE GREGSON



YEWANDE THORPE



AGBANI DAREGO DANJUMA

The LBD

A little black dress is a no-brainer basic that every lady must have in her wardrobe. Perfect for those times when we are not sure how to approach the dress code on that fancy invite.



NANUSHKA



OSCAR DE LA RENTA

NHN COUTURE @ RUNWAY DUBAI 2018

Runway Dubai 2018 recently wrapped up its sixth season with gifts of inspirational satisfaction and positive messages in the community. The very colourful event was held last weekend, at the Marriott Al Jaddaf in Dubai. The industry has seen creative performance from designers and artists around the world that carry the message of positivity in creativity. Runway Dubai, a fashion networking platform has in the past, carried out campaigns around fitness, health, Down syndrome, and alopecia awareness.

This year was no exception, with the beautiful model and actress Natlaie Oden with autism who launched the autism campaign on the Runway Dubai platform with a moving speech.

The shows included a lot of fashion activities that were highly engaging and motivating like fashion competitions and best dressed contests. It also saw creative designers and artists from all across the world displaying various fashion ideas inspired by culture and style.

Established designers that participated this year were equally captivating with their pieces on the ramp.

They all had their individual stories; Nkechi Harry Ngonadi for NHN COUTURE who has been named the ambassador to the Runway Dubai show in Nigeria, closed this year's event with a big bang as promised. Her collection named KALEIDOSCOPE was nothing short of colours with a splash of beautiful models and African dancers. The event also saw four women who walked the ramp with NHN for a cause, Rev. Laurie Idahosa (OVERCOMING INFERTILITY), Barrister Gozie Udemezie (WIDOWED BUT NOT WITHERED) Makosi Musambasi (BREAST CANCER SURVIVAL), Ijeoma Ndukwe (YOU CAN BE MORE). They each had empowering stories of survival and perseverance which gave an impactful meaning to the importance of platforms of this nature. Nkechi also won the Most Influential Designer of the year.



NKECHI HARRY NGONADI
DESIGNER



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SPEED SERVICE SECURITY

The FF Fine Jewelry S/S 19 Collection

When it comes to current jewelry trends, the latest styles are bold, daring, and uncompromising. Lately, it's been all about letting your jewellery stand out and making a strong, decisive statement with your accessories in general. Get ready for over-the-top designs featuring, statement earrings, asymmetrical hoops, embellished ear cuffs, layered necklaces, rings galore and show stopping pearls.

All these and more are what you would find in the latest FF Fine Jewellery campaign.

A premiere online jewellery house with the goal of keeping women looking elegant, FF Fine Jewellery understands the importance a piece of jewellery creates. The campaign features a variety of stand out pieces from the brand and a stunning range of timeless jewellery staples for every woman. The collection is made up of four parts: Mother of Pearl, Candy Crush, King Woman and Minimalist. The four categories features classic, edgy and clear cubic zirconia stones.

The wide range of jewellery comes in different colours to serve each woman for any occasion.



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