

# Dazzle!

## WITHOUT THE BLING

By Judy H. Fitzpatrick

### Beverly's Hand- crafted Jewelery



\* Photo courtesy of Judy Fitzpatrick

Who says you need those expensive, sparkling machine made jewelry to dazzle like the stars.

For years Dominican born, St. Maarten bred, Beverly Wilson, has been making scores of tourists and locals step out in dazzling style in her handcrafted jewelry created primarily from natural products from Mother Nature.

And unlike the high price tags on some lines of machine made jewelry, her prices are so attractive that you too can stand out in an original Beverly's design without having to spend a car loan or mortgage payment.

The Libra born mother of one has been using her labor of love to create jewelry since the mid to late nineties but only went into the field full time after opening an outlet at the Philipsburg Marketplace opposite Angelo's Boutique in 1999.

Her passion for creation, combined with her desire to be her own boss, led her to discover and mold her creative side and to channel her inner mother nature by creating items with materials from the earth so that others can look even more beautiful.

She learned the skill from her sister-in-law in the United States after visiting her during a two week vacation in the late nineties. She fell in love with the craft and instead of touring, shopping and pampering herself, she spent her

vacation time arranging beads, setting stones and twisting beading wire to create jewelry.

As her appetite to create intensified, she visited her sister-in-law every chance she got, to develop her new passion and learn new techniques.

During that period, Wilson, who was born in the 'Land of Many Rivers,' but had been residing on the Friendly Island since age nine, was a sales clerk at a Front Street clothing store. She desperately wanted to run her own show.

She juggled her job as a sales clerk in the morning and retailed t-shirts, costume jewelry and other mementos at the Philipsburg Marketplace in the afternoons and on her days off. The marketplace was not yet beautified at that time.

She later secured her business license to operate at the Marketplace which was by then being constructed to accommodate local crafters.

After sharpening her jewelry making skills even further through several books, and learning the ropes of operating a business from her sister-in-law, who ran her own show in the US, Wilson decided to quit her day job and go into the local crafting industry full time.

She hasn't regretted it since. "I really love making jewelry. Even if they don't sell, I really don't mind. I just like making

nice things that people can look beautiful wearing," she said, as she used her speed and skill to whip a trendy mother of pearl necklace into reality.

"It was a bit difficult when I first started, especially learning how to tie the clasp to hold the necklace in place. There is a particular way that it has to be done so that it doesn't slip out and mastering this was a bit difficult, but I eventually learned how to do it perfectly," she boasted.

Operating under the name Beverly's Fashion and Handcrafted Jewellery, Wilson creates all type of

jewellery from earrings and necklaces to bracelets and anklets. She also retails a small amount of costume jewellery made by other designers such as bangles and rings, at her central Philipsburg location.

She mostly uses natural materials like shaped wood, wooden beads, coconut shells, different types of seeds, unique tropical sea shells, corals, amber and fresh water pearls and other materials to create her attractive ensembles.

"Making jewellery comes naturally to me. Sometimes I throw all the beads in a container and I start to create something. I use my imagination and they always come out beautifully."

Beverly uses the finest quality fishing line as a base for the necklaces, which she adorns with small stones and for heavier materials like wood, she uses special beading wire.

"I do use some artificial materials but only on a few occasions. Most of the materials I use are natural. I prefer to use natural items because natural always look beautiful," she said.

One of the comforts of owning jewellery made of materials from Mother Nature is that you don't have to worry about any

costly precious stones getting lost on one of the island's 37 beaches, or forgetting your gems after a fun getaway somewhere. If you ever lose a Beverly's original, Wilson can use her creativity and speed to create an identical piece in the blink of an eye.

It takes her between ten to fifteen uninterrupted minutes to make an item. "The longest time it takes me to make a necklace is about ten minutes, some things I make in about fifteen minutes because I have to



\* Photo courtesy of Judy Fitzpatrick

ensure that the stones are set perfectly and the colors blend in naturally."

Among her hottest sellers at the time of this interview, was the line of jewellery she invented from a stunning shade of turquoise beads she recently discovered.

"The turquoise stones are extremely attractive. They're very rich. Some people have even told me that they are stones from heaven. It's a good seller and the way I mix the shades it look very nice." Jewellery made from fresh water pearls are also eye catching.

Wilson is so enthralled by her own creativity that she is often found wearing

her own creations. She is inspired by nature and sometimes just works off her own imagination.

She is patronised by a dedicated set of local clientele who visit her regularly and cruise ship passengers who she says enjoy watching her work. They often capture her labor of love in photographs.

So what differentiates Wilson from other jewellery makers out there? "I try to be different and I'm always friendly to my customers. When they come around to the table, I allow them to take their time and go through the products. I'm not pushy because this drives them away."

Even though Wilson has been doing this for some years now, she's not through learning. She plans to take a few courses to sharpen her skills further and wants to visit the US in the near future to learn to make a specific type of layered necklace and bracelet.

She also wants to diversify in the future by making her own line of hats and bags, since these are among the things tourists frequently request.

She said that although business from tourists is not as good as it used to be in the past, she's not complaining. She feels that there is need for a special location solely for local crafters. While the Philipsburg Marketplace was originally intended for this purpose, Wilson said it is now also used by persons peddling imported goods, which she believes defeats the purpose of why it was built.

Her advice for persons considering this line of business is; "It's a lot of hard work. It's not easy. If you want something you have to work hard for it. Sometimes I'm here from about 7:00am and sit here all day without selling anything. Other days are different. You have to have a friendly attitude and offer good products."

With Beverly's creations you too can channel your inner mother nature and dazzle without breaking the bank or being blinded by all the sparkle from expensive bling.

**Place your orders by contacting her at Tel: (599) 522-4250.**