

JEWELRY

## Harry Kotlar's Czarrah Cabrera: Luxury Woman to Watch 2021

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Czarrah Cabrera

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

*Luxury Daily* annually honors smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features 26 honorees who have set ambitious goals to achieve in a luxury market that, while growing, is also challenged by rapid changes in consumer behavior and technology.

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Here is one honoree:

Czarrah Cabrera, director of brand management, [Harry Kotlar](#), Los Angeles

*"It is hard when you want the best and be different in this new era of digital"*

What do you most like about your job?

The endless possibilities I could potentially create.

I love the fact that I am given the creative rein and license to think big, explore and innovate game-changing strategies, initiatives and products that break through a clutter of sameness in a world that I grew up in the jewelry industry.

I have always been passionate about luxury since I was a kid. The myriad of art and history imbued in each piece, be it shoes, clothing, artwork, music, travel, cuisine and jewelry, just leaves me in awe and deeply inspired.

This is how I began my obsession to cultural theory, art and human societies that inspired me to create, initiate and view things with an anthropologist's lens.

Harry Kotlar has been in business for seven decades and I am fortunate to be given the opportunity to be able to articulate its breadth of history, the undeniable romance of the genesis of our handmade masterpieces, our master artisans' unwavering attention to details and emotional intensities, as well as merging all these dialogues with various forms of art, culture, world history in several different channels and approaches.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

There are a few challenges in my work. That is an understatement.

The biggest challenge for me would be balancing ambition for growth, impossibly high standards, passion to excel and budget limitations with the inner-knowledge that high-quality work and product takes a lot of time, money, sacrifice and effort.

It is hard when you want the best and be different in this new era of digital.

The amount of work that must be created for any brand is tremendous to ensure a brand's success. And on top of that, we must all be obsessively focusing on delivering the best-quality experiences, products and services that exceed our audiences' and consumers' expectations while ensuring the consistency of our luxury positioning on every touch point.

In luxury, we cannot be reeling in mediocrity.

It takes a lot of patience and sometimes I wish I could clone myself so I could do more, but I believe in taking it one stride at a time and having a strong point of view. Slowly but surely, focusing on exploring and navigating untapped spaces and ideas that will illuminate our difference as a brand within a very traditional industry with lots of other brand heavyweights.

How have you adapted to the new order of things with the public health crisis?

I can say that I've adapted quite OK with the new order of things, but it wasn't such an easy journey.

At first, there was, of course, a feeling of uncertainty because this pandemic poses a great threat to our independent jewelry retailers' business, consumers' spending power, employment, financial markets, GDP and the whole economy, which, in turn, decreases profits and sales, consumer confidence and willingness to spend on fine jewelry.

There's also that fear-of-contagion factor that drives all of these.

I am just grateful that I work with a smaller team, which is to an advantage because we can make much faster decisions.

To that note, we were able to regroup and plan our short-term arrangements and actions as well as our long-term deliberations for shaping what's ahead.

The brand's first priority was to protect the well-being of our employees, partners and clients through closure of our corporate offices, design studios and production spaces, supporting our exclusive retailers wherever possible as well as financially support nonprofit organizations that continuously help and support families impacted by COVID-19.

The pandemic forced us to embrace the digital world even further video conferencing, cloud-based collaborations, telecommuting, ecommerce and omnichannel retailing which, in turn, technically saves us money, increases efficiency and reduces our carbon footprint.

I believe in the power of positivity, so instead of dwelling on the negativity of a crisis, I put my creative hat on to see things differently: to thrive and not just survive.

Fighting that human instinct to be negative will enable and empower us to gain a competitive advantage in constructing a creative solution to conquer a problem or a difficult one.

Diving deeper into our creativity will allow us to solve problems that people will say are unsolvable and impossible.

Creativity envisions the world as how it can be and not as it is. Thus, I believe that this is an opportunity for independent brands like us to flourish with the right playbook.

What is your work priority for 2021?

Our work priorities for the rest of the year and 2021 anticipate to respond to what would be that next normal be and evolve.

These are:

- Foster a supportive and creative mindset and culture within our teams
- Reallocate investments on non-converting marketing and PR initiatives and media to digital and online channels
- Continue to reimagine our consumer facing Web site, Facebook Shop, IG shop and B2B platforms and online

- retail partnerships with the aim for greater customer intimacy as consumers shift to digital shopping
- Exploration of alternative ways to deliver the Kotlar Luxury Experience's magic through potential virtual experiences and outside-the-box bespoke initiatives to enhance our client's journey and deepen their connection to Harry Kotlar
- Support and work with our exclusive independent jewelry retailers and Harry Kotlar exclusive boutiques in curating their product assortment and consumer experiences, both online and offline. The faster we can pivot together, we can adapt and turn challenges into great opportunities
- A more focused, curated and sustainable new collection for 2021
- Maintain our stance on ethical sourcing for natural diamonds and continue to consistently weave our brand's soul and story into all our initiatives

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I have worked with other luxury brands before, but I think my proudest achievement in luxury is rethinking and revamping Harry Kotlar as a brand from scratch almost seven years ago with an intern and a humble budget to start.

From defining its soul and story, streamlining its collections and merchandise, revamping its B2B and B2C digital and omnichannel capabilities, to activating celebrity and influencer placements, national/international editorial placements in digital and print publications to establishing exclusive Harry Kotlar boutiques, crafting and producing unique, immersive and multi-sensory Kotlar luxury events within local Harry Kotlar exclusive retail partners to directing and producing short films, musical score, museum apps, ad campaigns and coffee table books.

It has been quite a journey. It's not easy, but I took that challenge and I told myself I'd give my all and passion into this and see where I go with it and here we are now.

The most satisfying above all lies within the achievement of our revenue growth, expansion of our distribution, successful bespoke initiatives, audiences that were inspired, strong relationships we have built with our network of retailers and consumers as well as the faith they had in us over the past few years.

The icing on the cake is to have top A-list celebrities and tastemakers wear our pieces on the red carpet, such as Celine Dion, Michelle Obama, Matt Damon, Cate Blanchett, Rihanna, Jennifer Lopez and Carrie Underwood, to name a few.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2021?

COVID-19 has definitely affected the world economy and, in turn, disrupted the whole luxury sector.

Due to this, there will be an accelerated shift to digitalization, which means raising our game in online assortment, digital commerce, virtual experiences, personalized content and digital marketing without compromising the personalization quotient and personal touch of the consumer's journey, both online and offline, as well as the brand's core values that truly make it an ultimate luxury brand: authenticity, limited, craftsmanship, quality, heritage, pedigree and, now more than ever, sustainability.

As consumers become more socially conscious and desire a more responsible consumption, we should all expect luxury brands to be more transparent with their ethical processes and products with new or improved brand narratives.

We should expect a more focused and concise product offering, leaning towards something attainable yet still classic.

Although there's a current accelerated shift to online shopping, once the consumers feel safe again they will travel once more as well as return to the brick-and-mortar stores with a renewed spirit for real-life experiences and a potential shift toward "subtle luxury," paying attention to the classic elements of luxury: craftsmanship, heritage and subdued classic pieces.

The lessons that we learn during the pandemic days of 2020 can empower us to have a sustainable and balanced recovery in 2021.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2021 list](#)

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