

JEWELRY

VRAI's Mona Akhavi: Luxury Woman to Watch 2022

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Mona Akhavi

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:

Mona Akhavi

CEO

VRAI

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

"Providing facts and information to make the diamond industry more transparent is a challenge we've been determined to tackle"

What do you most like about your job?

We are in a unique position to shape the future of diamond jewelry and to reinvent and modernize some of the standards and practices used in the luxury sector.

VRAI created diamonds to grow sustainably in our certified zero-emission foundry, which allows us to offer what consumers are seeking in luxury now, knowing the origin of their piece, the path it's taken and its social and environmental impact.

One of my favorite things every week is to hear about customer's joyful moments, how they are celebrating milestones with their loved ones and life's everyday moments when they receive their VRAI piece.

We have an incredibly engaged customer base communicating on our social and Web channels with us. It's most fulfilling when customers share their stories and why VRAI value's resonate with them.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Many of our customers are informed, familiar with lab-grown diamonds and are seeking a sustainable option when they come to us.

Still, as we work to change the paradigm around lab versus mined diamonds, education is a key area of opportunity and challenge.

Both the Federal Trade Commission's ruling and the [National advertising division's \(NAD\) recent release](#) have been instrumental in providing facts around created diamonds being atomically identical to a mined diamond and graded in the same way. They asked for discontinuation of false advertising by mined diamond companies suggesting lab-grown diamonds are less valuable.

So providing facts and information to make the diamond industry more transparent is a challenge we've been determined to tackle.

As our team and brand have grown exponentially in the past year, a challenge for me as CEO is to ensure we stay true to our core values of transparency and sustainability in all areas of the company.

In the fast-paced environment of fashion and technology, we are constantly expanding and evolving, but it is imperative to stay true to our principles and what the brand stands for.

What is your work priority for 2022?

We are focused on growing and scaling our collections online and offline globally.

Luxury consumers are sophisticated and well educated, so we're excited to create touch points at key offline locations for them to experience the brand and to strengthen the relationships and emotional connections we have with our clients.

On a global scale, we are focusing on our growth in the E.U. as we now offer VRAI in the U.K., France, Spain, Germany and have operations in Denmark.

A constant priority is to continuously innovate in cutting and polishing new diamond shapes for jewelry that pushes the boundaries of design and craftsmanship as we're working on some unique and iconic collections.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Our vision has been to define the standards of modern and sustainable luxury in the jewelry industry and to show consumers that they can incorporate pieces that have meaning into their everyday lifestyle without compromising their values.

Some of our best achievements have been tied to shining a light on our sustainably created diamond pieces and creating awareness that they are here to stay.

From international media coverage to red carpets at the Academy Awards, Golden Globes and Grammys, these are all moments that help to educate the market.

Also, partnering up with celebrities, activists and opinion leaders who align with our values has been incredibly rewarding. This past year our pieces have been worn by Jennifer Lopez, Rita Ora, Adam Levine, Gwen Stefani and more which really shows that VRAI is making headway in the lab grown space.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2022?

For decades luxury has been about legacy, a history and beautiful stories that inspire a lifestyle.

From couture fashion brands to jewelry maisons to luxury travel and automobiles, modern luxury is evolving to be about transparency in addition to the history, story and quality.

Brands are sharing the story about the origin of the material, the technological advances and innovations used and more importantly about the impacts of their creations on the future of our planet and humanity.

Luxury consumers are increasingly making choices aligned with their values that inspire qualities that are beyond the craftsmanship and history of the brand, values such as the social and environmental impact of the brand.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2022 list](#)

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