

The raw beauty of Black Betty Jewellery

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Homegrown brand Black Betty Jewellery is the latest addition to Sea Point's vibey Regent Road. Founder, designer and all-round creative Kristin Weixelbaumer created the new Cape Town retail space to be the physical representation of the Black Betty brand personality, where visitors can experience its true essence.

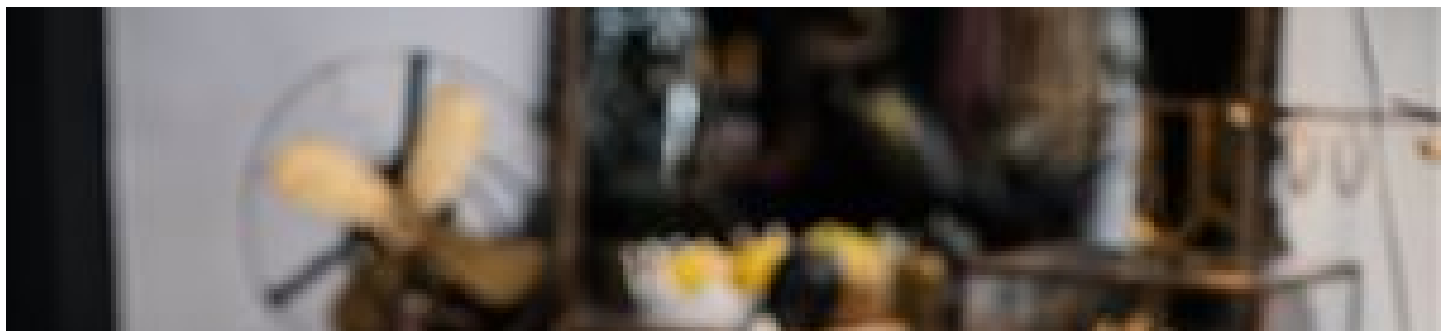


Kristin Weixelbaumer, founder and designer at Betty Betty Jewellery.

The move from a kiosk in the V&A Waterfront to a fully-fledged store meant that Weixelbaumer had room to play. Black Betty's signature range of jewellery, made using hand-cut precious and semi-precious stones suspended in treasured metals, are now complemented by its surroundings.

The space is dotted with statement decor and artwork with a feature wall displaying The Real Crystal Birch's trademark hats in all black. It also houses a professional piercing studio, a small selection from Weixelbaumer's clothing line, and it makes room for in-store collaborations with other local creatives.







The Capetonian jeweller officially launched Black Betty in 2012, with a vision for it to go beyond simple aesthetics. Instead, Weixelbaumer believes that precious gems find their owners and the brand exists to facilitate this magnetism.

“Jewellery isn’t just about decoration or being a slave to the latest trend of style. We believe that there is a definite sense of magic in wearing a polished and cherished fragment of the earth on your neck, ears or fingers,” she says.

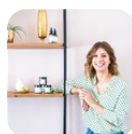
Here, Weixelbaumer shares more on the ethos behind Black Betty Jewellery and the growth of the brand.

🍷 ***Tell us a bit about life before Black Betty, and what led you to launch your own jewellery brand.***

I was brought up in an entrepreneurial, design-oriented family – my father, an architect and mother an interior designer – so working for myself in the creative world was always the goal.

Black Betty started with my explorations in my mother's jewellery box at the age of 5. I could lose myself for hours in this treasure chest but officially Black Betty began in 2012 when I set out to combine my 10 years of experience in the design world with my passion for stones. This opened up my path and ever-growing love affair with jewellery, where my creative, spiritual and brand-building juices all come together.

Black Betty has become a beautiful cycle where I can connect and design my collections, work with the beautiful materials of the universe, and then show them to the world. I feel very blessed. I love what I do and aim to never stop learning and growing because of it.



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🍷 ***What inspires your designs and how would you describe the Black Betty aesthetic?***

We want our pieces to be more than just adornments. Today, everyone is about the perfect body, the perfect life; we edit and airbrush all the flaws out of our lives using social media. Black Betty embraces these flaws and imperfections as they are the things that ultimately shape us, connect us with others, build our unique characters and help us, as women, reconnect with our power. This is the philosophy behind our jewellery.

Black Betty does not revolve solely around trying to create pretty things. We are a strongly cerebral jeweler, and our process and pieces originate from an inner journey. Each piece has been on a journey and has a story to tell, from where the stones and metals originated, to the ideas behind the designs and then to who builds them and sets the stones.

I believe that mainstream jewellery has become all about symmetry, flawlessness and a misconstrued obsession with perfection, an industry inspired by artifice as opposed to the epiphany of observing beauty in its natural, imperfect state.

I've always been inspired by natural beauty found in simplicity, imperfection and the mysterious. I'm continuously playing with the relationship between beauty and imperfection, and the importance of preserving and presenting it in its natural state. Leonard Cohen says it best, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

The main aim behind our jewellery is to keep it delicate, organic, raw and personal and to help our clients feel like goddesses when wearing them.



What stones does Black Betty Jewellery work with and how do you go about sourcing them?

We only work with precious and semi-precious metals and stones, aiming to always honour the earth and its beautiful materials - gold, silver and natural gemstones.

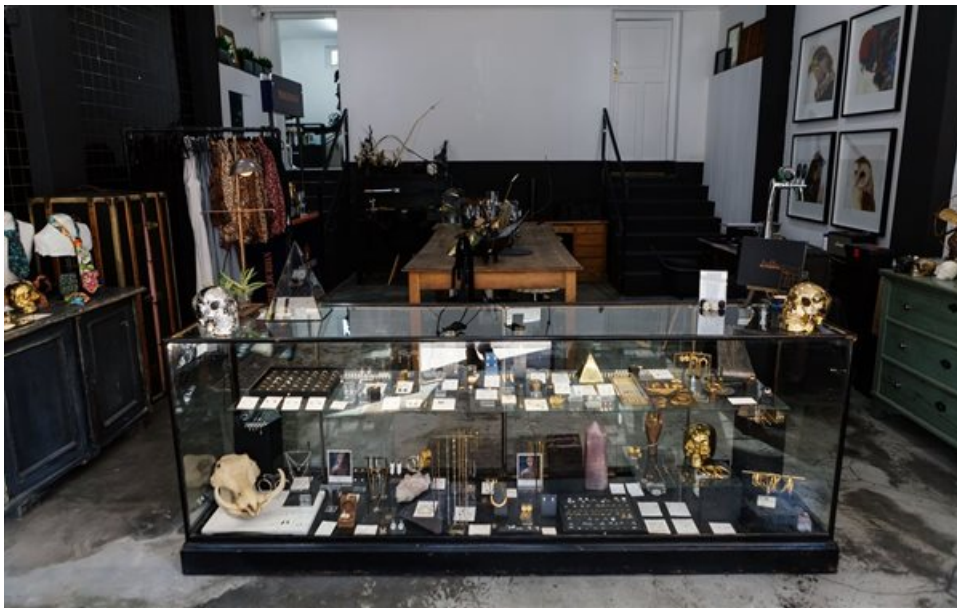
We also have a complete love affair with flawed stones, especially diamonds as they have unique stories to tell and no two are the same. If we can't locate the stones here in South Africa, we then turn to India – the Mecca of gemstone and jewellery craftsmanship.



Congrats on your new beautiful store in Sea Point. What does this move mean for the Black Betty brand?

Thank you! We are so excited to now be able to offer our clients the full Black Betty experience. Before we had our Waterfront Kiosk but it was a complete fishbowl where our customers were always kept outside looking in.

We have also been able to open our piercing branch which we have been working for over a year now. Our clients can now step into the brand at our new Sea Point store, and grab a piercing if they are feeling a little wild.



In a market flooded with trend-focused costume jewellery, how do you ensure Black Betty stands out and is understood by the customer?

We put a lot of effort into sharing Black Betty's stories and depth with our customers and across all our marketing channels. We are creating our own brand language and hope that the people it resonates with take the time to come visit us so we can show them our playground and love affair. We absolutely love what we do and are very proud of our creations;

we hope this can be felt.

■ ***What have been some of the biggest struggles and major highlights on your entrepreneurial journey thus far?***

I would have to say staff has been our biggest struggle and was a large part of why we closed the Waterfront kiosk. But then again, it's also been our biggest highlight because the team we have now is rock solid with incredible women. And watching it grow with the right people is immensely gratifying. Nothing makes me prouder!

We have been working on opening our piercing branch for over a year now, and now seeing it become a reality with our new Sea Point store has also been a huge highlight.





■ ***If you could travel back in time to the start of your career and give yourself one piece of business advice, what would it be?***

Never give up and keep challenging yourself. To take every knock, learn from it and do it again but better.

■ ***What is your ultimate vision for Black Betty Jewellery?***

We have always wanted to reach international shores. Launching in the USA is next on the cards.

For more information visit [Black Betty online](#) and connect with the brand on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

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