

## **Beading Hobby Takes Off Across U.S.**

### **New industry survey shows growth in beaders running up to 30% annually**

Loveland, Colo., March 2005: A diamond may be a girl's best friend, but these days beads are not far behind. From the runway to the red carpet, beaded jewelry is hotter than ever, and now making your own pieces is as popular as wearing them.

The Craft and Hobby Association (CHA), a trade organization for crafts- and hobby-related businesses, says beading is its **fastest-growing sector among young people under age 35**. For the second year in a row, beading had the greatest increase in customer participation among all its sectors, with **1 in 3 crafters now purchasing beads**. Also in 2004, at Jo-Ann stores across the county, "beading jewelry basics" was the second most popular class, just behind sewing level one.

There are a number of theories about what is driving the growth in beaders, currently running at 10%-30% annually according to "The State of Beading—2004 Industry Survey" from Interweave Press. Bead retailers credit the growth in the number of Baby Boomers who have more time on their hands, the fashion attention on beaded jewelry, the overall cultural emphasis on creativity and handmade, and the critical mass of beaders encouraging converts as factors driving this growth.

#### **The Need to Bead**

Like many crafts that are experiencing resurgence in the marketplace, the appeal of beading may derive from the need to create something handmade and original in our stressed-out, technology-driven lives.

But beaders have different motivations than other hobbyists, like scrapbookers and needleartists, who often practice their craft for the social component. **Beaders are more independent** and often do it as a solo activity, although they may first learn the craft in a group setting.

In addition, more than half of all **beaders are entrepreneurs** and sell their work out of their homes, on the Internet, at local boutiques, and even into department stores.

If they're not selling their creations, beaders are giving them away. Jewelry is by far the favorite type of project and about 54 percent of **beaders create jewelry to give as gifts**.

"I think more people are getting involved in beading because they enjoy the creative process and working with their hands. And because it doesn't take much time to finish a project—basic earrings can be made in 5-10 minutes, necklaces in less than an hour—beaders naturally want to give their work away. So they can keep on beading and buying more beads," said Jamie Hogsett, special projects editor at *Beadwork Magazine*.

#### **Growth in Bead Retail**

Perhaps the most compelling reason beading is taking off is the easier access to beading classes and supplies at quality bead shops and mass-market retailers. While the industry had too few players to count in the 1990s, "The State of Beading— 2004 Industry Survey" from Interweave Press says that there are now about 1,800 independent bead supply stores in the United States, representing 41% growth since 1997, and growing at a rate of 1-2 per week around the country.

This is not counting the craft store chains, mass-market retailers and office supply stores that sell beading materials. These days, you need look no further than Target or Wal-Mart to find bead supplies, as mass-market retailers are devoting more and more space to beading supplies.

Craft and hobby shops also are an important first stop for new beaders—26% of beaders got their first beads at a craft or hobby shop; these new beaders then head for the specialty bead stores as their pastime intensifies.

Major craft store chains, like Michaels Stores and Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts, now have beading sections as big as those reserved for more traditional hobbies of woodworking, fiber arts, and painting.

## GETTING STARTED BEADING

- **Pick up a magazine.** At least 6 beading publications have emerged in the last decade. *Beadwork*, started in the late 1990's, is one of the leading magazines and its sales have grown an average of 44% per year from 2002-2003.
- **Learn from a book.** There are many beginner bead books on the market; *Getting Started Stringing Beads* (Interweave Press, April 2004) is the first book written for non-beaders—those people with absolutely no beading knowledge—and carefully guides them through every aspect of jewelry making. *The Beader's Companion* by Judith Durant and Jean Campbell is a small, spiral-bound book that has become an indispensable guide for enthusiasts at all levels of practice.
- **Visit a bead shop.** Most bead shops and craft stores offer classes at all levels—from basic stringing to advance techniques.
- **Take a vacation.** There are many well-attended consumer beading conventions and there are retreats, cruises, and vacations for people who want to learn to bead while traveling.

## ABOUT INTERWEAVE PRESS

In business since 1975, Interweave Press publishes magazines and books related to crafts and natural living. Interweave publishes seven magazines including *Beadwork*, *Handwoven*, *Interweave Knits*, *Natural Home & Garden*, *PieceWork*, *Spin•Off*, and *Fiberarts*. Interweave is dedicated to creating a resource for its readers to find the best information in their field of interest—the latest news, the best products, the newest techniques, and the history behind the techniques.

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