



# THE STONES ARE TALKING

By *Stuart Leuthner*



**Top right, Elena Kriegner at work in her Manhattan studio.**

**Top left, Kriegner designed her Uber rings to spice up the classic diamond band.**

**Middle left, the classically glamorous rings from the Swing Series can also be worn as stunning necklaces.**

**Bottom, right, the Sailaway Ring was inspired by Kriegner's love of sailing.**

**E**lena Kriegner began to create her first pieces of jewelry when she was only six years old. By the time she was twelve, Kriegner's schoolmates and neighbors in her Austrian hometown were purchasing her beaded necklaces, bracelets and earrings. After passing the entry exam for a prestigious European jewelry design school, Kriegner spent the next four years training in the demanding craft of goldsmithing. Graduating in 1989, with the title of "goldsmith," Kriegner spent two more years in training and received a degree recognizing her as a "master jewelry maker".

With the combination of her distinct style and love of technical challenges, Kriegner realized she would probably not be happy in the traditional jewelry business. Instead of looking for a job, she opened her own workshop in the village where she grew up and was soon creating one-of-a-kind signature pieces for a growing number of private clients.

Kriegner also traveled the world, seeking new inspirations and techniques. She spent time in South Africa, working with a gemstone cutter, taught classes in jewelry design in Greece and was a frequent visitor to New York. "During my time in South Africa," Kriegner says, "I fell in love with gemstones...I feel like the stones are talking with me and I usually start out with picking the stone first."

When Kriegner discovered Manhattan was the ideal environment for her to integrate her individual style with the fashion world, she relocated her operation to a light-filled studio and showroom in Chelsea.

Kriegner considers her signature pieces to be the Movement Series. "Jewelry should reflect one's lifestyle. Since ours is always in movement: sailing from island to island, biking in New York City, running to catch a train, flying to different continents, jumping in the water, sliding down sand dunes, lifting weights ... there should be options so women can mix and match and create their own personal combinations."

The Movement Series, represented by three basic ring models, can hold any of three design pieces, each available in six gemstone colors. Each piece is crafted in gold or sterling silver. As an added bonus, the pieces can also



**Above, the Movement Series has endless combinations: three basic ring models can hold any of three design pieces.**



**This elegant example from the Swing Series is crafted in yellow gold.**

be worn as either a pendant or on a necklace. Kriegner's Prince Ring is also multi-talented, worn on the finger or as a necklace. The rectangular-cut stone — amethyst, citrine, quartz or topaz — is mounted on an axis and can be flipped ninety degrees when worn on a necklace. Available in yellow or white gold, the Prince can also be embellished with square diamonds.

The Venus Rings demonstrate Kriegner's fascination with challenge. The three-part ring in yellow or white gold ring can be easily taken apart to exchange an undrilled white, peach, brown or black South Sea pearl. Diamonds can also be added to the top ring or a square plate.

Kriegner designed the Uber Rings to spice up the classic diamond band. The unique rings feature an elegant and sophisticated "architectural" frame, topped with a sparkling gem stone, that encases the diamond band. The diamonds, visible through the sides of the ring, add vibrancy and fire to the gemstone, offered in a variety of colors. Uber Rings are available in several different widths, and in white and yellow gold and platinum.

The Sailaway Ring, available only in white gold, features an ultramodern band showcasing an aquamarine cut to resemble a ship's sail. The eye-catching cocktail ring was inspired by Kriegner's love of sailing. In 2002, she and Herbert Winkler sailed a thirty-two-foot catamaran around the world. Since Kriegner would be thousands of miles from her studio, a custom workshop was installed on the boat so she could continue her creative work.

If you would like more information about Elena Kriegner's jewelry, she can be reached at 212-643-0068 or [www.elenakriegner.com](http://www.elenakriegner.com)