They're 40 or younger and they've accomplished more than many people twice their age. Introducing the best and brightest this business has to offer.

LITA ASCHER, 35
President
Royal Asscher America
New York City

Lita Asscher says her father, Dutch dia-

30
muntier Edward Asscher, told her “Go

learn someone else’s mistakes before

you learn yours.” So after university in

Amsterdam, she spent six years in sales

doll and in 2004 became the sixth

generation of her family to join Royal

Asscher. Out of her first moves, chang-
ing its business model, “I said to my father and uncle: I never met a woman

social Web, and they're brighter than the jewels they sell.

a few things in common: They know their way around the

organizers, marketers, and manufacturers, but they've got

bloggers, retailers, designers, trade-show

person staff are pioneering a visionary editorial-commerce business model

with a series of pop-up events to sell secondhand timepieces, plus collabora-
tions with Gilt and Drake’s of London. “We’re doing something nobody else is

doing online,” Clymer says, “and the Swiss are starting to understand that.”

JENNIFER GANDIA, 38
Co-owner
Greenwich Jewelers
New York City

Manhattan is home to an avalanche of

fabulous jewelry stores, from the ven-

erated to the cutting-edge. But down-
town’s Greenwich Jewelers has stood

out since Jennifer Gandia and Christina

Gandia Gambale took over the 39-year-

old shop from their parents in 2011. Jen-

nifer stresses its impeccable curated

mix of high-end bridal (Arne Sportun, Mark Schneider), fashion (Alexis Bit-
tar, Bon-Amanu), and custom fine jewelry designs. “We debuted [fashion] lines

time at a time when fashion jewelry became so much a part of our vocabulary,”
says Jennifer. “We were so much ahead of the curve on that.” She was also one

of the first indie jewelers, in the early 2000s, to tap into the power of social

media—and remains one of the savviest online jewelry marketers in the biz.

SAMANTHA HIATT, 33
Director of communications
Jewelers of America
New York City

Eleven years ago, Amanda Gartz replied
to an ad in The New York Times—“The

paper New York Times,” she notes—to

work as a public relations assistant at

the Jewelry Information Center. She’s

been there ever since. (JIC merged with

BJC in 2000.) Her job includes promoting

the industry to consumers in print, over

the Internet, and on TV—as well as organizing events like the GEM Awards

and JIC’s annual fine jewelry preview for retailers. While she never set out to

work in the trade, Gartz now considers it a natural fit. “I had a grandmother

whose dresser was filled with jewelry,” she says. “I always played with it. So

even though I didn’t grow up in the industry, my grandmother supported it.”

ERIC GROSSBERG, 36
Co-founder
Brilliant Earth
San Francisco

Stanford University grad Eric Grossberg

cofounded Brilliant Earth in 2005 to

bring global ethics to the jewelry indus-

try. Specializing in responsibly sourced

jewels, the boutique custom design firm

tracks its stones to ensure they’ve been

mined, cut, and finished in socially and

environmentally responsible ways, using

recycled gold and platinum exclusively; and partners with advocacy groups

to promote awareness about conflict diamonds, labor and mining issues, and

environmental concerns in the industry. “Eric is truly exceptional at creating

a vision of more ethical, transparent, and sustainable jewelry industry,” says

his Brilliant Earth partner, Beth Gerstein. “From the ground up, he has built an

emotionally resonant brand that connects with a compassionate consumer.”

RUSSELL CLAYTON, 40
Founder
Jewelry Insight Consulting
New York City

Clayton founded Jewelry Insight Consulting in 2005 to bring objective, indepen-dent

research to the jewelry industry. With the help of his wife, a former jewelry buyer,

Clayton now offers clients a comprehensive view of the industry and is

constantly on the lookout for new angles to report on and trending topics for


Benjamin Clymer and now serve as market presidents. They’ve also

in the family business, you’re always going to be the boss’ son.” After getting

his 23rd birthday by surprising him with a freshly printed box of business cards.

He then formalized it into an ever-growing operation, and vastly improved its

functionality. One of the first jewelry stores to go online, and a presence on every social platform imaginable. “When I started, there was

no computer; no Internet,” Gordon says. “In three years, everything changed.”

BUDDY DICKERMAN, 40
General counsel
Ben Bridge Jeweler
Seattle

Dickerman graduated from the Uni-

versity of Washington law school in 1990,

and joined Ben Bridge in 1997, after a

briefly working in corporate finance.

Eventually he left to work as a corporate

counsel for various companies, but

found himself thinking about how the

law applies to the jewelry industry. He

then formalized its buying, reorganized its operations, and vastly improved

its merchandise mix. Dickerman is a

graduate of the University of Oregon law

school, and a certified fraud examiner,

a member of the American Bar Association’s Bankruptcy Section, and a
certified fraud examiner.
Matt Lauzon got interested in jewelry working there for almost four years, he still sees himself as an outsider, looking at the operation with fresh eyes. “The more you uncover about a business, the more you uncover cobwebs, old systems,” he says. “But then you find some real gems. We have boxes and boxes of letters from customers. Who knew? We have some amazing stories that people want to tell about their engine of their being. They’re not just users. They’re people who are passionate about what they do.”

Matt Lauzon, 28  Chairman  Gem structuring New York City

New York City

When he started Crooked Monkey, a line of humorous “T-shirts that found their way to Nordstrom and Lord & Taylor,” he says, “the youngentrepreneurs...”

JONATHAN MERVIS, 29  Director of business development  Mervis Diamond Importers Washington, D.C.

Mervis Diamond Importers is an underground when he started Crooked Monkey, a line of humorous “T-shirts that found its way to Nordstrom and Lord & Taylor.” Yet his jeweler-father asked: “Why are you working so hard to sell one T-shirt? You can make Much more than a diamond!”

The jewelry wasn’t really a souvenir—Michelle Orman’s hometown, Minneapolis, Minn. (a small town that made a live comes in Little  Russian Jewelry). You much prefer not to wear it, but she says, “There’s this one time when I’m looking at a customer and she says, ‘I’d love to have an internship in Saks. From there, she went to the Jewelry Information Center, which led to opening her own PR firm. She also posts interviews with designers and photos of cool new pieces—particularly charming. She appears on jewelry and antiques in the same shows, giving her an even greater reach. “We were one of the first brands to branch out of bridal and into fashion magazines,” she says. Its next big breakthrough was being featured in the 2013 wedding of Bachelor stars Jana Mann and Ryan Sutter. Today, Tacori is far bigger and higher-profile, but Tacorian remembers his days as an employee. He says, “I got to work with many of your family, my best friend is the SVP of sales. It’s a good place to be.”

MICHAEL SCHIEDECKER, 33  Digital marketing director  blomma Boston

For a self-proclaimed “tech geek,” joining the jewelry world seemed a bit much for the average homeowner. “I was always wanted to be in jewelry since childhood, and then he started looking for ways to reach a younger demographic.” But Tacorian says it has been a rewarding experience. “I never thought I’d be a jeweler, but now I love what I do.”

Michele Miele, 28  Founder  Gemstructuring Nashville, Tenn.

Show me your ring! Danielle Miele is the kind of girl with hand upon hand—as she her 900- 545-9000 “FABULOUS Flutterbies” and loyal readers of her 5-year-old blog, Gemstructuring Retailers Doyle & Doyle and Cartier have submitted snaps, designer Andrea Minton and Joanna Wyne have given her their digits. “No one in my family is in jewelry, I taught myself in the beginning,” says Miele, who also posts interviews with designers and photos of cool new pieces—particularly charming. She appears on jewelry and antiques in the same shows, giving her an even greater reach. “We were one of the first brands to branch out of bridal and into fashion magazines,” she says. Its next big breakthrough was being featured in the 2013 wedding of Bachelor stars Jana Mann and Ryan Sutter. Today, Tacori is far bigger and higher-profile, but Tacorian remembers his days as an employee. He says, “I got to work with many of your family, my best friend is the SVP of sales. It’s a good place to be.”

Jane Wu grew up with a bench jeweler—was there first. From there, she went to the Jewelry Information Center, which led to opening her own PR firm. She also posts interviews with designers and companies, and groups such as the Women’s Jewelry Association. “I love that you have personal relationships,” she says. “The friends I see on a day-to-day basis are from the industry. If I...
Without the 50 people who appear on this list (alphabetically), it’s safe to say that the jewelry and watch trade would be disrupted—if not made downright dysfunctional.

1. Ruediger “Rudy” Albers
President and CEO
American Wempe Corp.
Business is booming at Albers’ boutique on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue, where the inventors of prestigious timepiece brands read like a veritable who’s-who of the watch business.

2. Fyodor Andreev
President and CEO
Alexros
While De Beers may have reclaimed the worlds largest diamond producer crown, the comparatively low-profile Andreev wears the white glove all through his purchase of Ultra.

3. Bernard Arnault
Chairman and managing director
Graff
Arnault’s strategy has been to create a luxury company with diverse offerings. Since the victory over Tiffany, Graff has expanded into a wide range of gemstone mines, with no fewer than five brands under its “De Beers of gemstones” its acquisition of a wide range of gemston minerals as well as its purchase of Fabergé certainly have made a force to be reckoned with.

4. Donna Baker
President
Gemological Institute of America
GIA remains the leading lab in the diamond trade, and its research and education still sets the standards for the gemological world.

5. Michael Barnes
CEO
Sterling Jewelers
Barnes heads what is arguably the most successful jewelry chain in the world; with his purchase of outlet chain Ultra Stores, he has shown he’s not afraid to make bold moves.

6. Ruth Bateson
Executive director and CEO
American Gem Society
Lifetime head of the venerable industry group, Bateson is also in charge of AGS’ well-expected diamond grading lab.

7. David J. Bonaparte
President and CEO
Jewelers of America
As the recently appointed leader of America’s premier jewelry organization, Bonaparte is dedicating himself to expanding its membership.

8. Henry Chong
Executive chairman
Chew Tai Foo
By some estimates the worlds largest jewelry retailer, Tai Foo owns ULG-jewelry points of sale and 78 watch points of sale in Hong Kong and mainland China and, under Chong’s direction, hopes to hit 2,000 by the end of the next fiscal year.

9. Michael Choksi
Chairman and managing director
Ghani Jewelers
One of the Indian industry’s major manufacturers, Ghani also owns the 185-year-old Samuel chain in the United States, which last holiday announced a stunning 12 percent gain in comp.

10. Francois Carrel
President, Christie’s Asia
While 2012 didn’t see any spectacles like last year’s auction of Elizabeth Taylor’s jewelry collection, the venerable auction house did smash several world records and sold several notable stones, including the 76.02 ct. D-FIF Archduke Joseph Diamond.

11. Stanislas de Quercize
CEO, Cartier
The 166-year-old French “jeweler of kings” released a number of groundbreaking pieces last year, including the Panthère de Cartier, the most expensive piece ever to be publicly auctioned.

12. Peter M. Engel
CEO, Fred Meyer Jewelers
Engel has more than made his name with his family firm, Fred Meyer Jewelers, which last holiday announced a stunning 12 percent gain in comp.

13. Robert Gavirios
President and CEO
Harry Winston (now Dominion)
Gavinios’s company may have sold its retail arm to the Swatch Group, but its purchase of Eliott will make it the further largest diamond producer in the world and he’s eying even more acquisitions.

14. Cecilia Gardiner
President, CEO, and general counsel
Jewelers Vigilance Committee
At the intersection of politics and jewelry stands Gardiner, whose job now involves most government officials at agencies ranging from the State Department to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

15. Janet Goldman
CEO, Freedman & Co.
F&Co’s “The Trend Starts Here,” proclaims the headline-making gems as a 10.48 ct. deep blue and the legendary Beau Sancy.

16. Jonathan Goldman
CEO, Frederick Goldman Inc.
With brothers Richard, Goldman has turned the 48-year-old jewelry manufacturing company into an industry powerhouse with no fewer than five brands under its umbrella: Goldman, Diana Classic, Art-Carved, Lyric, and Triton.

17. Laurence Graff
Chairman and controlling shareholder
South African Diamond Corp. (SAPIDC)
Graff Diamonds Group
London-based luxury goods giant is a regular at the auction houses, snatching up an impressive array of once-in-a-lifetime stones, and his retail arm is also beginning to make a name for itself.

18. John and Marc Green
Chairman, North and South America
The New York City jewelry manufacturing company into an industry power house generating intense loyalty among consumers and jewelers alike.

19. John and Marc Green
Chairman, North and South America
The New York City jewelry manufacturing company into an industry power house generating intense loyalty among consumers and jewelers alike.

20. Ian Harbrittle
CEO, Gemfields
While Gemfields may or may not reach Harbrittle’s ambition of becoming the “De Beers of gemstones,” its acquisition of a wide range of gemston minerals as well as its purchase of Fabergé certainly have made a force to be reckoned with.

CEO, Swatch Group
Already the leading producer of watches and watch movements in the world, Swatch stunned the industry in January by purchasing legendary retailer Harry Winston for close to $1 billion.

22. Lia Hubbard
Chairman, North and South America
Internationally, Sethy’s jewelry department had a record year in 2012, auctioning such headlines-making gems as a 10.48 ct. deep blue and the legendary Beau Sancy.

23. Doug Hacker
CEO, American Gem Trade Association
As the gemstone industry grows in importance and prominence—at least in the United States—Hacker has played a key role in getting the word out.

24. Susan Jacques
President and CEO
Boucheron
One of the few independent jewelers owned by a conglomerate—and not just any conglomerate, mind you, but Berkshire–Shady Hauwxy-Jacques has become an articulate spokeswoman on industry issues and a leading behind-the-scenes force in trade groups.

25. Harvey Katner
CEO, Blue Nile
Having taken over the industry’s leading e-tailer, the former head of Moseen Jewelry was nominated to make his site more than just the “Amazon of jewelry.”

26. John J. Kennedy
President
Jewelers’ Security Alliance
No matter where you work in the industry, security is always a concern, and Kennedy’s organization has worked tirelessly at keeping trade members safe for more than a century.
27. Diane Kenyon
President
Jewelers Board of Trade
It would be nearly impossible for a credit-based industry such as jewelry to function (at least financially) without the JBT and its widely watched ratings and statistics.

28. Theo Killion
CEO, Zale Corp.
After a tough few years, Killion has put 1,770-store Zale Corp. back on the comeback trail—and even Elliott Stirling is beginning to notice.

29. Michael Kowalski
Chairman and CEO
Tiffany & Co.
In addition to heading one of the biggest brands in this (or any) sector, Kowalski has transformed the 175-year-old retailer into one of the industry’s most socially conscious companies.

30. Eddie LeVian
CEO, LeVian Corp.
On top of being a leading manufacturer, the Great Neck, N.Y.-based LeVian has seen its trademark Chocolate Diamond collection become a staple at Sterling.

31. Kimberly McDonald
Jewelry designer
She’s turned funny, forgotten rocks into celebrity favorites. Just ask Michelle Obama, who wore her diamond jewels to the 2003 inaugural ball, sending so many fans to McDonald’s website that it promptly crashed.

32. Dilip Mehta
CEO, BvB Labs
Mehta’s company generally is considered one of India’s biggest diamond manufacturers—which also means it’s one of the world’s biggest manufacturers—and he is a frequent speaker on industry affairs.

33. Philippe Mellier
CEO, De Beers
De Beers is no longer the superpower it once was, but it’s still the biggest name in the diamond business, selling an estimated 40 percent of world production.

34. Michelle Obama
First lady of the United States
The fashionable FLOTUS has championed little-known contemporary designers—from Brazilian Mary Fase to Texas A&M grad Katie Dockery—earning major kudos from the jewelry industry, which can’t help but love her for the exposure.

35. Carolyn Rafaelian
Owner
Alex and Ani
Perhaps the most notable jewelry success story of the past few years, Alex and Ani expects to double its sales this year and recently made a splash with its much-hyped about Super Bowl ad.

36. Beryl Raff
Chairman and CEO
Helzberg Diamonds
Raff heads the industry’s third-largest jewelry chain, and made sure a few years back by joining the AGS.

37. Ippolita Rostagno
Founder and creative director
Ippolita
During the course of 14 years, the Italian-born designer has built a jewelry empire on an instantly recognizable (and much duplicated) signature style with wild appeal.

38. Glenn Rothman
Co-founder and CEO
Hearts On Fire
Rothman scours what is perhaps the country’s best-known diamond brand, and he’s got aggressive plans for a retail chain.

39. Johann Rupiet
Executive chairman
Richmont
Luxury giant Richmont owns everything from venerable jewelers such as Gardner and Van Cleef & Arpels to relative up-and-comers like luxury dot-com Net-A-Porter.

40. Lorraine Schwartz
Jewelry designer
She’s Hollywood’s new Harry Winston, with a stream of A-listers—including Heidi Klum, Blake Lively and the abrazo-loyal Beyoncé—regularly modeling her intricate jewels on award shows red carpets.

41. Glenn Senk, CEO, David Yurman
The former CEO of Urban Outfitters, Senk surprised the business world by jumping to the famed designer jewelry house, a series of high-profile hires signals further expansion.

42. Russell Simmons, cofounder
Diamond Empowerment Fund
Simmons owns a jewelry company, but he’s more famous as the force behind the GLG the gritty charity that’s backed by everyone from De Beers on down.

43. Thierry Stern
President, Panthos Philippe
Stem—who took the reins of the Geneva watchmaker from his father in 2009—has final say on which of his brand’s timepieces end up in collector hands, decisions that can mean millions of dollars on the secondary market.

44. Matt Stuller
Founder and chairman, Stuller
Not only do Stuller and his Louisiana-based company rank as one of America’s most prominent manufacturers, but they are also a prizing force in the technology realm, thanks to the acquisition of software company Gemvision.

45. Elliot Tannenbaum, senior principal, Lee Schachter Diamond Group
In 2011, Lee Schachter dethroned LLJ as America’s No. 1 diamond exporter. But it may be Lee Schachter that-the United States as the entity behind Sterling’s Loss.

46. Joanne Teichman
Owner, Yama’s
Aspiring jewelry designers consider her 27-year-old fashion-forward boutique the holy grail of retail accounts.

47. Candy and Mark Udell
President and CEO, London Jewellers
The Glen Cove, N.Y.-based chain looks large over retail through progressive merchandising and large-than-life marketing (e.g., creating Victoria Secret’s 25.5 million gem-covered bra).

48. Dennis Urich, CEO, Balfour
Under the careful eye of owner Warren Buffett, Balfour’s middle-market giant just keeps growing; it recently acquired equipment manufacturer Rio Grande.

49. Stephen Webster, jewelry designer
With skills honed in London’s Hatton Garden and perfected over a 30-plus-year career, Webster runs a global designer jewelry business with a much-copied aesthetic—footed rock crystal over colored stone began with his Crystal Halo—that’s as fun as it is fine.

50. Nancy Wartenschel
Group vice president, JCK Events
After inheriting the mantle of group vice president from now JCK head David J. Bogue, Wartenschel now manages a portfolio that includes the famed Las Vegas show, LUXURY, Swiss Watch at JCK, LUXURY Print (New York City and Panama), and this magazine.