



# Be One Everyone Remembers Always

Designer Teresa Rae has established the innovative jewelry line BOERA—a brand built upon self-expression, passion and influential wordplay.

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▼ **TERESA RAE KINDLY WELCOMES** ME INTO HER CHARMING HOME SITUATED IN A PEACEFUL PASADENA NEIGHBORHOOD. HER TWO YORKSHIRE TERRIERS FRANTICALLY FOLLOW AS

we progress through the elegant residence—a modern space embellished with jazzy throw rugs, geometric end tables garnished in succulents and red roses, and a wooden accent tray cleverly displaying the latest issue of *Pasadena Magazine*.

The tour guides us down a steep flight of stairs and into the basement—an intimate craft cave where the magic happens. A vision board ornaments the wall above her desk—a real life replica of Pinterest festooned in magazine clippings, fabric swatches and photographs that inspire Rae's artistry and achievements. A tall white table exposes a beautifully arranged display of sample pieces from her jewelry line—the profitable shield glam knuckle ring, starlight stud earrings and free flow tassel necklaces. Everything an accessory aficionado could ever need in her jewelry box. Poised and confident, Rae positions herself comfortably in a chair beside me, eager to share her story—a tale of courage and a strong sense of self.

As a previous loan officer in Orange County, Rae describes her thought-to-be career as the most boring job ever. Hoping to attain a lucrative salary, she sought the money and lacked the enthusiasm—a state of mind meant for disaster. “I hated it. The best thing about my job was thinking about what I was going to wear that day, like big girl clothes,” she says with a lighthearted laugh. “Like I’d get excited about buying a new pair of shoes for work, but then I realized, well what’s the point? I hated my job.” At the time, Rae’s boyfriend Stephen Chavez had just started a celebrity home and lifestyle magazine, and was immersed in thrilling photo shoots, interviews and celebrity meet-and-greets. “He was having a good old time,” says Rae. “I mean yeah, he





was struggling because it was his own business, but he was happy and passionate. That's what I wanted." And with the encouragement of her beau, that's exactly what she did.

Harmonizing with Canadian rapper Drake's catchy lyrics, "Started from the bottom now we here," Rae worked her way up the ladder by gaining industry experience through entry-level internships—packaging jewelry, helping designers choose fabrics and hardware, and watching a product go from a simple sketch to the finished product on the shelves. "I was excited because I was a part of that design," says Rae. "But after the design was done and we got our samples in, I was over it. I wanted to move on to the next design and the next collection. Getting it in the store was not an interest for me. And that's how I knew I wanted to be behind the scenes rather than the person selling or merchandising the jewelry. It was the process that got me."

After working with a medley of established jewelry designers and building relationships with industry professionals, Rae became inspired by interior design—oddly, a chair to be exact. "It had this beaded area on it, and I started to imagine what it would be like as a bracelet. I took a picture of it and drew out

what I wanted, cut out pictures, made the size and everything. I took it to a manufacturer and asked how much it would cost to make it. It was super expensive, but I'm like, I can get something from Tiffany's for that much, so why wouldn't I make my own. And when I did, it was a sense of pride. I was like, 'Wow, this is awesome, I could actually make my own idea come to life.' And I loved it."

While she lacked relevant technical training, Rae began to explore the idea further on her own—sketching and designing a ring to go with the bracelet and eventually, creating an entire jewelry line for herself. As a kind gesture, she had samples made for her friends and family, but after receiving endless compliments about her work, she realized she had found her calling—a calling that has taught the 32-year-old couturier independence and structure. "Managing myself has been the most challenging aspect of this job," says Rae. "I finally figured out how to do things my way, and I think that's what's really great about having your own company. You find out what works for you at the time, rather than copying everyone else's systems."

In 2013, Rae developed the brand BOERA—an acronym derived from a message

**DREAM ON.** Teresa Rae reveals her latest collection Bows and Arrows in her cozy Pasadena office—reminding her wearers to be one, be inspired and have purpose.

she stands by every day: be one everyone remembers always. "The name comes from when I had the idea of having my own company," she says. "My boyfriend, now fiancé, is a branding guy and said, 'OK, we need to know exactly what you want to do and why.' And I said, 'Well, I want to follow my own dreams, affect people positively and be remembered for something.' Ultimately, that's what everyone wants—to build their own legacy and inspire others. When we came up with the name, I thought it looked amazing, and it inspires me everyday. I always think, am I doing things I'm proud of today? Am I living the life I want? And I just love that."

As the sole designer of BOERA, Rae launched her very first collection in 2014—a bold line of armor-inspired metal wear conceived for women who are not afraid to express themselves. Each piece details a rare aesthetic that carefully incorporates texture, color and weight, like the fecta necklace—a beaded statement pendant featuring contrasting gunmetal chain, or the soft, free-flowing Italian suede tassel necklace that adds delicacy and movement to any ensemble.

While the BOERA Web site produces the largest source of income, Rae has recently hired on a sales team to get her jewelry into boutiques including Elisa B., a high-end designer shop that survived Colorado Boulevard for 20 years. Rae is also making headway towards the wholesale market where she can feature her pieces in prominent retail stores.

Funding her own lines, the ambitious fashioner is now working on her second collection called Bows and Arrows—a mélange of simplistic pieces that will integrate arrowheads and hammered pedants, and hopes to design leather goods and bags in the near future. "It's all trial and error," says Rae. "But I feel like I've done a good job so far. If you love something, you just have to do it. I mean, there are so many people who hate what they do. Like someone in car finance who just really wants to be a chef, you know, just do it! Start a blog, start something, because if you don't, you're just going to be working at this pointless, uninspired job your whole life. And personally, that is my ultimate fear, getting stuck in a life I don't want to be in. You just have to go for it."

For more information on BOERA check out [liveboera.com](http://liveboera.com). ☺