

# SIFANI

## One Precious Gem at a time

### HUMANS HAVE TREASURED GEMSTONES

for centuries. They are often associated with beauty and great wealth. From religious, medicinal, mythical to astrological values, gemstones have been associated with human beliefs from as early as the middle-ages. Gemstones are found at various depths and locations within the Earth's crust. The island of "Ceylon", modern day Sri Lanka, is one of the most celebrated regions of the world for its incredible nature given resources of various types of precious and semi-precious gems and stones. The ancient Indians referred to it as "Ratnadeep" which is translated as - Gem Island.

### THE SIFANI BRAND CREATION

The Sifani brand was established in 1970. A family owned business by a group of directors under the leadership of their former Chairman, Dr. A.M.M.Sahabdeen. He was originally from a real estate background and later moved into the gold trading business. It was right after the colonial era, when Sri Lanka was regarded as the pinnacle of tropical tourism for Europeans, especially among the British tourists. It was through the gold business, that a niche jewelry market for gemstones was discovered. Since foreigners visiting the country wanted to buy a momentum of Sri Lanka which was in the form of colored stones - precious souvenirs to take home and remind them of their adventure.

With the growth of the business, the Sifani store in Kandy was opened, presenting an all-round experience for tourists, complete with a museum, explaining the entire process from the formation of the gemstones, the mining process, to the end result of the fine jewelry creation. The concept was very popular among tourists and the company became successful in Sri Lanka during the



beginning of civil war in 1983. However, this naturally led to a significant decline in tourism, which had an overall effect on the company. The brand struggled through these challenging years until things took a positive turn in 1991.

### THE MAN BEHIND THE SIFANI BRAND

In 1991, Mr. Mahmood Rizvan Sahabdeen, joined the company. Young, enthusiastic, and the son of the founding member and chairman, Rizvan was determined to take the company to the next level. Around this time, he discovered an opportunity in the Maldives and without any hesitation, he pursued this new direction.

Under the leadership of Rizvan, the first Sifani store to open in the Maldives was in Kuredu Resort in 1992 and to this day it is still going strong. Though it was

his first experience in the Maldives, Sifani previously had a store inside Nasandhura Palace Hotel, an iconic location in Male city. Following the closure of the store, Rizvan decided to venture into the Maldivian resort market. After the launch in Kuredu resort, Sifani fearlessly began opening up jewelry boutiques in the Maldives resorts, conquering one by one.

"I remember travelling to Kuredu, it was a six or seven hour long boat journey, as back then there were no speedboats in the Maldives. Then came the helicopter transfer, which eased our travel to resorts. Everything had to be brought from Male' at that point. But the model worked well in Kuredu," commented Rizvan Sahabdeen

The 90's was all about operating stores at classical resorts and the airport duty free, in the Maldives and by 2000's, Sifani



### CROSSROADS MALDIVES AND NEW VENTURES

The beautifully designed, well-lit Sifani boutique stands overlooking the ocean beyond the berths of the Marina at Crossroads. This boutique stocks a vast range of colored gemstones and a unique collection which is not yet available in other stores. The boutique not only offers gems such as Ceylon Sapphires and Rubies but also an interesting collection of semi-precious stones including Amethysts and Rose Quartz which are believed to have healing powers in different cultures. In addition, there is a vast choice of Diamonds and Emeralds available.

On the 19th of September 2019, Sifani opened its boutique at the Crossroads, Marina. Crossroads offers a completely new experience in the Maldives with a plethora of retail and excellent dining options, which are accessible to the public in addition to the guests staying at the collective resorts. The modern innovation that Crossroads provides is a completely new approach on the usual one island one resort concept of the Maldives.

was a well established, reputable and trusted brand in the Maldives. Then came the opening of stores in high-end luxury resorts including Fourseasons, Cheval Blanc and Shangri-La. By this time, the brand had already captured the market in the Maldives. However, the mastermind behind the success of Sifani did not stop at this, Rizvan also expanded their presence to other destinations such as the Seychelles, Mauritius, Malaysia and London, United Kingdom, with all around the same time.

Even though the company began as a family business with his father and uncles as the directors, in the 90's with Rizvan's success and loss of his father, he managed to gain ownership and buyout the company.

"We also went back to Sri Lanka and re-entered the market in a strong way during 2009-2010. Tourism started post war so we expanded our footprint there in Sri Lanka. We now have about ten stores spread across the island" commented Mr. Rizvan Sahabdeen

2010 onwards, Rizvan has also developed into the luxury watch business and this is proving to be extremely successful. Currently, Sifani and Associate Company Chatham are the distributing agents for international luxury watches including Cartier, Chopard, Rolex and Omega.





The inspiration for the design concept was derived from the companies tagline - Sun, Sand and Luxury. Drawing inspiration from the beautiful nature in the Maldives and Sri Lanka, the collection consists of various designs inspired by the Maldives corals and fish.

“Sri Lanka not only produces gemstones but the country has also become a trusted trading hub for gemstones. We have a long tradition in gems and gem mining. We produce the finest sapphires which are highly sought after. We also produced the Sapphire that Princess Diana was gifted by Charles, Prince of Wales which is a ceylon Sapphire. This one-of-a-kind piece has now been passed down to Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.” explained Mr. Rizvan Sahabdeen

Today Sifani has become a reputable local Sri Lankan brand, known by certain segments of the European market. Sophisticated travellers are always looking for something out of the ordinary to take back home and cherish that represents memories from the destination.

Each year Sifani launches two main collections as well as additional special collections launched on different occasions in the year. From their versatile designs, some of which include the added ability to interchange the stones to suit any occasion or the wearers mood to jewelry which serves as a dual purpose from a ring to a pendant; they



have attractive, modern designs for a range of clients, from young designs to more classical and timeless pieces.

This coming year, Sifani is set to open four new stores in Shangri-La Mall and Colombo, Sri Lanka, which will also stock their new watch designs. The new stores will include a store especially for high-end luxury brands Rolex and Omega, a multi-branded luxury watch store and a stand-alone Sifani boutique. 2020 is set to be an eventful and prosperous year for Sifani. |