

# Condé Nast Traveller

WORLDWIDE  
WATCH & JEWELLERY  
HIGHLIGHTS



# SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

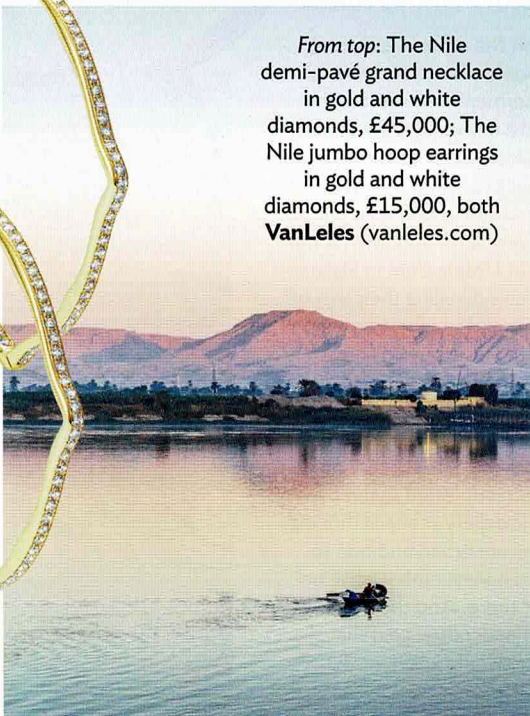
AFRICA IS THE RICHEST SOURCE OF GEMSTONES YET ITS STORY OFTEN ENDS THERE. MEET THE JEWELLERS PAINTING A FULLER PICTURE THROUGH THEIR WORK. BY CHARLOTTE DAVEY



## VANIA LELES OF VANLELES INSPIRED BY: THE NILE

From top: The Nile demi-pavé grand necklace in gold and white diamonds, £45,000; The Nile jumbo hoop earrings in gold and white diamonds, £15,000, both **VanLeles** ([vanleles.com](http://vanleles.com))

“To be truly free, one has to be deeply rooted” – my grandmother would always say this when I was growing up. She was a true African woman. I think she was worried her grandchildren, who went to school in Europe, would lose their identity, but she taught me that to know who you are, and to accept it, is where real value lies. I set up my brand with the view to honouring the continent that gives us gemstones. You have Zambian emeralds, Mozambican rubies, South African diamonds – Africa has produced 75 per cent of the world’s diamonds – but there’s no recognition in the fine-jewellery sphere, no celebration of where they come from. The Nile collection captures the essence of what I wanted my brand to become; the gems, the craftsmanship, they’re pieces that will last for generations. The river flows through many regions and has been a fixture since ancient times. We went canoeing in Egypt to take in as much of the raw nature as we could. Then in my designs I focused on its fluidity – such as this necklace, above, which sits on the collarbone and feels very ethereal. Although I’m most excited by the hoop earrings. I also went to the British Museum for extra research, but it was very bittersweet to see African craft that had been taken by Europeans. I think that’s something the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted. It has given a renewed appreciation of minority-owned businesses and is also helping people to look further into where pieces come from and who has been involved in that chain – mining communities, for example, are always overlooked. This is something I, and many others, have been saying for years, but it takes a lot to bring it to the attention of the public. What is important is to keep the conversation going – this isn’t a trend, this is our lives.’



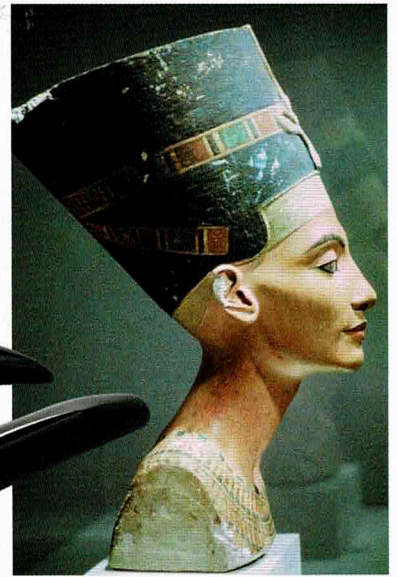


## ANGIE MAREI OF DIABOLI KILL INSPIRED BY: NEFERTITI

'Jewellery has always been very important in my family. My Egyptian side absolutely loves gold and my Dominican side is just as obsessed. As a child, I'd always receive gold gifts and I still cherish every piece as it connects me to my relatives. When I was five years old, I visited the pyramids of Giza and it left a lasting impression on me. I like to work with the ancient symbols as they carry so much meaning, for example, I often use serpents because they are beautiful and seductive, standing for rebirth and transformation. My Damian Horn Collection speaks most to my Egyptian heritage; the shape was inspired by the famous limestone bust of Nefertiti by Thutmose.

With her strong profile, long neck and angular headdress, she is an eternal symbol of feminine power. After I gave birth to my son Lucien, I really came to realise how spiritually divine women are.

We are the vessels that bring life into this world. My work is about continuing the legacy of my ancestors. In this age of fast fashion and social media, people's relationships with themselves and spirituality have become especially short-lived, even transactional. Celebrating culture is so critical – it teaches us to be open-minded, and brings a genuine appreciation for all humanity.'



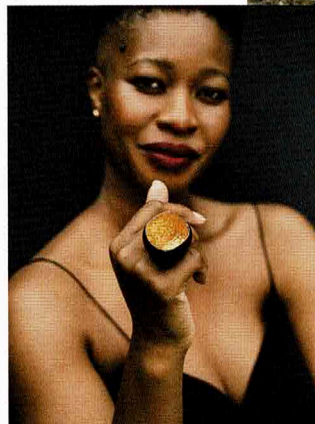
Ring in gold and onyx, £5,800,  
**Diaboli Kill** ([diabolikill.com](http://diabolikill.com))



## EMEFA COLE

### INSPIRED BY: THE SAHEL REGION

'I moved to the UK from Ghana at age 12 and forever felt displaced. Culture was always important to my family, and always honoured, but as time went on I felt a strong pull to learn more about my bloodline. I traced my journey in an attempt to understand why I create jewellery – I had one vivid memory of visiting a night market as a child, where I was bought a beautiful pair of earrings set with red gems. I also used to string together necklaces from Job's tears, a type of long-grass seed. My brand was founded in 2012 with the initial aim of creating pieces with hidden compartments filled with gold or jewels – a secret shared between myself and the wearer. I was fascinated by the idea of finding treasure in unexpected places. This gold and tsavorite ring from my Erosion series, inspired by the world's changing landscape, reminds me of the Sahel and the savanna, areas at the southern boundary of the Sahara desert. The tsavorite garnets are native to Tanzania and Kenya, so this piece really celebrates Africa's raw environment, and it's also directly influenced by my Ghanaian lineage because beads and gold are extremely important. Everything from food and language to culture is such a strong part of who we are as a people, and all are vital in knowing the story of the vast continent.'



Strip ring in tsavorite garnets and gold,  
**POA, Emefa Cole**  
([emefacole.com](http://emefacole.com))

