

# HONGKONG JEWELLERY

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## Young duo rejuvenates Italian tradition 意年輕人組織為傳統行業注入新活力



GIORGIO ISABELLA (LEFT) AND FILIPPO MARIA CAPITANIO  
GIORGIO ISABELLA (左) 及 FILIPPO MARIA CAPITANIO

IN 2011, Giorgio Isabella and Filippo Maria Capitanio, aged 31 and 28, met at an MBA programme at University of Malta. Isabella is a fourth-generation jeweller and Capitanio has a background in luxury e-commerce. Seeing huge potential and the lack of organisation in the Italian jewellery industry they decided to unite the second-generation entrepreneurs and small companies to enhance their competitiveness in the international market. In 2012 **Giovani Gioiellieri d'Italia**, or 'Italian Young Jewelers Association' - dedicated to uniting micro, small and medium players of the Italian jewellery industry - was established. To this date they have more than 300 members from all over Italy.

Isabella pointed out that in the 1980s, the Italian government and big

business players in the luxury sector were unaware of the coming of globalisation and had therefore failed to respond to it. Instead of forming conglomerates to better compete in the international market as their counterparts in France did, small players in Italy remained scattered and were losing their competitive edge. These concerns drove the duo to think about how small jewellers could survive and innovate.



STERLING SILVER LUXURY BRACELET, GIOIELLI DOP

To help jewellers engage in B2C marketing, the association has launched an international e-commerce and networking platform dedicated to Italian artisanal jewellery **Lux Made In** in 2013 with the support of an angel investor. "We bring something new to this absolutely traditional jewellery business, because

selling online was a taboo in Italy. We have to make them (jewellers) understand the opportunities online," said Isabella. This is also why the association focuses on the second generation as many of their predecessors are computer illiterate or sceptical about online business. Nevertheless, there are exceptions. Among the 70 producers currently selling on the site, **AULE** is owned by 72-year-old Alano Maffucci, founder and master craftsman of the brand. When jewellers decide to sell on our website, they start to work on branding, approaching the market and reaching customers, Isabella continued. The association also offers help in areas such as marketing consultancy, networking and liaison. In February 2015 the site was chosen as a representative of 'Made in Italy' in a Google event that promotes itself as a growth engine for European business.

Currently the Italian jewellers are struggling to survive, yet they are aware of the potential in export and some traditional companies had decided to adopt new styles to produce more accessible fashion jewellery in order to reach more customers, Isabella remarked. In his view one clear problem plaguing the industry is that Italian jewellery companies are heavily attached to the owners who are the designers,