

This could be your year



The retail landscape hit the headlines at both the end of 2011 and the beginning of this year. On December 13, Mary Portas's review of the high street was revealed to the sound of opinion columnists everywhere tapping furiously on their keyboards.

Her vision of "[putting] the heart back into the centre of our high streets" by recreating them as "destinations for socialising, culture, health, wellbeing, creativity and learning" became that month's journalistic scratching pole.

Post-Christmas, the high street hit the headlines again as retailers reported that, despite scenes of pandemonium outside Selfridges on Boxing Day, Christmas and its subsequent period of sales had not been the life-saver many hoped for. All of which adds up to a rather cautious start to the new year, but how much of this is unnecessary gloom-mongering?

For every Next, which stated it had a disappointing November and December on the high street, there is a John Lewis, which had a fantastic Christmas with like-for-like sales up 6.2%. However, most of the media coverage focused on Next's results and predicted a bleak outlook for the UK retail sector for 2012.

I'm not suggesting ostrich-style behaviour, but a little positive mental attitude can go a long way. Businesses can and do survive in the toughest of circumstances – why shouldn't yours?

One way to achieve this is to innovate, and if you're looking to add to your stock there is plenty to tempt at The Jewellery Show 2012 at Spring Fair.

Whether you want guaranteed money-spinners or something to attract a new type of customer, you'll find all you need to know in our seven-page guide to the show starting on page 22.

And, of course, the *Retail Jeweller* team will be there so make sure you pop over to stand V42 and say hello.

Laura McCreddie Editor

"Businesses can and do survive in the toughest of circumstances – why shouldn't yours?"

YOU'RE THE EDITOR

Each month we give a reader the chance to say what they would write about as editor of *RJ*. This month, Harriet Kelsall of Harriet Kelsall Jewellery Design is up



The feature I would most like to write

is about my belief that any retail jewellers who might be struggling in this tough economic situation should be brave and think differently. Instead of copying what has been done for years on the high street, it would be great to see more ordinary jewellers ditching boring shop displays and coming up with something new and attractive.

The person I would most like to interview

is retail guru Mary Portas – I think she is great. I would love to ask about her opinions on high street jewellery.

The products I would recommend to retail jewellers

are those made from fair trade and fair mined gold. There are many brilliant designers registered to use it.

The tip I would give to readers would be

to tell British Jewellers' Association (BJA) chief executive Simon Rainer that you are interested in joining the Responsible Jewellery Council, and then the BJA will simplify the paperwork for you if it gets enough 'hands-up' from the industry. Work towards giving your business this important ethical overhaul in 2012. Also, how about

we all vow to buy fair trade tea and coffee for our businesses in 2012 too?

The question I would ask readers

is can we do something ethical en masse with the few bits and pieces of old stock (non-precious) or damaged jewellery (not worth repairing) that we all get stuck with now and then?

Would you like to tell us what you would do as editor? Send us your name, job title and a colour photo of yourself to retail.jeweller@emap.com