



An underwater photograph showing a large school of dark fish swimming in clear blue water. The fish are scattered throughout the frame, with some closer to the camera and others further away. In the bottom right corner, a portion of a coral reef is visible, showing various coral structures and some smaller fish. The overall scene is bright and clear, with sunlight filtering through the water from the top.

INSPIRING A CORAL *reef* REVOLUTION

Written by Amber Nightingale

Photo by Kyle Kaili

GRANDE GEMS

Underwater landscapes of natural grandeur, coral reefs are among the most valued ecosystems on Earth — providing food, oxygen, and resources for over 500 million people worldwide. Currently in the midst of a crisis, over 35 million acres of these beautiful biodiversity hotspots have been lost in the last decade, and this issue hits the heart of Kaua'i.

“On this island, the ocean is as important to us as the land,” explains Tiffany Grande, owner of Grande’s Gems, who launched a coral-inspired jewelry collection in honor of these fragile ecosystems. “If we don’t have the oceans to generate oxygen for us to breathe, our race may die out,” she explains.

With proceeds benefiting the Coral Reef Alliance, Tiffany’s stylish, award-winning design launched in the summer of 2014. Called the Coral Branch Collection, these wearable treasures exude a “simple, organic elegance” that display a single branch of coral in the adjustable necklace and accompanying ring. Dotted with a gemstone, both are available in rose or yellow gold and silver.

Considering that an estimated 70% of coral will be decimated within our lifetime, Tiffany and her family are on a wholehearted mission to bring awareness to this issue. A family-owned business, Grande’s Gems has been celebrating this kinship to the ocean since it first opened 35 years ago.

Originally from the Santa Ynez Valley of California, Tiffany’s oceanic aesthetic has been influenced by many experiences, including childhood summers spent with her grandmother Orienne on Maui. Learning the ways of the water, like free diving

KAUAI LIFESTYLE

for minutes on end or floating atop the ocean for hours, Grandma Orienne was an icon of Tiffany's youth who believed that everyday life was a celebration.

After the shocking shark attack death of her surfing uncle, an admired ocean devotee known for his Sunday morning spiritual talks on Maui, Tiffany immersed herself in the healing powers of the water. A key to curing her breast cancer at the age of 36, surfing became a newfound passion that further deepened her connection to the sea.

While her husband, a seasoned fisherman, observed the diminishing coral and her children researched environmental school reports, Tiffany's devotion to the Coral Branch collection was ignited. Attracting many other ocean-centric people, destiny finally led her to jeweler Hank Verhaagen, where her hand sketched drawing took form.

Winning the coveted 2014 Hawaiian Theme Design award, this special collection is featured at Grande's Gems. This summer, a smaller version of the current necklace and cute stud earrings will be released. Watch for Tiffany's new collection, based on the celestial North Star Polaris, that debuts in November of 2016. ■

¹Cho, Renee. "Losing Our Coral Reefs." State of the Planet. The Earth Institute, Columbia University, 13 July 2011. Web. 17 April. 2015.

²Coral Reefs." Coral Reefs. Wheeling Jesuit University/NASA-supported Classroom of the Future, 1997-2004. Web. 17 April 2015.

³Coral Reefs." Coral Reefs. Wheeling Jesuit University/NASA-supported Classroom of the Future, 1997-2004. Web. 17 April 2015.

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