

## Eco-Friendly Shopping Picks: Guilt Free, Fair Trade Jewelry

Posted on July 19, 2011 by Gia Machlin: President and CEO, EcoPlum

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When you put on that necklace, what goes through your mind? How does this make me look? Is this the right fit? What about, how does the purchase of this affect people's lives around the world? Buying Fair Trade jewelry ensures that the people behind the production of your everyday necklaces, earrings, rings and bracelets are being paid adequate wages, endure decent working conditions, and have fair terms of trade for their products. Fair Trade requires companies to pay sustainable prices for products, thus addressing the injustices of conventional trade, which exploits workers in developing countries.

At EcoPlum, we sell [Jewelry from Shanti Boutique](#). The reason we selected Shanti as our first Fair Trade jewelry supplier, is that they are a [Green America](#) approved company. We have a tremendous amount of respect for the Green America approval process and knew that any company that passed their screening process had to have Fair Trade principles ingrained in their business practices. But Shanti is also a member of the [Fair Trade Federation](#), so that gives us double confidence!

In a bit I will give you some tips about my favorite Shanti products, but first I'd like to share a little about Shanti's inspirational founder, Crystal Water. She started Shanti Boutique because she wanted to create a business that offered unique fair trade jewelry to fill a niche market of yoga and well-being with everything she loved incorporated into it — travel, fair trade, design, health, languages, green business, internet, and wearable and meaningful art/jewelry (among other things too long to list). She saw it as a means to improve lives in developing countries through practicing fair trade principles while providing conscious options to consumers. A portion of all proceeds are donated to the Tibetan Children's Education Foundation, a cause very close to Crystal's heart. She serves on the board of this foundation and personally sponsors a Tibetan child and a Tibetan elder. She says her initial goal in starting Shanti was to make fun and meaningful jewelry that supported fair trade and charity, and this goal has remained consistent in the 7 years since she started the company. Crystal enjoys traveling on business to India with her family, where they all experience high adventure together. "It's a pleasure to run Shanti Boutique," says Water, "it's just about the love for people and the planet. A small business with our little mission of trying to make some difference in the world."

I really enjoy working with Crystal and I personally love her jewelry. I realize jewelry is a very personal thing, and while some people love big dangly colorful items, others go for the dainty and classic. What I love about Shanti is that there is something for everyone. I recently wore my [7 Chakras Dangling Earrings](#) and matching [7 Chakras Well-Being Necklace](#) to my dear friend's 45th birthday party. I'm not really that into yoga and spiritual things, but I have to admit I felt some energy coming from this

jewelry as I got comment after positive comment from the partygoers. “Chakra” is a Sanskrit word that means “wheel” or “turning.” It is used in many Hindu texts and practices, and refers to the “force center” or “energy center” of the body. If you don’t believe in that thing, you can wear it and buy yourself a cup of Fair Trade coffee; that works too.

For a completely different look, consider the [Hamsa Protection Earrings](#) and the [Hamsa Protection Necklace](#), to match. The Hamsa is popular in the Middle East as a defense against the evil eye. It is also a symbol of good luck in Jewish mysticism.

Hamsa isn’t really your thing? Then how about the [Heart Wire Wrap Necklace](#)? This lightweight piece goes well with pretty much any casual outfit. Earrings-wise, I also like the [Heart Wrap Earrings](#). They are simple and intricate at the same time; small enough to be comfortable, and big enough to be noticed.

Last, but certainly not least on the list of accessories are our Fair Trade rings. My favorite one is the [Namaste Ring](#). I’m sure many of you have heard the term “Namaste” used in your yoga classes. For those of you who haven’t, Namaste is a customary greeting and salutation in India. It also has connotations of recognizing the spirit within, honor and love.

I hope some of these suggestions help! No matter what, your purchase will be Fair Trade Federation certified, which makes it a good purchase. Happy shopping!



**Gia Machlin** is President and CEO of [EcoPlum](#), the green shopping rewards site that makes it easy, fun and rewarding to go green. We provide information on [green living](#) and [eco friendly](#) products to help people make responsible choices every day. Shopping at EcoPlum earns EcoChipz rewards, redeemable for discounts in our shop or donations to environmental causes. Gia and EcoPlum have been featured on Green is Good Radio, WOR Talk Radio, Crains’s New York, and in many other business publications.

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