



# Party for a living

**Brian Alexander** on Jo Magdalena of Cobham, a family affair bringing fashion and fun to the world of jewellery

The offices of fashion jewellery party-plan business Jo Magdalena are a hive of activity in the calm of the countryside outside Cobham.

It's a genuine family affair, run by Chris Roberts, her step-daughter Jo Popham and her son Josh. Exotic jewellery, sourced from buying trips to the Far East and Asia, is being carefully packed ready for their team of independent consultants who organise informal home shopping parties.

Just four years ago, Chris and Jo were operating from a garage in Fairmile Lane, Cobham. Since moving to their current premises – a converted dairy on a farm in 2005 – Jo Magdalena (the latter is Chris' confirmation name) is proof that customers are happy to buy attractive pieces of well-designed and eye-catching jewellery at an affordable price, even in the toughest financial climate.

"It started as a hobby," admits Chris. "But now it's a super business giving women all over the country an opportunity to earn commission by becoming consultants, selling jewellery via home parties. It means they can work the hours that suit them and it gives them the opportunity to earn some extra cash with very little start up cost – which is especially useful given the current financial climate."

Chris has been involved in retail and interior

design all her working life, while Jo was a purser with British Airways. As Jo says: "We wanted to do something that interested us. We saw a similar fashion-based business doing well and we decided that there was a gap in the fashion accessories market."

"We had a brochure designed and printed, set up the website and started sourcing items in India, China, Korea and the Philippines. We've travelled on many buying trips and concentrated on pieces made with Jade, Rose Quartz, Onyx, Agate and similar materials. The whole key is supplying lovely, interesting fashion accessories for all age groups and for all pockets. Our jewellery is affordable, but very fashionable."

Jo Magdalena's team of consultants has now reached 100 – and it's growing quickly. It seems the ideal way for women to earn some extra cash and have fun at the same time.

The core of their business is the Magdalena Collection, featuring their best-selling Magdalena flower pendant in faceted cubic zirconia with diamante centre on an adjustable silk cord. It comes in 14 colours and costs just £35.

The range includes necklaces, bracelets, earrings, pendants and rings with great attention to detail, going from casual chic to full-on glamour. The children's collection is very

successful, offering an array of bracelets, pendants and necklaces.

"It's great to see women having fun running their own businesses – and seeing their commission payments grow each month too," adds Chris. "2009 is set to be another year of fantastic growth for Jo Magdalena – and our Wake-Up Workshop on 7 January is an ideal opportunity to come and see what we do." ●

#### fact file

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Jo Magdalena's Wake-Up Workshop  
Wednesday 7 January at Cobham Rugby Club,  
Fairmile Lane, Cobham KT11 2BU  
10am registration for 10.30am start  
RSVP: [support@jomagdalena.net](mailto:support@jomagdalena.net) by 5 January 2009

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