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Chatting With Jaimie Chew

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I have always been passionate about recognizing and celebrating the work of emerging entrepreneurs. And it is within this spirit that I recently sat down with Jaimie Chew, founder and designer of [J.Chew Porcelain](#) and a talented entrepreneur whose work made my holiday shopping list all the easier this year!

MOIRA FORBES: How did J.Chew Porcelain begin?

JAIMIE CHEW: I have always loved Chinese ceramics, French porcelain and design. I come from two different cultures (Chinese and American) and have always tried to incorporate the two in whatever I do. Porcelain appealed to me because there was no other fine china company that fused eastern and western style. Other companies have a similar history but their porcelain designs



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are not as fresh or modern. And, certainly, there hadn't been a young, independent entrant into the fine china category in many, many years. I wanted to design porcelain that was not your "grandmother's china," and that ushered in a new era of tradition — of bringing people around the table to entertain. The porcelain you own shares a story about you, and also tells its own story, one that endures and reflects your style. It was time for a new voice.

MF: What stories do your designs tell?

JC: Every piece in the collection has a significance or meaning offered in a vivid presentation. I find inspiration in some unusual sources, like textiles, tapestries, art, history, even family history. In a disposable culture, porcelain can be both an objet d'art and a conversation starter. I use motifs and symbols that bridge my two heritages. For example, "Song," named after the Chinese dynasty, incorporates the colors of royalty in both East and Western courts. The lotus flower in "Lotus Pavilion" is a symbol of good fortune and prosperity in China, rarely seen in this Western setting. My grandfather was a Chinese watercolor artist who inspired me with his paintings of birds and animals in the style "Shangri-La" — which is also, of course, the fictional Himalayan valley in Lost Horizon. I want these pieces to spark story-telling around a table, for people to be interested in more than just a plate.



MF: What does being a luxury brand mean in today's environment?

JC: Classic pieces are timeless, and people are valuing those investments again and in a new way. People want memorable pieces to last a lifetime, pieces that can be shared. My line is classic with a twist. My china, while formal, is also simple and playful enough to incorporate into daily use. I created this line to enhance a spectrum of dining occasions. I find many customers, among them brides, who even want to integrate my pieces into their existing dinnerware and use them in

many settings.

MF: As we approach the end of the year, how does J.Chew Porcelain reflect the holiday spirit?

JC: The holiday season is the one time people collectively power down and gather their loved ones to reconnect around a table. Honoring new and old traditions and giving gifts that endure and have special meaning is particularly important to me. My porcelain joins the new with the old, so there is no more perfect time than the celebration of a new year, to set the table for a fresh, memorable occasion.

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Moira Forbes hosts the video series "Success with Moira Forbes" and "Women to Watch." She is publisher of ForbesWoman, a multi-media platform serving successful women in business and leadership. Representing four generations of publishers, Moira joined Forbes in 2001 in its London office. She graduated from Princeton University.

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