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From the
EDITOR
April 2015

GRANDEUR
A collection for your larger stones



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MOKOSO ATELIER

POETIC IMAGINATION

Once in a while, a jewelry designer escapes the trajectory of mere beauty to elevate its art to an entirely new dimension. The innovatively brilliant designs of Mokoso Atelier continually surpass the expectations of even the most discerning clients.

By Cynthia Unninayar

Mokoso Atelier stands at the peak of aesthetic achievement, unparalleled craftsmanship, technical mastery, and poetic imagination. This is not jewelry you simply wear. It is jewelry you experience on every emotional level. From internal feelings of ultimate luxury and fascination to the undeniable intrigue of enviable onlookers, Mokoso's jewels evoke emotions so enchanting they are almost magical.

The brand's master craftsmen bring each designer's artistic inspiration and imagination to life with uncanny expertise and meticulous attention to detail. Front and back, every jewel personifies perfection—the unquestionable signature of the masterpieces that Mokoso has come to symbolize.

Every collection endeavors to capture the illusive nature of life, as seen in the *Kaleidoscope of Color*™ line above. Multi-colored sapphires sparkle as an asymmetrical play of light on the fragile wings of a butterfly sends our imagination into the skies.

And, setting the imagination soaring is a hallmark at Mokoso. Its award-winning *Wings of Freedom*™ collection evokes the inner longing within all of us



The brand also tempts our palate with the sheer beauty of *Rock Candy*™—irresistible treats that sparkle like finely spun sugar crystals. Each earring, necklace, and ring bursts forth in delicious color. Featuring vibrantly fresh precious stones, these alluring jewels are a toast to fun, joy and the finer things in life.

And, because one of the finer things in life is Art, Mokoso celebrates the expressive works of Monet with its *Lily Pond*™ line of colorful jewelry. Beautiful blooms and luminous lilies float amid vibrant fauna and foliage, lightly and lovingly crafted in soft colours of gold.



Lily Pond

Wings of Freedom



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Rock Candy

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to fly forever free
What is life without dreams? Mokoso helps capture each one in the very magical *Dream Catcher*[™] collection. These jewel-studded Native American-inspired talismans symbolize all that is positive, while warding off evil spirits. Close your eyes and dream—you may be surprised.

The unrivaled uniqueness of precious earrings and pendants in the *360 Degree*[™] collection comprises four hoops that can rotate easily on a revolutionary swivel system. Set with diamonds on one side, they spin a full 360 degrees, offering dynamic jewelry with multiple looks.

On a different note, Mokoso's use of dark and light themes in a creative play of gothic patterns draws inspiration from the edgy side of life in its *Gothica*[™] line. Whimsical and contemporary, they are sure to please those who appreciate the work of filmmaker Tim Burton.

Mokoso Atelier's parent company, MKS Jewelry International, has more than 450 employees who are involved in every facet of jewelry manufacturing, both for Mokoso and for a variety of private label brands. These include in-house gemstone cutting, state-of-the-art CAD/CAM technology, CNC systems, and an entire staff of highly skilled model makers, along with four separate manufacturing units within its factory.

But, even with all these technologically advanced capabilities, pieces are handcrafted, stones are hand-set, and every piece is hand-finished.

With over thirty different collections and a 35-year history of award-winning designs—both internally branded and manufactured for other companies—MKS Jewelry, along with its phenomenally successful new house brand Mokoso Atelier are undeniably masters of Poetic Imagination. (mokosoatelier.com)

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Splash into Spring with Aqua Gems

Can wearing Different Colors Improve Your Day?

A harsh wind gusts through the city streets, hitting me with the icy punch of a winter that has overstayed its welcome. Dark brown trees lift bare branches to a bleak gray sky, and an icy layer of snow blankets the ground with varying shades of muddy white. After months of being surrounded by a vista of stark neutrals, it can be difficult to remember a world shining with light and color. I wake every morning with my mind as clouded as the sky above, and despair at how easy it is to succumb to the grip of an overcast day.

When the sun shines brightly on a cold day, the sky a stunning shade of piercing blue, I don't find myself hunching into my gray coat to take shelter against the chill, feeling more inclined to face it head on. And I wonder, is it possible to harness the sheer power of color?

I decide to take a week to experiment, and the weather does not disappoint. During the week I chart, the weather is absolutely dismal, with five out of seven days so dark and cloudy that the morning hours still seem like twilight.

There is a torrential downpour on the day I wear yellow. I see people huddle under windswept umbrellas and turn up their coat collars. They skirt around deep puddles, but I head straight into the flooded curb as I cross the street in bright yellow rain boots. I feel playful and care-free. My mood remains consistently cheerful and optimistic, even later in the day when I'm put on hold for forty-five minutes with the electric company.

The next day, an impenetrable fog settles heavily across the city, shuttering my steps with an ambiguous hesitancy. I am confident and sophisticated in a burgundy pencil skirt and press forward despite my doubts. I finish two projects that I was having difficulties with and I

feel unstoppable.

You'd think I would know better, but mid-week I find I've reverted to a black on black ensemble. It takes me until noon to realize that there may be an obvious reason why I have no patience to deal with my cranky toddler. I slip on a soft yellow sweater and a chunky necklace with yellow gemstones. My mood seems to brighten along with my clothes, and my toddler is so distracted by the bright jewelry I'm wearing, she forgets why she was crying. I pull out her play pearl necklaces and together we adorn ourselves with bright baubles.

The best day of the week, by far, is the day I diversify my wardrobe with shades of blue, a color I have always cherished. I wear a pair of dangly earrings with aqua blue gems. They swing gently when I move, and already I feel



more agreeable and relaxed. I pair them with a deep blue shirt and an aqua blue gemstone ring that glitters in the light. I feel immensely calm and content all day, despite a post office mixup, a delivery that goes awry and a long wait at the doctor's office. An acquaintance compliments my jewelry and I smile, telling her it's my favorite as well.

As the week draws to a close, I reflect on what I've learned. The relationship between changes in mood and color have been so marked, I resolve to steer away from monochromatic wardrobe choices in the future. While it would be an obvious fallacy to state that simply wearing different colors can solve all my problems, there's no doubt left in my mind that the right hue can definitely put a positive spin on my day. Aqua blue, with its tranquil, liquid shimmer, will be my go-to color as winter finally fades into spring.



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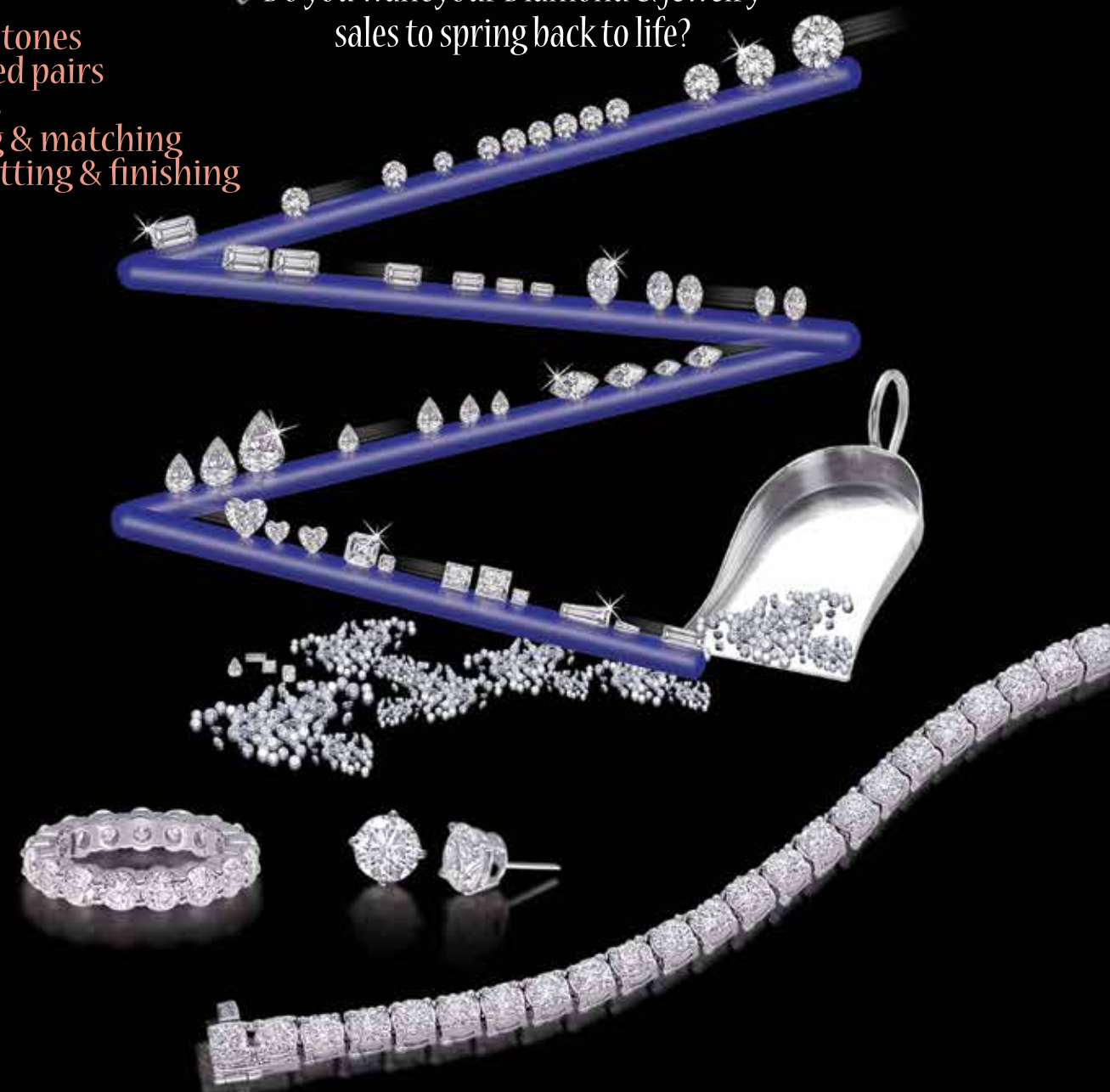
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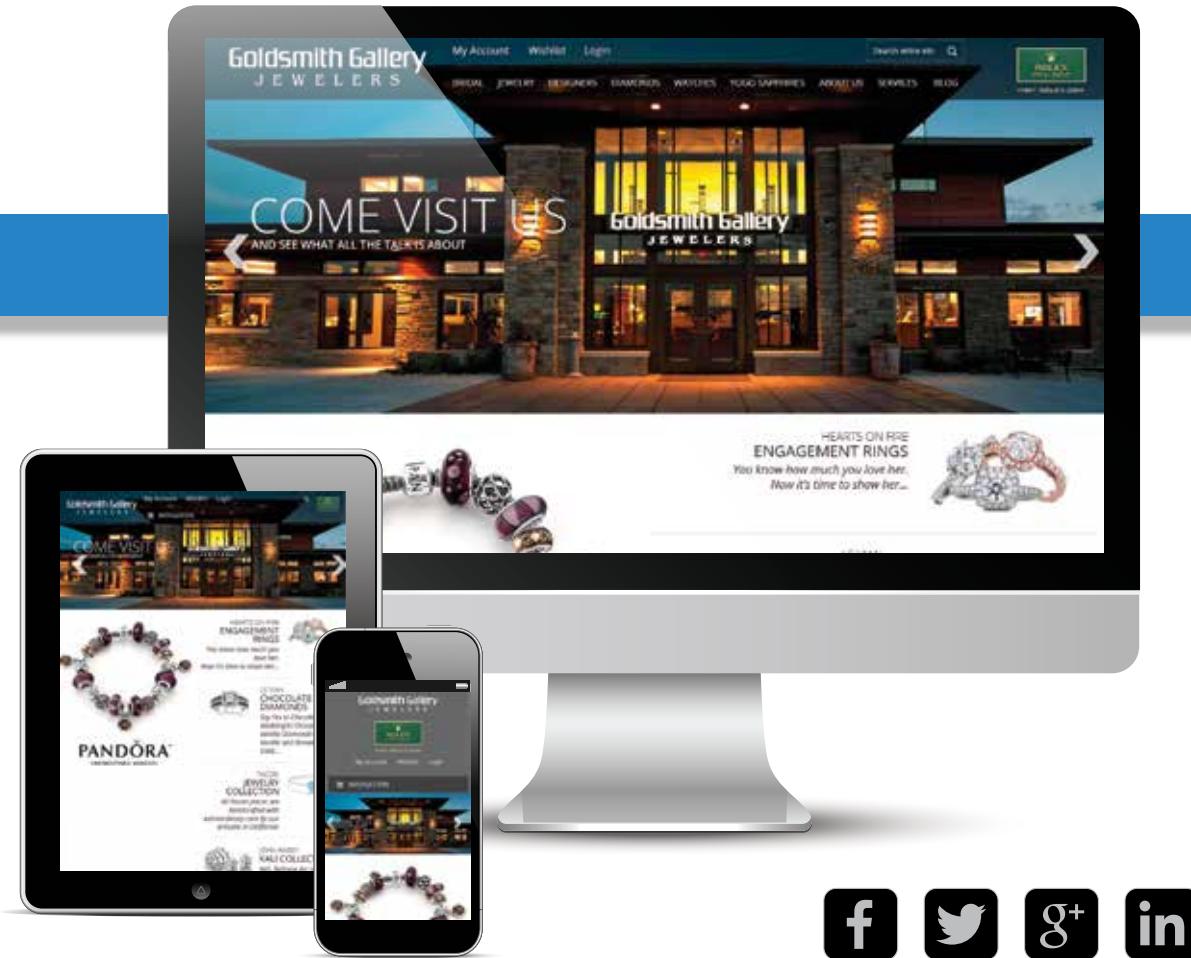
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Pearl dealers brought a wide array of parti-colored dyed strands.

WHAT TUCSON TELLS US.

By Diana Jarrett

Every year the faithful and the curious stampede to the dusty southwest town of Tucson, AZ in search of what's new, what's really old and what's just plain odd. Tucson has played host to the world's wildest gem and mineral bazaar for decades. Trying to explain it to those who've never gone, one falls woefully short of doing justice to this unique jam-boree. The legendary souk began back in the 1954 with a small group of rock hounds who set up a freebie mineral display at a local elementary school. Though making it available to anyone who would come, they had little hopes of outsiders taking interest in their shoe boxes full of rocks. But take off it did.

What Are You Looking For?

Today, the city of Tucson's personality is defined by these shows that have exploded from such humble beginnings. This is the place where haute-couture designers find their once in a lifetime Kashmir sapphire the size of a quail egg. High volume manufacturers negotiate with Brazilian, African and East Asian dealers hawking deep quantities of colorful stones cut overseas. Need a fossilized dinosaur egg? Check. How about an amethyst-bearing geode taller than you? No problem. And this time some ambitious dealers even lugged in huge petrified wood with polished top surfaces so big, they were-styled as cocktail tables and sculpture stands.

For the colored stone trade in particular, a couple of things contribute to the overall vibe at Tucson each year. First, the economic climate dominates the pervasive mood of the focus shows. The hubs are the AGTA Gem Fair held at the Tucson Convention Center, and the GJX (Gem and Jewelry Exchange) bustling across the road in billowy white tents that seem to go on forever. Secondly,

Continued on page 34

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Continued from page 32

gemstone trends that are revealed set the pace for what merchants will be promoting everywhere for the following season.

Tucson 2015

This year, veteran dealers expressed a mixed response to their inventory's sales. Holiday business was less than stellar for many retailers. While the effects of the economic free fall of a few years back are in the rear view mirror for retailers, there lingers trepidation about where we are headed given the precarious global vagaries. Smaller exhibitors selling classic sapphire, zircon, and topaz in the outlying shows were happy to undercut their competition who had laid out big bucks for space in the convention center and nearby tents.

Those at the epicenter of the major events report that their buyers knew exactly what budget they had this year and spent not a penny more. So their top goods zipped out of their stock in the first two days of the show. Pearl vendors weren't about to let sales slip away. Next to top-tier goods were tables overflowing with Mardi Gras-colored dyed pearls inexpensively priced for the impulse buyer.

Odd, Isn't It?

An interesting trending pattern that's been gaining traction for the last couple of seasons dominated at fashion-forward designers booths. Both acclaimed haute jewelers and emerging designers alike thrilled buyers with their exotic stones featured prominently in their wares. There are a few reasons for such a daring move. These oddities, known collectively as exotic gems—are under-exploited stones that often provide greater margins for designers. That frees up the manufacturer or artisan to concentrate on other-enticing aspects of the design process. More precious metal might be used in a piece for greater heft and appeal. Traditionally coveted accent stones are a great accompaniment to exotic gemstones. If diamonds or emeralds are placed on a piece featuring an unusual central stone, the customer immediately understands that this item merits the value placed on it. And importantly, there's the story. Customers love a great story. Retailers need a great story to begin the conversation with customers and hold them spellbound until they have to have that piece. Jewelry is all about the emotional connection. How better to establish that bond than to enthrall a

Continued on page 36



Outdoor displays at Tucson had enormous chunks of petrified wood styled into decorative and functional objects.


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Gemstone and jewelry author Renee Newman says that the increasing interest in rare and unusual gems prompted her to create an "Exotic Gems Series" of books. The guides provide detailed information about the gems and illustrate how designers are using exotics to make distinctive jewelry that sets them apart from the competition. For example, Exotic Gems, Volume 2, has a chapter illustrating the wide variety of non-play-of-color opal like blue opal, landscape opal, banded opal, and cat's-eye opal. Newman will speak about matrix opal and common opal at the Sinkankas Opal Symposium cosponsored by the Gemological Society of San Diego and the GIA at the Gemological Institute of America in Carlsbad, CA on April 18, 2015.

Interpreting the Trends

Newman shares her opinion on this trend. "Each year I've noticed more designers embracing non-traditional stones in their high-end collections. I think it's because their customers want to expand their jewelry wardrobe with new exotic gems." Retailers don't need to abandon their current inventory to hop on the odd-train of gemstone trending. But you may want to expand your inventory base to provide a wider array of goods for your style conscious customers. Also, offering your classic goods as a natural complement to exotic gems is another way to finesse this movement and expand your total sales.



Massive split geodes with amethyst interiors tempt buyers at Tucson.

Exotic Gems
Volume 2

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Diana Jarrett

Arguably the most branded voice in the jewelry trade for over a decade, graduate gemologist (GIA) and journalist Diana Jarrett's writing style covers in-depth laboratory analyses in worldclass trade journals, consumer-centric luxury life style publications, blogs, and monthly trade news. Jarrett covers trade shows and is an often invited speaker on current gemstone topics. She co-authored and massively revised the classic reference guide "Cameos Old & New 4th Edition," by Gemstone Press. Her articles appear in Rapaport Diamond Report, InDesign, Jewellery Business, Texas Jeweler, Canadian Jeweller, The Daily Jewel, New York Mineralogical Club Bulletin, Montage Magazine, Life in Naples, Southern Jewelry News and Mid-America Jewelry News, and her popular blog www.color-n-ice.blogspot.com. Contact her at: diana@dianajarrett.com

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2) Layering options for stackable rings and bracelets.

3) Mixing metal colors, because Rose is very complimentary as a tri-color or two-tone option.

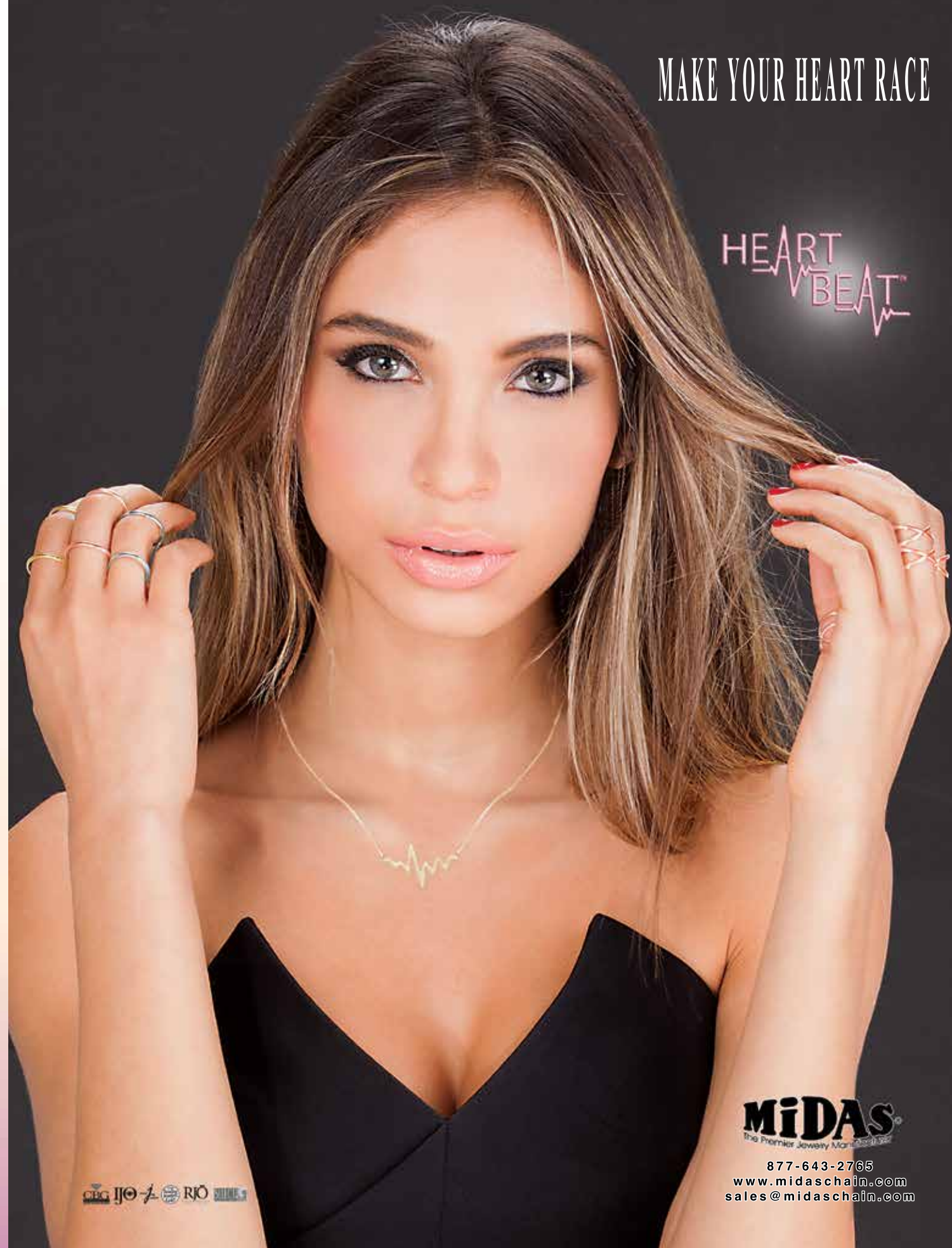
Everyone loves a comeback and Rose Gold is doing just such without taking any attention away from our white and yellow counterparts. It is certainly a metal that gets a fair amount of attention and its coming Hot...Red Hot!

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WANGARA GOLD



By Benjamin Mark

Everyone knows that Africa is homeland to the diamond mines belonging to the Consolidated and DeBeers group. However, for those of you interested in things other than diamonds, if such a thing were indeed possible for those of you wondering just where the richest gold deposits are and were for those of you thinking that perhaps Sutter's Mill was not the gold center of the universe, for those of you thinking that perhaps...just perhaps...the American Gold Rush was not the beginning and end all of quantum gold producing discoveries--for all of you folks, I present...Wangara!

Back we go my friends. Back back back...before the beginning of the Common Era...before even the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Africa...that sweltering continent...was mining gold...and trading in it...and making beautiful jewelry out of it.

And in them there days...trudging across the Sahara...came the Arabs on camels...to trade and barter...and get as much gold in their hands as possible...and perhaps pick up a few slaves and some ivory too. And the trade-



off? What did they use? Aw heck folks...they used what any fair minded business man would use. They used beads...and salt...and cotton goods...and...eventually...guns too. And all this began in Wangara, in West Africa, in a forest region filled with placer mines.

And time passed...as it is wont to do...and great ruling entities grew in wealth from all this gold trading stuff...and Emperors were created to rule...and an empire arose by the name of Ghana. So let's go back to about a thousand years ago. Ghana was then called the land of Gold. An Arab visits the kingdom and comes back with this report...and I paraphrase. There is a horse there, hitched to a thirty pound gold nugget. (Anyone out there in California, or in the Klondike, ever find a thirty pound nugget? Anyone want to figure out what a thirty pound nugget is worth in today's market and get back to me?) The

king's court, if you want to talk about opulence was guarded by dogs wearing gold and silver collars.

There were 20,000 warriors, all carrying shields and swords with gold handles. Oh...the



enormity of it all. It is to shatter the mind's eye. Question is...how to support all this wealth and luxury. Hey...you want gold...you gotta dig for it...and digging costs money no matter which kingdom you live in. Well...our kingies of them thar days were no different than our kingies of these here days. They taxed the bejeebers out of the populace.

And Ghana became--back then--the major West African trading force of it's day. North Africa wanted gold, and the Middle East wanted gold, and Europe wanted gold. For a long time Ghana ruled and traded gold. Ah...but alas and alack...nothing is forever...and by the eleventh century...Ghana crumbled. And a new golden era arose in Africa.

But that's another tale for another time. This tale is for those of you--me included till just recently who thought the American Gold Rush days was where it was all at. Hunh-uh my friends. Compared to them...we're peanuts...albeit one heck of a peanut...and a peanut to be reckoned with too. Oh yeah...one more thing...alas and alack...no pictures for you guys this month ... except for a map of Wangara's location.. But I'll make up for it next month. I promise.

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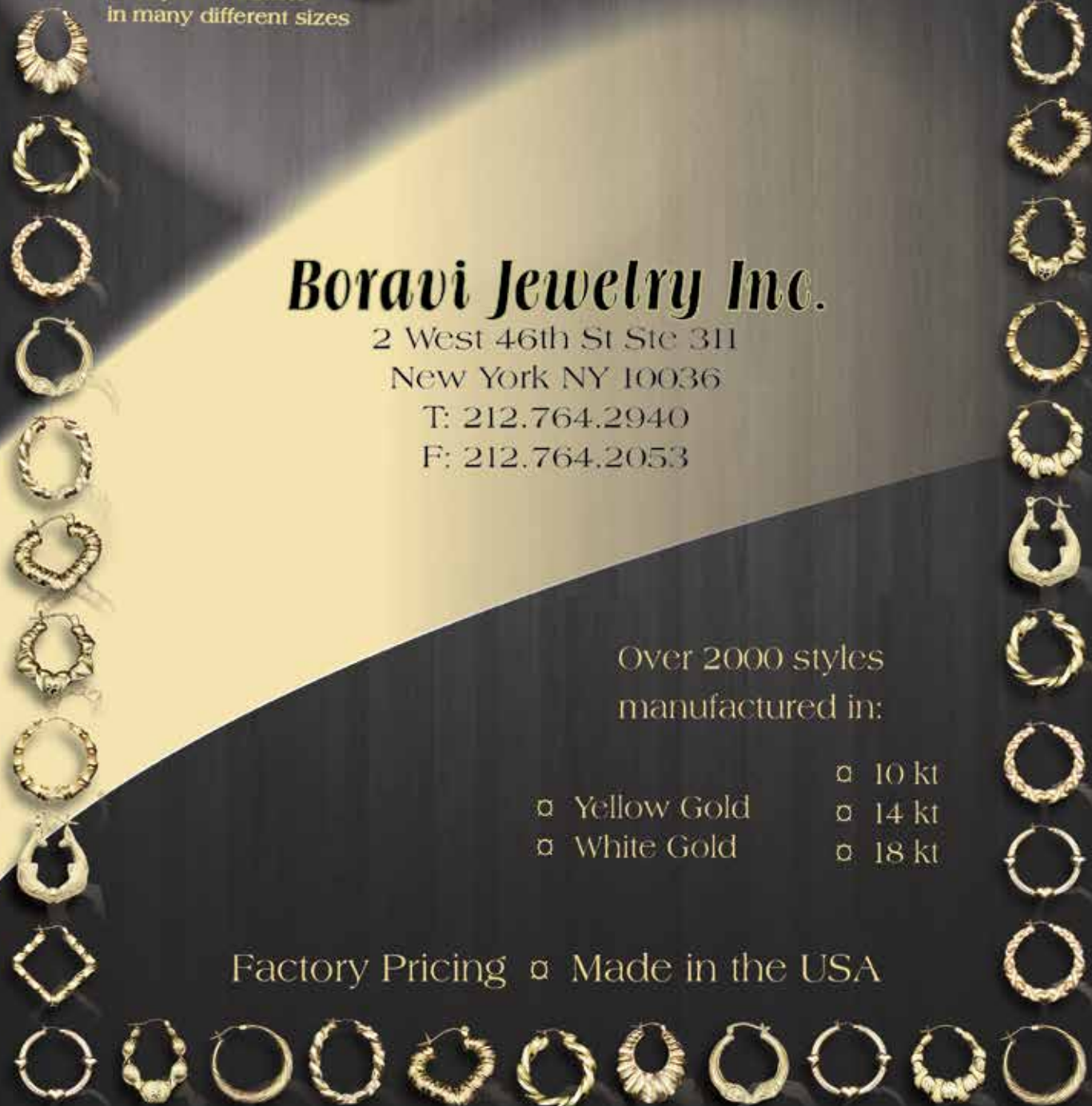
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SOCIAL MEDIA AND BRAND BUILDING

When it comes to building brands and brand awareness, Daniel Scott is a master. Often called a “Brand Architect,” his vast experience includes marketing positions with QVC, Chanel, and Verisign, followed by more than a decade as Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Scott Kay. Two years ago, he became CMO of World Trade Jewelers, where he was responsible for the global growth of billion-dollar iconic brands translated into jewelry. Ranked #15 out of 5,000 CMOs in the United States and elected for the third year to the very prestigious and respected CMO North American Advisory Board, Dan creates brands using social media, but not always in the ways you might think. *Jewelry Showcase Magazine* caught up with Dan recently to learn more about this constantly changing phenomenon.

Interview conducted by Cynthia Unninayar



Dan Scott, Brand Architect

Jewelry Showcase: How would you describe a brand?

Dan Scott: The definition of a brand, in simple terms, is that it is a promise. We too often call a company a “brand” because it has a name, logo, or tagline. But, this does not make it a brand. To create a jewelry brand, for example, you must carefully nurture its designs or collections. And then, through the proper channels, you must stand by your brand promise and deliver on it each and every day to the right audience.

JSM: How can you build a brand with the help of social media?

DS: Social media can be compared to a continuous party with conversations that take place using text, images, videos, or audio, or any combination of these. The most popular conversations are those occurring on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. You may invite your brand to the party, but don’t think for a minute that, because a social platform bears your brand name, you are in control. The consumer has the ultimate say. Before you type, tweet, post or pin, you should visit your competition and just observe. Remember, once you hit Enter, it will be online forever. A strong brand promise never dies and, while there might be magic in instantaneous action and reaction, what can spread like wildfire to promote your brand can also harm it with as little as one bad post.

JSM: In social media, how would you compare “hits,” “unique visitors,” “likes,” “fans,” and “shares?”

DS: It used to be that people jumped for joy when their website had a million hits, but since then, we have understood that a “hit” is rather meaningless. You don’t know who “hit” the page. “Fans” or “likes” are, in a way, similar. You don’t know who they are, where they came from, or what, exactly, they are “liking.” But, having said that, high numbers are still important for the sheer attention of it all. People are drawn to crowds, and thousands of Facebook “fans” make your brand or product look successful. As for “unique visitors” (UVs) to your site, they tell us that one specific visitor, on one day, from one IP address came from a completely traceable online location. You can see the visitation time, duration, action taken, and much more. UVs can produce email addresses, home addresses, and phone numbers, as well as other opt-in information. This is useful once it is put into action to help create brand awareness. “Shares” are the digital version of word-of-mouth. When people share, it’s a peer-to-peer endorsement, but shares can also be negative. If people have a bad experience, they tell the world. When you see those—and you may well get them—do not hit delete or block them (unless it is profane and modern filters take care of most of those). Resist the temptation to be defensive.

JSM: So what can you do if you receive negative “shares?”

DS: You should try to communicate with the person, just as any good customer service person would do. Though, in this case, the world is watching. It is important to try and right the wrong, even if you are right. Don’t forget that people who express their discontent are still people who care. But, if the conversation continues to be negative, try and take it offline. There are ways to do this, and they are specific to each circumstance. >>

JSM: How effective is social media, or more specifically Facebook, for example, in creating brand awareness?

DS: It can be effective if used in the right way. It is important to keep in mind, however, that nothing that works in the physical world works here, not promotion nor incentives nor discounts. With social media, you engage your audience. You speak around your brand and not to it or about it. An example can be seen on the Hershey Kiss Facebook page, which has 200,000 fans. One of the most popular posts was an adorable baby sleeping in a bed of Hershey Kiss chocolates. No jewelry. Thousands of people shared the post and the result sold more Kiss pendants than expected. Yet, when a hero image was placed with the popular kisses, it flat-lined. The baby picture spoke around the product and touched a cord with the audience, without mentioning the product itself.

JSM: How do you determine which social platforms are best at reaching your target audience?

DS: Studies indicate that Facebook is skewing 30+ with higher household income. Instagram and Twitter are more tweens, teens, and twenties. Pinterest is varied, but attracts mostly women, aged 25 to 45. Pinterest is also the best platform for click through to buy. Facebook is not—F-commerce tanked—and Instagram won’t allow you to click to buy, at least not yet. Once you identify your brand’s psychographics, you are half way to finding the right platform to get your message out to your target audience.

JSM: What does “psychographics” mean and why is it so important?

DS: Rule Number One is that you must know your customer. Psychographics is a marketing term used to identify people’s personalities, aspirations, and desires. To understand psychographics is to understand the “why” of people’s purchases. It is a multi-layered evaluation of “why” someone “needs” a Rolex over a Swatch. Yesterday’s marketers used only household income, age, and geography to target their customers. Today, one must get inside consumers’ minds and follow their lead. It’s their voice, their likes and dislikes that control how well a product performs. If you force feed your brand in social media, people will be turned off. You must allow the conversation to grow organically, while carefully guiding it, and then your brand will thrive.

JSM: More specifically, how can you help guide your “conversation” to grow organically?

DS: One important way is to get “influencers” involved in the conversation. I don’t mean film celebrities or stars in the traditional sense of the word. Today’s influencers, or we might call them informal “brand ambassadors,” are the fashionistas and trendsetters you never hear of, but who have millions of active followers. They are people such as Michelle Phan, a hair-and-makeup guru who, with more than seven million subscribers and one billion page views, is a certified YouTube superstar. Look around. You can cultivate your own influencer. They are out there. You just need to find them and make them a star for your brand promise.

JSM: Can you tell us about some of your current marketing projects?

DS: At the moment, we are in the process of rebranding a bridal company called Just Perfect, NYC. Specializing in platinum bands, it offers an online system to price any ring instantly (JustPerfectNYC.com). Although they produce for the largest and most renowned bridal jewelry brands, they are unknown to most in our sector. One example of this rebranding is speaking to the empowered woman of today. The visual campaign features ethereal images of modern-day goddesses and embraces the emotional importance behind bridal jewelry, evoking aspiration and desire. I am also working within a celebrated medical industry specialist, Dr. Daniel DePrince in another total rebranding effort. He is about to make headlines in *The Wall Street Journal* and NBC in the next two months. I have learned that one gains a new perspective when expanding branding and marketing techniques across new sectors.

In rebranding efforts for the bridal brand, Just Perfect, NYC, the visual campaign speaks to the empowered woman of today using ethereal images of modern-day goddesses.

For more on branding and marketing in today’s digital environment, Dan Scott can be reached at DanScott.com, info@danscott.com, or 201.294.3697.



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HONG KONG - THE GLOBAL GEMS & JEWELRY MARKETPLACE



"Panda" brooch in gold, baroque pearls, diamonds, and tsavorites by Mario Buzzanca.

The 32nd edition of the Hong Kong International Jewellery Show in March attracted a record number of exhibitors, making it the world's largest gem and jewelry fair, attesting once again to the city's importance as a global trading hub.

By Cynthia Unninayar



"Monet's Lily Pond" pendant in gemstones, diamonds and gold by Mokoso Atelier.

For the second year, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) organized its annual gem and jewelry event under the "Two Shows, Two Venues" arrangement. The Hong Kong International Diamond, Gem & Pearl Show took place at Asia World Expo (AWE) near the airport from March 2 to 6, while the Hong Kong International Jewellery Show was held in the city's modern convention center from March 4 to 8.

More than 76,000 buyers from 140 countries and regions came to see the products of 4,364 exhibitors from 52 countries and regions, which reflected a two percent increase over 2014. Some 46,000 visited the jewelry show's 2490 exhibitors, while more than 30,000 buyers came to see the 1874 exhibitors at the gem show.

"Despite the global economic challenge, the two shows recorded a slight increase in buyer attendance," stated Benjamin Chau, HKTDC Deputy Executive Director. "It is a very encouraging result. Attendance from traditional markets even recorded double-digit percentage growth, namely the USA, Italy, UK and Japan. Visitors from emerging markets such as Thailand, South Africa and Israel also recorded significant growth, reinforcing Hong Kong's position as a leading jewelry sourcing hub."

The majority of exhibitors in both shows were from overseas, demonstrating that they consider Hong Kong as a springboard to the rest of Asia, especially the large Chinese market, even though growth in China has slowed recently. In a survey of 1,206 buyers and exhibitors commissioned by the HKTDC, both groups said they were optimistic about the growth potential of jewelry markets in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, which they consider a key market to explore.

Ninety-one percent of buyers and 93 percent of exhibitors polled consider Hong Kong's fairs a major channel to find new suppliers, while 79 percent of exhibitors consider the fairs a key avenue to promote new products. The majority of respondents said the twin Hong Kong fairs are



Gemstone, gold and diamond full-finger ring by E&V Jewellery.

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“their must-attend trade show.” The survey also found that “80 percent of buyers expect steady or increased overall sales this year, while over 60 percent of buyers and exhibitors expect retail prices to remain steady in order to be competitive.”

In terms of product materials, the majority of buyers and exhibitors interviewed expect karat gold to be the most popular material in 2015, with white gold leading the trend at 48 percent, followed by yellow (32 percent) and rose gold (33 percent).

They also predict that diamonds will be the most popular gemstone, with one-carat stones leading at 48 percent, followed by round-cut (45 percent) and colorless (41 percent) diamonds.

Diamonds, Gems and Pearls

Starting two days earlier than the jewelry event, the Hong Kong International Diamond, Gem & Pearl Show featured a vast assortment of products. Diamonds occupied a large portion of the show, with Antwerp and Israel hosting the largest pavilions, followed by other national groups.

The busiest booths seemed to be those selling natural colored diamonds. U.S.-based Scarselli Diamonds offered a range of very large fancy colors, including a 50-carat intense yellow round and a 15-carat vivid yellow heart, as well as some spectacular fancy diamond jewelry. “2014 was a strong year for colored diamonds and we are seeing this demand spill over into 2015,” said Bruno Scarselli. “We sell all sizes, but are seeing great interest by retailers for the 2-5-carat range.”



Platinum ring set with 1.28-ct pink heart, 1.25-ct blue heart, 6.29-cts pear shape diamonds, and 0.29-ct brilliants by Scarselli Diamonds.

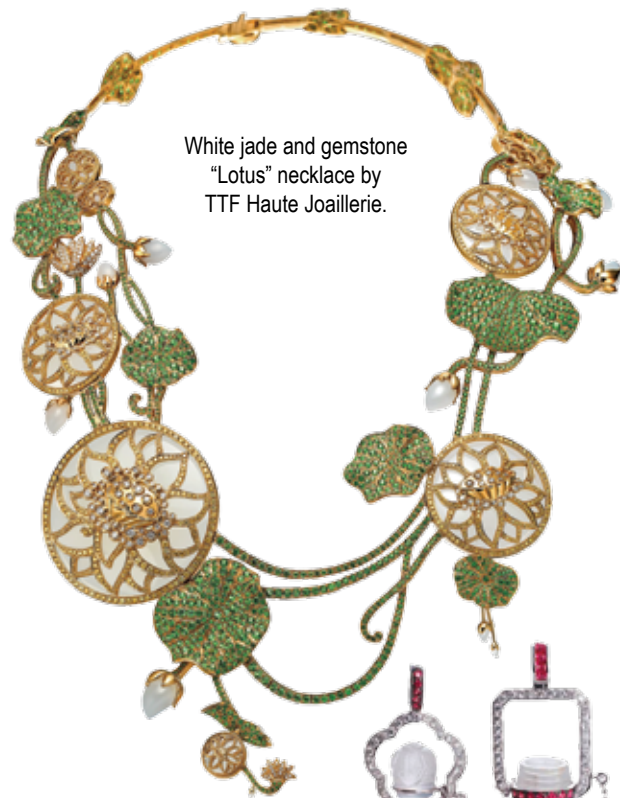


Rare 0.90-ct red diamond by Antwerp Cut.



Among the more unusual pieces seen at the show was this “claw” hand decoration in silver, gold, and enamel by Sekikazu.

Another very busy booth was that of Belgium-based Antwerp Cut, which displayed a wide variety of colors and sizes, including a spectacular suite of 20 intense yellows and a 0.90-carat red. “Potential buyers do not come here specifically to replenish their stocks,” stated Mike Akiki, Managing Director, “but to make the right contacts so that they know who to contact when they need a custom order. The Hong Kong March show is therefore the ideal platform for maintaining existing contacts and making new contacts.” >>



White jade and gemstone “Lotus” necklace by TTF Haute Joaillerie.

Pendants made of miniature perfume bottles in carved quartz embellished with diamonds and rubies by May Jewelry.



Selling mostly colorless rounds from 30 points to 3 carats, in various qualities, Hong Kong-based Dharam Creations offered an innovative way for buyers to examine prospective diamonds. “We launched software that allows a video of the stones to display all the inclusions in a clear manner,” explained Manish Mangukia. “Retailers are happy with the system as their customers can see for themselves exactly what they are buying.” He continued that sales at the show were about as expected with most buyers coming from China and the ASEAN nations.

In the colored gemstone areas could be found every type, color and quality of stone imaginable, ranging from inexpensive beads to rare untreated gems. Dealers of higher end stones, such as Germany-based Constantin Wild, said business was good, with the “finest qualities selling the best.”



Rare 20-ct bicolor Imperial topaz by Constantin Wild.

While there were buyers for all colors of tourmaline, the neon shades of Paraiba seemed very popular. Sebastian Ferreira, director of Brazil Paraiba Mine (the only major continuing source in Brazil for the popular gems, which are named for the state in which they were originally found) offered Paraibas, ranging from melee to 5 carats as well as carved pieces. Other dealers also offered some Brazilian stones, but most Paraibas at the show originated in Mozambique.

Sapphires, in all colors—especially pink, yellow and blue—attracted buyers’ attention. Among the more interesting cuts were those seen at Sri Lanka-based Sapphirus. “We have a variety of cuts, including a new unique diamond cut for our sapphires,” explained Andre Tissera. This impressive branded and patented cut, known as the “Asscher Cut Princess,” was invented by Israel “Izzy” Itzkowitz of U.S.-based Quadamas.

In the Opal category, Australia-based Cody Opals featured a variety of beautiful stones, including a collection of “Koroit” opal. “This has been a really hot product,” said Andrew Cody.



Gemstone and diamond pendant by MVEe.

“Horse” ring in gemstones and diamonds by Zorab.

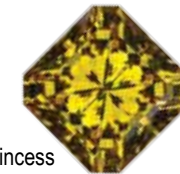
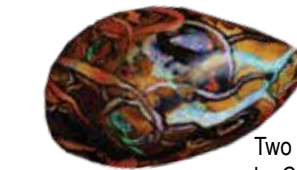


Baroque pearl, gemstone, and diamond brooch by Mousson Atelier.



Carved Paraiba tourmaline in matrix by Brazil Paraiba Mine.

Two Koroit opals by Cody Opals.



Three Asscher Cut Princess sapphires by Sapphirus.

“Koroit is boulder opal in matrix and opalized wood that provides a unique combination of patterns and veins.”

In the warmer end of the spectrum, fire opal has been rising in popularity and price. Clement Sabbagh, of Brazil-based Ben Sabbagh Bros., said that it was becoming more popular with Chinese buyers as they learn about the orange gem. >>

Continued on page 55



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Jewelry and More

At Hong Kong's modern convention center, the Hong Kong International Jewellery Show kicked off with a record number of exhibitors, plus seminars, networking events, fashion shows, gala dinners, and jewelry competitions. Conveniently divided into various sections, this mega-marketplace included fine jewelry, silver, antique pieces, equipment, jade, packaging, and various national pavilions.

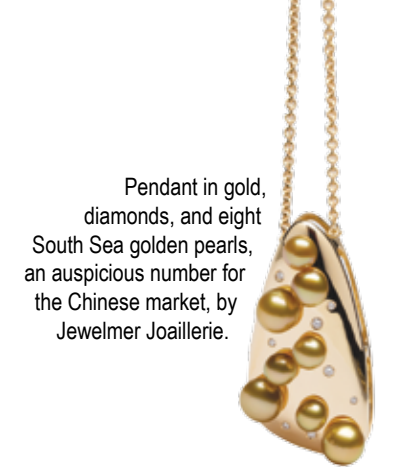
In terms of trends, there was something for everyone. Having said that, however, a few notable design directions were evident. Lacy, open designs continued to be prevalent in light of metals' prices. Diamond pieces in all sizes and price ranges remained popular. Flora and fauna motifs abounded in a variety of stylized and realistic pieces, while long earrings, full-fingered and multi-fingered rings attracted a lot of attention. Long, loopy necklaces, pendants and large center stone rings also graced many display windows.



"Plumes" necklace by Alessio Boschi, winner of the Merit Award in the International Jewellery Design Excellence competition. This luxurious necklace features Australian black opals, diamonds, tsavorites, blue and orange sapphires. Sponsored by HKTDC, the competition featured 191 entries from 31 countries and regions, making it the largest and most international contest to date. Winners were announced at a gala dinner.



Gemstone and diamond ring by Isabelle Langlois.



Pendant in gold, diamonds, and eight South Sea golden pearls, an auspicious number for the Chinese market, by Jeweler Joaillerie.

Full-finger ring in diamonds and gold by Djula.



Multi-gemstone and diamond pendant by Green G.



Emerald and diamond ring by Bapalal Keshavlal.



This remarkable "Venice" ring is one of the "Postcard" city series in micro-mosaic and gold by Le Sibille, a Rome-based brand that exhibited in the Italian pavilion, one of the largest national groupings in the HKTDC jewelry show.

The next HKTDC twin gem and jewelry shows will be held in March 2016 with exact dates to be announced soon. (www.hktdc.com)

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By Marlene Murphy

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Q: What is the most common misperception people have about SEO as it relates to their own site?

MURPHY: When I speak with clients about creating a new site, one of their main requirements or goals is to be "in the top ten results of Google and preferably #1". They have the notion that some web developer out there can do that for them. But

common sense suggests that when you're competing against millions of other jewelers in a global community for the top ten spots, you must have something unique to position your site in front of Blue Nile, Zales, and other e-commerce giants. Jewelers with a brick and mortar business have a distinct advantage because they can drive focus away from a global or national rivalry to their own region where there is less competition and where achieving higher ranking is more attainable via proper SEO.

Q: Many modern jewelry sites are designed with minimum or no text at all appearing on the landing page, called the Home Page. The effect is meant to be sleek and high end because the visitor just sees jewelry (if it is a jewelry site). But is that a good option?

MURPHY: A sleek home page is effective if you have tremendous brand recognition, like Tiffany or Cartier. They don't need good search engine rank-

ings to drive customers to their site. Google and other search engines are looking for original text content containing the right mix of targeted keywords and key phrases written in a readable format. Search engines are also looking for an "outline" format in the coding (remember creating an outline in school – Main Headings, Sub-Headings and relevant text underneath?). Pages with nothing but images don't give Google any content to offer up to people searching for products or information.

Q: What are other ways to engage and hook the visitor to ones' site?

MURPHY: Product slide shows, short videos and interactive applications combined with engaging original text and links create a rich shopping experience for your customer straight through to checkout.

Q: Tell us a bit more about the visual appeal of a good website . . . What are things a site owner should have on their site including but not limited to the home page?

MURPHY: Mobile internet browsing is now so pervasive that website design has undergone a radical change in response to that user behavior. We used to tailor design layouts to the standard 17 - 20 inch computer monitor – now shoppers routinely view websites on iPhones. In office or at home, huge computer monitors are becoming the norm; 24 inch monitors are not considered large now. Today's websites must respond visually to every visitor's viewport, whatever size it may be. Fonts now need to be large enough to be legible on a mobile device after they are downsized to fit the screen. There also needs to be enough space between lines and around links because mobile devices don't have mouse capability. Actions are performed by touch; if the user has fat fingers or the print is small, navigating a site can become frustrating to impossible. Color palette plays a key role in readability and visual appeal. Studies point to the subliminal but powerful impact that color produces.

Q: Are there any strict no-no's that one should eliminate or not place on their site at all?

MURPHY: My number 1 no-no is music or sound effects! It's cute the first time you listen but quickly be-

comes irritating after hearing it more than once. You must consider that a visitor may be surfing the internet while at work and they can't afford music blaring from their cubicle. iPhone addresses this issue in their operating system by requiring the user to initiate the sound by clicking a button or a link.

Q: What are latest and most powerful tools in the widget, function and app category for use in a jewelry website?

MURPHY: Google Translate and payment calculators are great examples of useful widgets. Important functions for jewelers would be the automatic updating of Kitco prices, currency exchange rates and online inventories. Applications refer to specially designed programs built for mobile devices, like Kayak, or those created by the airlines to check flight status, or schedules.

Q: If a jeweler only wants people to come into their store---because they are 'not ready to sell online yet' is there any reason they should invest in a website at all?

MURPHY: The information super highway as we say has made businesses without websites appear suspect of not being legitimate. Even if a retailer doesn't want to conduct online sales, they should provide an e-Look Book that showcases the services and jewelry collections available in the actual store. Marketing studies reveal that shoppers routinely narrow down their choices from a business' online catalog before driving to the store to view the actual merchandise. Remember that a properly built website can efficiently transition from Look Book to a fully functioning e-Commerce site anytime later. As your business evolves, so can your website.



Murphy's rich experience in the tech culture began in 1981 with the dawn of corporate reliance upon computer technology. She played a pivotal role in implementing and integrating computer programming for the automotive industry. Sharp and intuitive, she developed computer training programs, and computer applications for myriad departments. Her decades of expertise include developing Visual Basic for Applications, SQL, and the Microsoft Suite of Office Products like MSAccess, MSWord, MSEXcel, MSPowerPoint, Classic ASP and ColdFusion. She's been a custom web developer since 2000 and a specialist developer for the jewelry trade since 2009.

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