THE Jeweller

The National Association of Jewellers

TRADE JOURNAL
Winter 24 Issue / £7.50



+ JEWELLERY SHOW REPORT
+ VICENZAORO REVIEW

NAJ AWARDS

Celebrating the winners

Image: Tish Lyon

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TH March

The National Association of Jewellers

FROM

The Editor



Two things happened last week. One of them happens (almost) every time I ask an industry VIP to be the subject of our regular Last Word interview, and Allum & Sidaway's Jason Allum didn't falter: "I find writing about myself difficult," he said.

"Tsk, it's easy," I (always) reply, "you know all the answers; you can knock it out over breakfast." Reader: if you turn to page 66, you see that Mr Allum managed it perfectly well.

The second thing that happened – for the first time since editing *The Jeweller* (15 years, according to LinkedIn) – the tables were turned on me. I was invited to be a guest on jewellery expert and Juraster founder, Jessica Cadzow-Collins' podcast Inside the Jewel Vault. Would I "share my life and career in jewellery" through six special pieces of my own jewellery to go into a fantasy jewel vault. Really? I'd have to answer questions about myself? And make sense? For a whole hour? Eek! I now feel a tad guilty for cruelly putting at least a hundred blameless industry bods under our spotlight over the years.

My working life involves questioning others about the jewellery they design, create and/or sell, and this, the last issue of the year, is full of the results of observing, examining, querying and generally oohing and aahing over beautiful pieces and latest collections.

My first visit to Vicenzaoro in Italy (yes, it's been a long time coming) was the visual feast I'd been promised – see page 26 for just a few of my highlights from the show. The trip followed hot on the heels of the Jewellery Show (my report on page 18), before I was walking, notebook in hand, the aisles of the CMJ Autumn Event (p36), so my brain was swimming with images and information. The icing on the (coffee and walnut) cake – a day at Goldsmiths' Fair during week one saw me fantasy shopping for 'my favourite things' feature on page 30. I love my job!

Talking of jobs, we're excited to introduce Faceted Careers, the NAJ's new careers website that addresses the recruitment challenges facing our industry. Turn to page 34 to learn more about the Association's plans for this invaluable resource. Then, (unapologetic segue alert) if you've ever wondered what a gemmologist is (and does), Kerry Gregory of Gemmology Rocks has her own enlightening opinions on page 34.



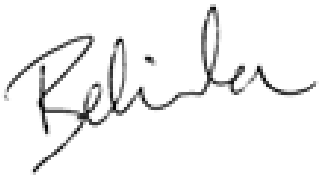
26 Vicenzaoro Trade Fair

18 The Jewellery Show Report

Designer, salesperson, goldsmith, valuer, engraver, marketer, mounter, setter... just some of the careers represented at the NAJ Awards, and on page 10, you can catch all the inspiring individuals and businesses that were winners on the night. More award categories than ever, a record number of entrants, a sold-out event, mirror ball decorations and a sax player all made it a fabulous night to remember. Roll on December's Benevolent Ball for more partying!

Meanwhile, if you need me for anything (chat shows, after-dinner speaking, fete openings) just get your people to call my people.

Happy Christmas!



Belinda Morris, Editor

The National Association of Jewellers

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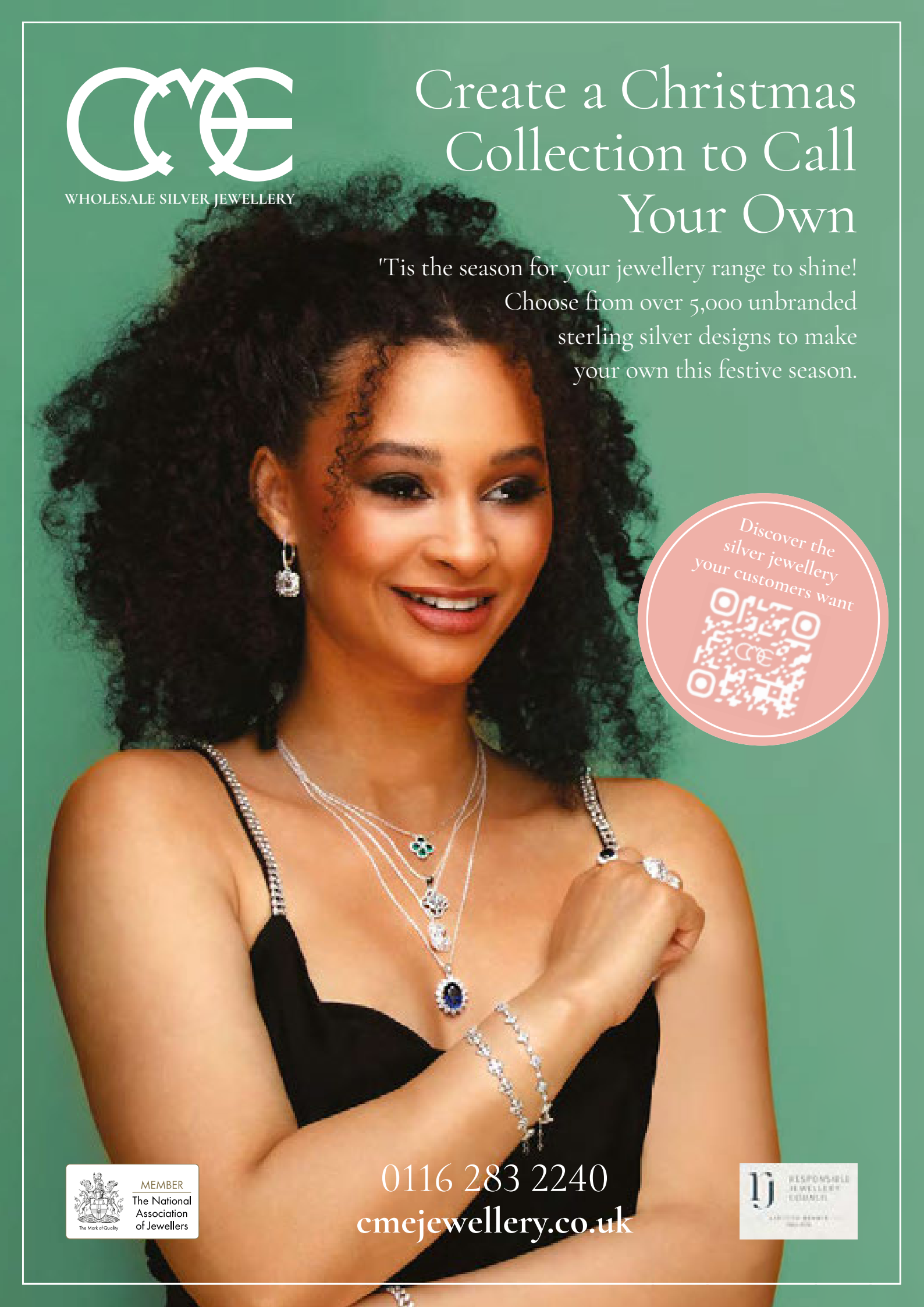
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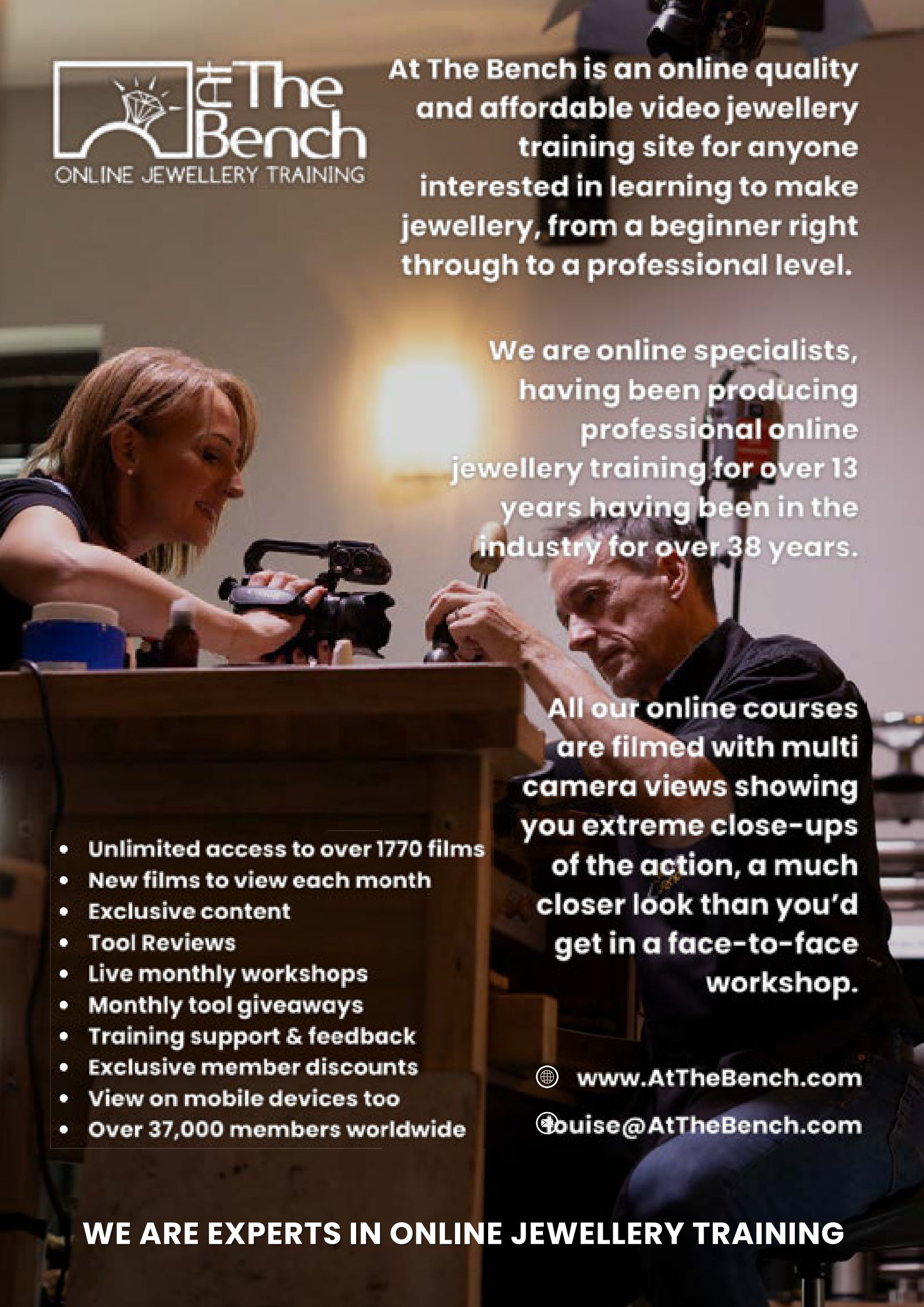
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At The Bench
ONLINE JEWELLERY TRAINING
At The Bench is an online quality and affordable video jewellery training site for anyone interested in learning to make jewellery, from a beginner right through to a professional level.
We are online specialists, having been producing professional online jewellery training for over 13 years having been in the industry for over 38 years.
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Chair's Foreword



As 2025 approaches, we once again balance a mixture of cautious optimism and current challenges. While signs of improvement have emerged, the reality remains that business is still tough. This is not unique to our industry but is across the broader luxury markets, both in the UK and internationally. Global economic uncertainties, supply chain disruptions and fluctuating consumer demands continue to impact our trade.

As I write this, the British Retail Consortium reveals consumer confidence has dropped again, and businesses are facing a turbulent period even during the supposed golden quarter. However, history and experience tell us this is cyclical, and despite the current difficulties, things will improve.

RELYING ON RELATIONSHIPS TODAY

The importance of open, honest communication between the supply chain cannot be overstated. Now, more than ever, we must engage in frank discussions about the challenges we face.

We must address economic pressures, pricing fluctuations and logistical constraints openly, so we can work together to find mutually beneficial solutions. By maintaining transparency, we align expectations and ensure all sides are better equipped to navigate these turbulent times. We can mitigate risks and capitalise on new opportunities through collaboration and shared understanding.

Strong, resilient relationships between retailers, suppliers and others in the supply chain are critical to long-term success. The most successful partnerships grow out of mutual respect and shared goals. When parties invest in each other's success, it creates a dynamic where challenges are met together rather than in isolation. Whether through joint business planning, sharing market insights or simply supporting each other during difficult periods, these collaborative efforts strengthen our industry. A relationship rooted in cooperation will survive and thrive, even in the most testing economic conditions.

RECOGNISING REPRESENTATION FOR TOMORROW

On a positive note, we are witnessing increasing recognition of our industry in government. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) now officially recognises jewellery, silverware and allied crafts as a vital industry. This designation is a significant achievement and marks a pivotal moment for us as a trade (read more about this recognition and the work the NAJ has done over the past 12 months on page 49). It comes after a series of productive roundtable discussions where industry stakeholders met to improve the industry's standing and direction for all.

This recognition, coupled with our existing relationship with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), positions us to influence key decision makers in ways not previously possible. Our chief executive, Ben Massey, was invited to Downing Street for the 40th celebration of London Fashion Week, further highlighting the growing stature of our industry in government circles. The work of the UK Jewellery, Silverware and Allied Crafts Industry (UKJSAC), for which the NAJ manages the secretariat, is central to shaping these conversations. With representatives from the British Watch and Clock Association joining the initiative, the scope of our dialogue continues to expand.

As we move forward, it is vital we continue to build on this momentum. I encourage all members passionate about our trade's future to get involved. Your voice is crucial, whether through participation in the UKJSAC or other initiatives. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you want to play a part in this important work. We're currently looking for people to join our finance committee to oversee our accounts.

A FACE-TO-FACE FUTURE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

On the events front, it is heartening to see more engagement in in-person gatherings. Our recent NAJ Awards saw record attendance, demonstrating there is still a strong appetite for industry events (check out page 10 for all the winners and news from the awards evening). It is a reminder of the importance of community and connection. These events celebrate our collective achievements and provide valuable opportunities for learning and collaboration. I believe investing in these moments, as well as in our people, remains one of the most effective ways to ensure future success. We're also reviewing our valuers and retailer events, please contact us for more info or to share feedback on 2024's events.

WE NEED YOU!

We're actively seeking new national committee members, particularly those in Ireland, and/or wholesalers who can bring diverse perspectives to our discussions. Our Association's strength lies in its ability to represent all facets of the jewellery trade, and we are committed to ensuring all voices are heard.

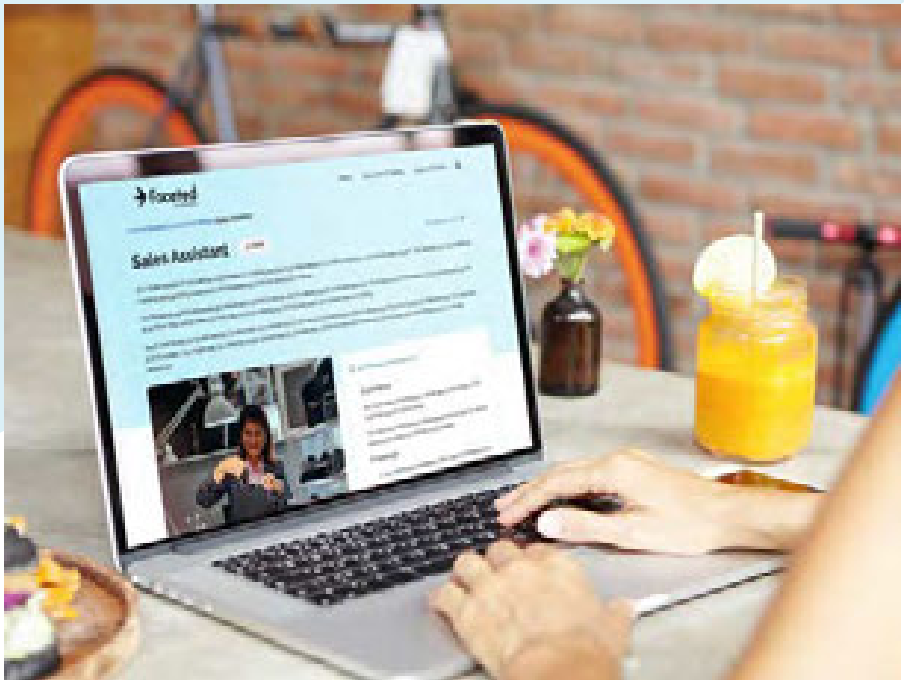
If you want to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact me at **chair@naj.co.uk.**

Here's to a positive and prosperous 2025.



Adam Jacobs, NAJ Chair





Faceted Futures

Introducing a pathway for the next generation of jewellery talent.

In response to an industry-wide talent shortage, the NAJ, along with industry partners, has been developing a new careers website to address the recruitment challenges facing the trade.

The jewellery industry, a vital contributor to the UK economy, has long struggled with attracting new talent and filling skills gaps. With this initiative, the careers website seeks to provide a comprehensive resource for vocation opportunities and education and training courses, making it easier for people to enter the jewellery sector and excel.

A RESPONSE TO A UNIVERSAL CHALLENGE

The jewellery trade encompasses a wide range of skills, from design and manufacturing to retail and valuation. Each sector faces its own specific set of challenges, but one issue persists across the board: the struggle to attract and keep skilled professionals.

The pace of new talent entering the trade is not keeping up with demand, leading to gaps in critical roles.

Recognising this, the NAJ has led proactive steps to ensure the future of the UK jewellery industry remains strong. Besides lobbying the Government for greater support, the Association, with industry partners, has turned its focus to creating long-term solutions that will benefit the entire trade.

INTRODUCING FACETED CAREERS

Faceted Careers is the industry careers website designed for two primary functions: signposting career opportunities and guiding individuals through the education and training available. It will be a single source for jewellery jobs, from entry-level positions to more specialised roles, and provide detailed information on how to pursue them.

The website will feature a comprehensive careers database, highlighting a variety of roles in the jewellery trade. Over time, it will expand to include a directory of education and training courses, helping individuals identify the best routes into the industry and where they can receive accredited training.

This platform aims to fill two vital needs for the jewellery industry: first, to make the trade more accessible to potential new entrants, and second, to provide clear and structured pathways for those already interested in advancing their jewellery careers.

Whether an individual is interested in customer-facing positions on the shop floor, skilled bench work in manufacturing or administrative roles, the website will be their guide. For each career path, there will be dedicated pages with essential information about the role, including responsibilities, key skills required and the qualifications needed to succeed.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

With the website launch, the NAJ is introducing the NAJ Endorsement Scheme, a programme that formally recognises high-quality jewellery training. Providers who meet the scheme's rigorous standards can apply for endorsement, allowing them to use the NAJ Endorsed logo on their marketing materials. The new website will promote endorsed courses, making it easier for potential students to find reputable training providers.

The endorsement process ensures all training programmes listed on the website meet the needs of the industry and deliver relevant, high-quality education. This initiative underscores the NAJ's commitment to both promoting the jewellery trade as a career choice and ensuring those who enter the industry have the skills necessary to thrive.

If you wish to have your course reviewed to join the NAJ Endorsed Scheme, email **education@naj.co.uk**.

"While showcasing available careers is an important step, the NAJ recognises that guiding individuals towards the appropriate training and qualifications is just as crucial. Faceted Careers will, in time, feature a database of education and apprenticeship opportunities, helping users identify the courses that best suit their chosen career path. These resources will include not only the NAJ's own JET courses but also external programmes from other accredited training providers."

Marie Garnett, NAJ head of education

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF THE JEWELLERY TRADE

Faceted Careers is more than just a tool for jobseekers. It is part of a broader strategy to revitalise the UK jewellery industry by attracting new talent and providing clear pathways for career development. As the website grows and evolves, it will become an invaluable resource for NAJ members, industry professionals and aspiring jewellers alike.

The NAJ encourages collaboration from across the trade to make this project a success. Businesses, training organisations and skills specialists are all invited to contribute their knowledge, share case studies and help shape the future of the jewellery sector. By working together, the industry can ensure it continues to attract, keep and develop the best talent.

So Faceted Careers can promote the trade and provide a comprehensive directory of roles and courses, we are keen for feedback to ensure we do not miss vital jobs or opportunities.

DISCOVER MORE

Visit, **www.faceted.careers**
To help us make the best possible careers website for the jewellery trade, please email **marketing@naj.co.uk** with your feedback.

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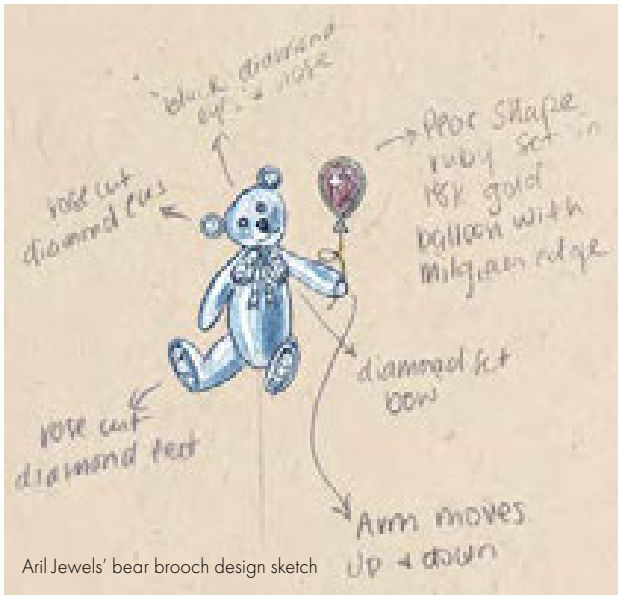


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Aril Jewels' bear brooch design sketch

Charity Fundraising Ball to repeat success.

David Doyle, Aril Jewels and Hockley Mint raise funds for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Following the success of their black-tie fundraising charity ball in April, which raised £86,000 for the cancer wards of the Birmingham Children's Hospital, David Doyle and family are continuing with the Bear theme for their Charity Fundraising Ball in April 2025, to be held again at The Grand Hotel Birmingham.

Working with jewellery designers Kayla Rimmon and Chlöe Woodmansterne at Aril Jewels, another unique Bear brooch/lapel pin is being designed for Doyle to auction at the upcoming ball. The bespoke piece will be manufactured in platinum by Hockley Mint, and along with another beautiful silver piece currently being designed by Andrew Macgowan, these two items will be the highlight of the evening's charity auction.

Doyle says: "I was particularly keen to work with new and upcoming designers on this important piece to help us raise funds, so I was delighted when Chlöe and Kayla agreed to give their time freely to help us design this Bear pin. Aril Jewels is also part of the Created in the UK initiative, which was the main reason I approached them."

Pictured here is the first design and drawing of the Bear pin, and over the next few weeks Aril Jewels and Doyle, and Gary Wroe from Hockley Mint, will work together to produce a final piece worthy of substantial bids at the ball.

Wroe commented: "As always, I know David has high hopes for what he can raise to help children with cancer, and after the success of last year's ball, I know he's set his family a fundraising target of £100,000 or more for this next charity ball. We are very happy here at Hockley Mint to help him and his family achieve that momentous sum!"

Aril Jewels commented: "We were delighted when David approached us to design this piece to raise money for children with cancer. The Birmingham Children's Hospital does such incredible work, and we're so looking forward to seeing our Bear pin raise funds to help the hospital continue its great work."







Top Left: NAJ CEO Ben Massey and Judith Lockwood, Ti Sento, have the first dance.
Left: NAJ Chair Adam Jacobs
Above: Leonid Dementiev, vice chair, and Janet Weller, chair, Institute of Professional Goldsmiths

NAJ Awards 2024 – The Winners!

On Thursday 10th October, the jewellery world celebrated the exceptional businesses and individuals who've contributed to its success over the past 12 months. We honoured the designers, makers, suppliers, sales staff, retailers and teams who've shown outstanding dedication and talent. And then we partied. Quite hard, some of us.

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2024 NAJ AWARDS

Held at the Burlington Hotel in Birmingham, the evening marked the first time our awards have been a stand-alone event – which made it particularly momentous and exciting. We are very grateful to headline sponsor, Curteis, and the category award sponsors and supporters, some of whom have championed the Awards since their inception. Heartfelt thanks also go to our judges, who generously gave their time and expertise to help decide our deserving winners.

This year, we awarded trophies in three pillars: Great Ideas, Great People and Great Businesses, recognising individuals, businesses and initiatives that contribute to the uniqueness of our industry. We also introduced new award categories to the line-up, allowing us to celebrate a truly broad cross-section of deserving winners.

Ben Massey, NAJ CEO, said: "What a fantastic evening, and what an incredible group of finalists! Congratulations to all the award winners, shortlisted businesses and individuals who impressed us with their innovation and professionalism over the past year. Thank you to our amazing sponsors and charity partners – The Benevolent Society, NAJ Educational Trust and the Silversmiths & Jewellers Charity – who helped make it an unforgettable evening."

The evening raised £3000 to be shared by The Benevolent Society, NAJ Educational Trust and the Silversmiths & Jewellers Charity.





Top Right: The NAJ Team. Bottom Right: Five of the eight judges – Marie Brennan, Helen dimmick, Gary Williams, Sally Leonard & Rachael Taylor.



David Wilkins Award

WINNER

Craig O'Donnell



Store Design of the Year

WINNER

Camilla Jones

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Arihant by Paul Spurgeon

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Hockley Mint

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Unsung Hero of the Year

WINNER

Sarah Jordan

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Rob Harrison, Hockley Mint

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Community Engagement of the Year

WINNER

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Jewellery Retailer of the Year

WINNER

Allum & Sidaway

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Bespoke Jewellery Retailer of the Year

WINNER

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Designer of the Year

WINNER

Genevieve Schwartz

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Collection of the Year

WINNER

Boodles' National Gallery collection

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NAJ CEO Ben Massey collecting the award on Boodles' behalf.

Workshop Professional of the Year

WINNER

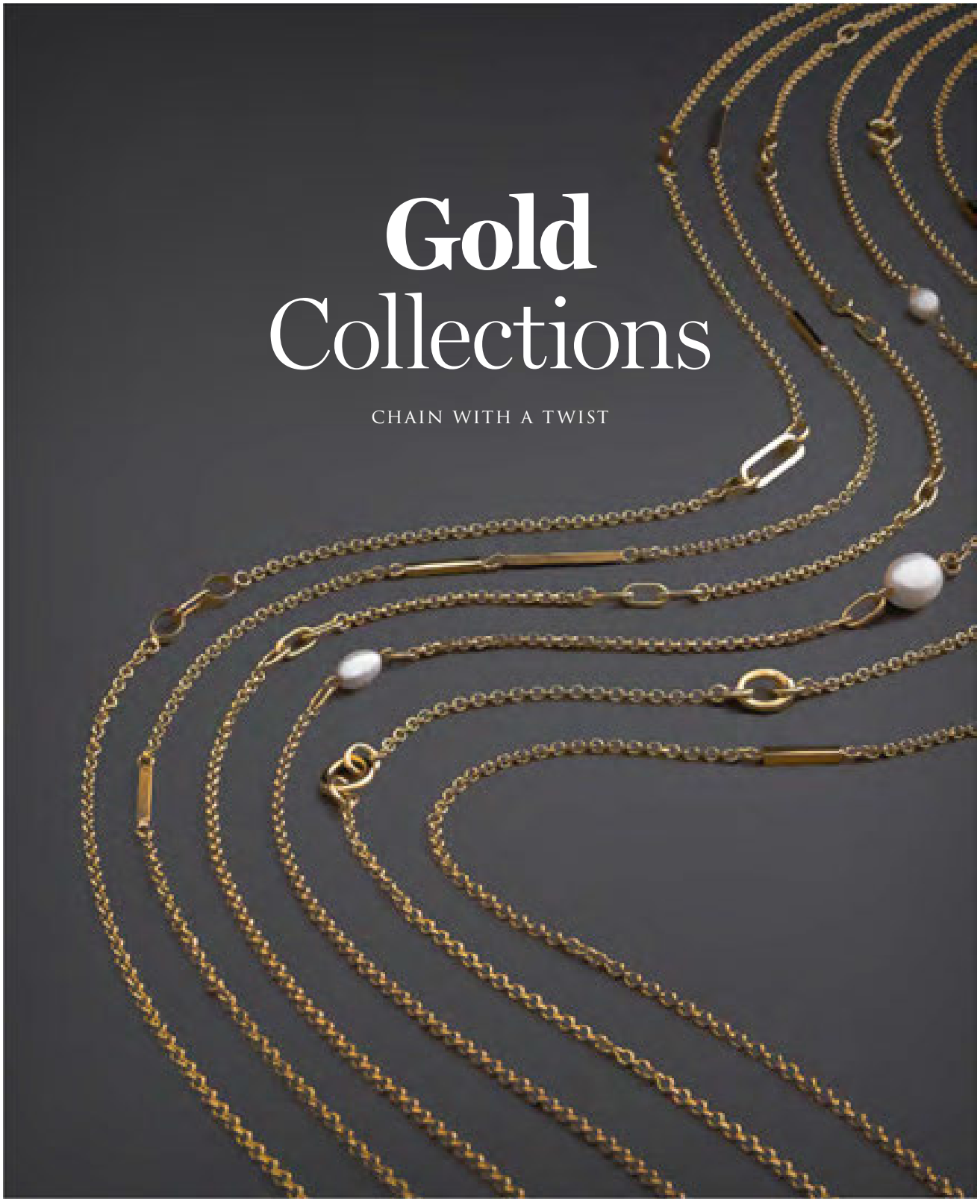
Deborah Rootham

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Astrid Jaroslawsky, Queensmith

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The Bench



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WINNER

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At The Bench

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Rising Star of the Year

WINNER

Beth Officer, Antique Jewellers Ltd.

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Salesperson of the Year

WINNER

Sandra Brown, Jeremy France

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Eddi Norris, Queensmith

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CMJ managing director, Emmet Cummins, presents the Salesperson of the Year award. CMJ are the first affiliate sponsor to join the SaferGems initiative.



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WINNER

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Team of the Year

WINNER

Austen & Blake (Glasgow Store)

HIGHLY COMMENDED

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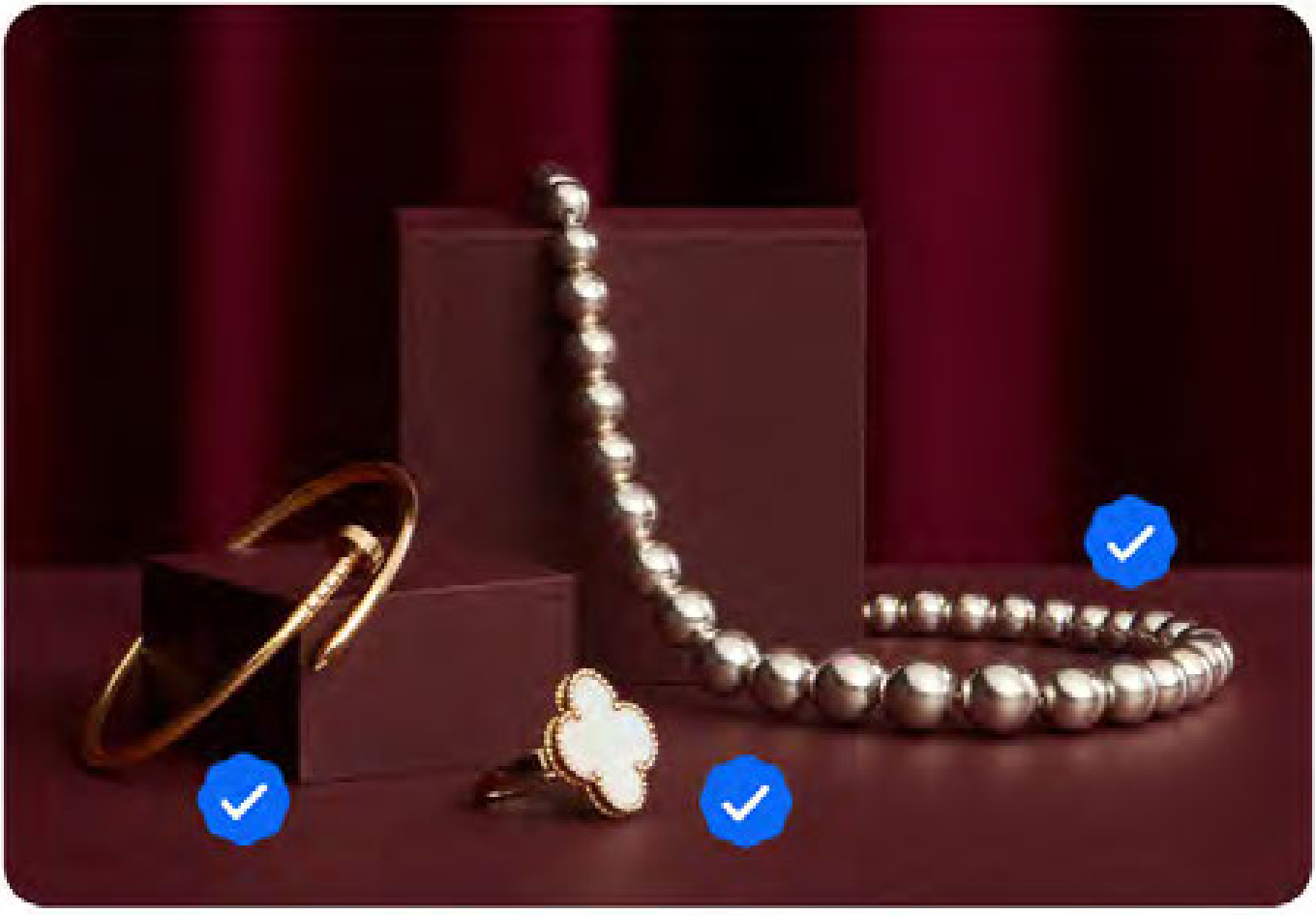
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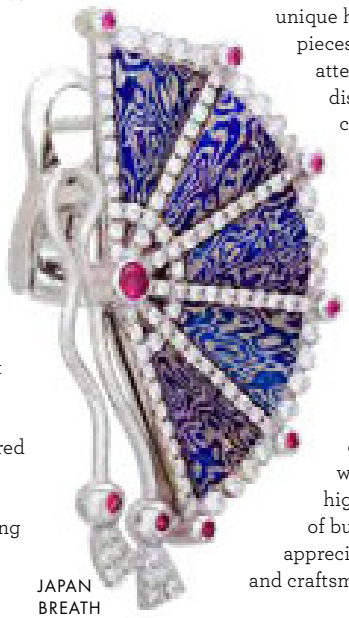
BUUNT – preserving the values of handcrafted artistry

When Ukrainian-born Vitaliy Astakhov established his luxury jewellery business, he knew he wanted to showcase a unique and beautiful blend of art, craft and imagination. He challenges the norms of mass production and simplifies manufacturing processes, consistently captivating even the most knowledgeable connoisseurs.

It was in 2012, following a course at Odessa Jewellery Academy, that Astakhov founded BUUNT, and he knew from the outset he wanted to present the highest standards of craftsmanship. As he describes it, it was initially "a period of mistakes and searches to develop something unique to compete with skilled and experienced jewellers." The name BUUNT combines two German words that capture a philosophy: Bunte – meaning colourful, and Bund – a connection. Inspired by Japanese culture and nature, he created one-of-a-kind jewellery using the mediaeval Japanese art of Mokume-Gane. Not as a base material, as it is often used, but as unique inserts into 18ct gold, making each piece of jewellery as unique as a fingerprint or an eye's cornea.

Describing the BUUNT collection, Astakhov explains that it brings together a blend of innovative, high-tech production methods, while each piece includes elements crafted entirely by hand, using the ancient Japanese techniques. Delving deeper, he adds, "each collection embodies the philosophy of the natural world, the cosmos and the planets, reflecting the creator's vision through his particular lens of understanding the world. We believe jewellery is not merely an accessory but a means of expressing one's connection to the world." The superb high finish of all the jewellery pieces is echoed in the supporting material, such as boxes, bags and certificates.

Astakhov's exacting standards, passion and commitment to the highest levels of artistry means BUUNT has an inevitable air of precious exclusivity. These are pieces to entice aficionados of ultra-fine jewellery, those who are familiar with the luxury jewellery market and understand the intricate principles required to create one-of-a-kind jewellery. Therefore, seeking the right retail connections is vital.



JAPAN BREATH

"This commitment, however, limits our ability to engage in mass production," he says, "but we're extremely proud to be in such constraining circumstances, and there is no intention to move out of this niche.

"Choosing partners to showcase our creations is a meticulous process," he stresses. "We are committed to long-term collaborations and sharing exclusive insights that enhance their understanding of our values and competitive advantages. Due to the intricate nature of our craftsmanship, we cannot partner with multiple stockists simultaneously, which makes the choice of partner crucial. We treat each client – even years after the purchase – with utmost care, offering them deeper knowledge of the technology and history behind their purchase. This is a labour-intensive endeavour we aim to establish once and for a lifetime."

Featuring BUUNT Jewellery in a store or online platform offers a distinct advantage as its unique handcrafted pieces draw the attention of discerning customers, encouraging them to explore the entire store and discover other brands as well. Given BUUNT's limited collections, this can enhance the overall appeal of the offerings, while attracting a high-value segment of buyers who appreciate exclusivity and craftsmanship.

BUUNT's main workshop is in Odessa, Ukraine, and even now, during the war and under the threat of missile attacks, it continues to operate despite having lost the majority of its artisans – Astakhov fears it will take a long time to teach new employees. He has moved the production partially to Manchester, where he is now based, but the hardest, most complex processes he has kept in Ukraine, mainly because some workers are unable to move from there and their skills are indispensable.

What truly matters when choosing a piece of jewellery? What compels customers to part with significant amounts of money? Through his extensive knowledge of jewellery production, precious stone trading and personal market relationships, Astakhov can confidently assert most people purchase jewellery "to amaze and be noticed, ensuring they don't remain in the shadows. It's essential to note that the value lies in the attention the piece garners, prompting questions like, 'What is that?' In these moments, the owners of BUUNT jewellery, or the stores that carry our creations, can share the fascinating stories behind the technology, craftsmanship and the life experiences encapsulated in each piece."

Leaving us in no doubt that BUUNT means far more than simply beautiful adornment, he concludes: "Every piece of jewellery carries a part of the artisan's soul, making it a truly living creation. It changes colours based on unpredictable environmental factors, without physical contact. Perhaps, in time, we will uncover the magical properties of these layers of metal."

> "We believe jewellery is not merely an accessory but a means of expressing one's connection to the world."
>
> **Vitaliy Astakhov, BUUNT**

CARETTA COLLECTION: Caretta is a rare species of sea turtle known for its astounding thousand-mile ocean crossings. The Mokume-Gane technique symbolises its majestic movement and arduous journey.



SELENE COLLECTION: Named for the moon goddess, iridescent shades of star sapphire emphasise its brilliance. The unique technique combines palladium and titanium, surrounded by the radiance of stars.

MOKUME-GANE

The Japanese art of Mokume-Gane is a technique (and works) using a unique Japanese metal crafting technique which comprises layering different-coloured metals and painstakingly carving and forging them to create beautiful wood grain patterns. In the case of BUUNT, these metals are overlaid and hammered under heat to produce a new and beautiful material. The technique was developed about 400 years ago, at the beginning of the Edo period, by an artisan making sword fittings.

In the hands of BUUNT's artisans, Mokume-Gane – as unique as a human fingerprint – is not the body material of a piece of jewellery. Instead, it is used in a very unusual way as inserts and as inserts, like gemstones or enamel, creating colourful patterns that are uniquely beautiful.



SAKURA COLLECTION: Conveying the anticipation of early spring – the transformation of nature, rebirth and play of light across a stream's surface when a cherry blossom falls on it.

THE LURE OF COLOURED GEMSTONES

The beauty and artistry of BUUNT jewellery aside, Astakhov is deeply interested in coloured gemstones.

"It's my passion, and I hope to make a business based on what I love, instead of on what I can do well," (the multi-lingual polymath Astakhov also has construction and finance businesses). He has recently introduced a gemstone arm to BUUNT, to trade both coloured and colourless gemstones, primarily to private clients, sharing with them insights based on many years of experience, practice, use and sales.

"Expanding the gemstone side of my business is a key long-term goal, but my focus isn't on mass-trading. Instead, I prefer a more personal, direct approach where I can share my expertise, insights and perspectives with clients," he adds. "I believe only through direct conversation can we truly engage potential customers and spark their interest in a particular gem."

Astakhov aims to offer a broad range of sizes, varieties and types of gemstones, with no limits when a client expresses interest. He believes his expertise in jewellery production, investment and previous business experience can greatly benefit potential clients. His goal is to assist them in making sound investments as well as in discovering mesmerising options that exceed mere budget constraints.



SELENE COLLECTION

Jewellery Show '24
The right time, the right place

Belinda Morris reports from a busy, buzzy Jewellery Show, now happily relocated to Olympia in West London.

Location, location, location. It really can be everything. In the case of Jewellery Show (1st to 2nd September), the move to Olympia was a strong driver for a successful event. As slick and modern as it is, Excel in east London was not a popular venue for the first two Jewellery Shows. The third edition represented, for many, a return (almost) to the industry's good old days, attracting a number of first-time exhibitors as well as established brands.

Ben Massey, NAJ CEO, says, "We are pleased to see the success of the Jewellery Show, with NAJ members reporting strong business and impressive footfall across the two days. It is heartening to see the trade's support for a dedicated jewellery trade event, and the panel discussions reflected the key issues central to the NAJ's current focus."

Howard Graham of **Ntinga** says, "The location is right, and the customers we've seen prove it's a show for the whole trade. We had a lot of interest from new as well as regular customers and hopefully this will bring in a higher level of suppliers in the future." As well as the introduction of loose stones, various statement cocktail rings, featuring unusual stones such as fire opals, green and bicoloured tourmalines, were popular at the show.

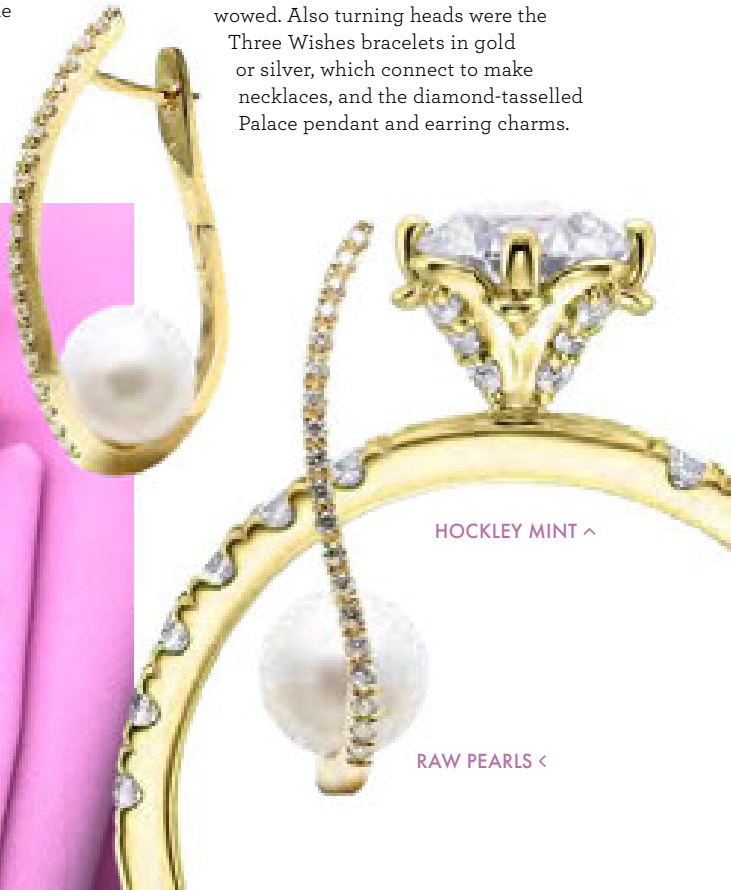
Olympia also sold Jewellery Show to Gary Wroe of **Hockley Mint**, whose very pretty Blossom collection of Wedfit engagement rings – diamond pieces with designs inspired by the structural details of four specific flowers – were very successful. The brand's new product developer, **Tanin Dehkhoda**, also took the opportunity to reveal her own intriguing collection of fine jewellery inspired by the world of human cells as seen under a microscope. The intricate lace-like patterns demonstrate scientific insight and artistic creativity... with a sprinkling of diamonds.

Raw Pearls also enjoyed "A great show. It's the right time of year and the right location," agrees Miranda Raw. "We saw a higher quality of visitors and a good calibre of retailers keeping a stock line of pearls. We show something of everything, but we're also very broad, so people were excited by our yellow gold, diamond-set pieces, huggie earrings and large cultured fresh water baroque pearls."

Jessica Cadzow-Collins was among the design contingent in the show's Podium section. "[It] was a great opportunity to debut **Juraster** to the UK trade," she says. "I met several owners of jewellery stores around England and had some exciting conversations about the collection and how its broad range and accessible pricing pyramid structure would work for them." Featuring a rainbow-coloured Australian opal and gems, the Selkie 2 ring, which transforms from a ring to a pendant, wowed. Also turning heads were the Three Wishes bracelets in gold or silver, which connect to make necklaces, and the diamond-tasselled Palace pendant and earring charms.



TANIN DEHKODA >



HOCKLEY MINT ^

RAW PEARLS <

HASSANZADEH <

JURASTER >

NTINGA >

TI SENTO >

The boulder opal collection by Milburn & Ley at **Prism** also proved popular – the strong shades of blues and greens with highlights of vibrant tsavorite were clearly a draw. So too were the denim-look titanium pieces in the rebranded Ti2 line – a very interesting wearable effect created by a flame process. **Ti Sento** has expanded its core collections, with pieces such as tennis bracelets and marine link necklaces, for retailers and their customers to create a family story. Snake rings and stones like created malachite continue to be important.

Across the board, colour was a draw. First-time exhibitor, Iran-based **Hassanzadeh** (founded in 1920 and with a London office) attracted attention with high jewellery, statement pieces incorporating diamonds, emeralds, sapphires and rubies. A second, more accessible, contemporary line – **Untamd** – featured gold-plated, fluid forms highlighted by coloured gemstones, such as lapis, amazonite, blue quartz and malachite.

For those with opulent colour plus lashings of glamour on their shopping list, the unmissable booth was **Tanaya Couture**. This treasure chest of exuberant Indian-made jewellery offered good price points, plus details such as invisible setting ("Indian finishing has got better," explains founder Taruna Anand). Statement earrings and necklaces created impact, while bright stone-set bangles and small hoops proved most popular.

ZAG ^



BURREN ^

TANAYA COUTURE <

SARAH ALEXANDER >

MARK MILTON >

While **Mark Milton** reports a resistance to price (making 9ct gold acceptable), buyers were spoilt for choice for colour, particularly in pieces with slightly edgy stone cuts and off-centre assemblies of stones. Peridot is becoming more popular, as are malachite, lapis and onyx cabochons.

At **Unique Silver**, peridot is also a strong player in the gemstone line-up of amethyst, blue topaz and citrine. And while rhodium and 3mg yellow-gold plating is in demand, Unique's **Daniel Ozel** predicts silver will become increasingly important.

Colour is **Sarah Alexander's** key focus, and this season the emphasis is on toned-down shades and combinations, like aqua and peach moonstone, green onyx and tiger's eye ("having a retro moment"). Flexibility is also key – think detachable charms that can move from earrings to pendants. Underscoring the charms trend, **Lily Charmed** relaunched (and new to JS) ... now with a couple of USPs. Each minutely detailed charm has a clever spring clip fastening, so it can be attached easily to any bracelet or necklace. In rhodium plated, recycled sterling silver, the charms' themes vary from iconic biscuits to music, sport, animals and everyday objects.



LILY CHARMED ^



UNIQUE MEN'S ^

Also new to the Jewellery Show was Irish Wicklow-based **Burren** with a collection of on-trend jewellery created in brass and plated in 3 to 5mg of champagne gold ("it suits the Irish/UK colouring"), with a three-year warranty on the plating. The look is low-key sophistication – a vibe echoed by Burren's minimal-chic, concertina card stand design. Another newbie – fashion jewellery brand, **Zag** – drew visitors to its broad collection of holiday mood, layering pieces (from hoops to chains) in stainless steel plated in 3mg of ionised gold.



UNIQUE SILVER ^

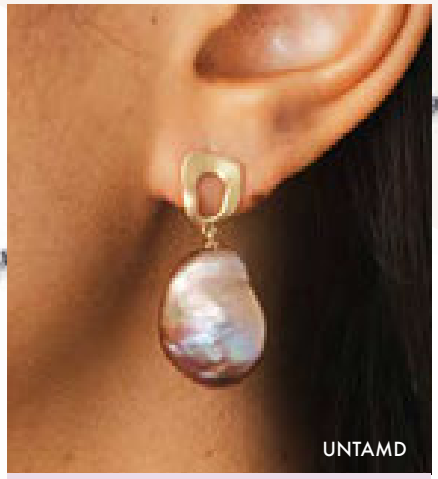
LIDO PEARLS <



PRISM DESIGN



RE MORRISH ^



UNTAMD

Talking it over

The show's full and varied conference programme saw topics ranging from auction market highlights and social media marketing to, inevitably, issues around diamonds. **Opportunities and Challenges in the Marketing of Natural Diamond Jewellery** saw Raluca Anghel (head of external affairs, Natural Diamond Council); David Troostwyk (president, London Diamond Bourse); Himanshu Shah (Andre Michael) and Ruth Faulkner (managing editor *Retail Jeweller*) discussing, among other things, the importance of using the correct terminology in relation to laboratory-grown diamonds and the confusion that can arise over the perception of the word 'sustainability.'

"It's a big challenge for the Diamond Bourse," said Troostwyk, adding that education on responsible retailing and marketing is "up to all of us" and "retailers should be trained to a point where they can educate their clients." With the Responsible Jewellery Council's new standards for laboratory-grown diamonds due for release, the importance of correct nomenclature and descriptions occupied another panel, chaired by Vivien Johnston Glass of Johnston Resources.

New Certification Standards and Trade Descriptions of Laboratory Grown Diamonds saw the NAJ's compliance and policy manager Katie Gillespie join Suzanne Brooks (senior standards manager, RJC); Wesley Hunt (chair of CIBJO's laboratory-grown diamond committee and Julia Griffith (the Gem Academy). Katie emphasised that her focus was on transparency and clear communication, with the right terminology being key. She added that the NAJ's courses are evolving to ensure education on this issue is available to members.



The Jeweller

Professional Jeweller Awards 2024

Congratulations to the many National Association of Jewellers members among the winners of this year's *Professional Jeweller* Awards.



President, Nicholas Wainwright and chair Michael Wainwright of Boodles

With **eBay** as the headline sponsor, the Awards – held at the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms in Holborn on 1st September – celebrated the achievements of the industry's best brands, suppliers, retailers and designers. We're happy to say we can count several NAJ members among the crème de la crème.

The *Professional Jeweller* Awards category sponsors were the **Jewellery Show, Malca-Amit**, and **NB Diamonds**, with supporting partners the **NAJ**, the **CMJ**, **Jewel Ads** and **Hassanzadeh**.

Here are the notable NAJ winners:

Austen & Blake (Multiple Luxury Jewellery Retailer of the Year); **Kay Bradley**, Bradley's Jewellers (Retail Leader); **Ernest Jones** (Multiple Fashion Jewellery Retailer); **Hockley Mint** (CSR Jewellery Supplier); **Jessop Jewellers** (Independent Fashion Jewellery Retailer); **Mappin & Webb** (CSR Jewellery Retailer); **Raw Pearls** (Jewellery Industry Supplier); **River Mounts** (Digital Innovator); **Sonny's Jewellers** (Independent Fine Jewellery Retailer) and **Wongs Jewellers** (Jewellery Team).

This year, the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award honoured not one but two individuals: Boodles president **Nicholas** and chair **Michael Wainwright** of **Boodles**. The honourees share 100 years of jewellery industry experience between them and work in tandem to ensure the continuity of their six-generation family business, whose origins date back 226 years. A focus on exceptional design, increased transparency and the communication of the brand's story has proven to be a highly successful model. During the brothers' tenure, the retail business has grown from county jeweller to a leading national brand.



Above - Austen & Blake



Right - River Mounts



Left - Sonny's Jewellers. Below - The NAJ team





Left - Jessop Jewellers
Right - Wongs Jewellers



Above - Raw Pearls.
Left - Kay Bradley,
Bradley's Jewellers



Above - Hockley Mint

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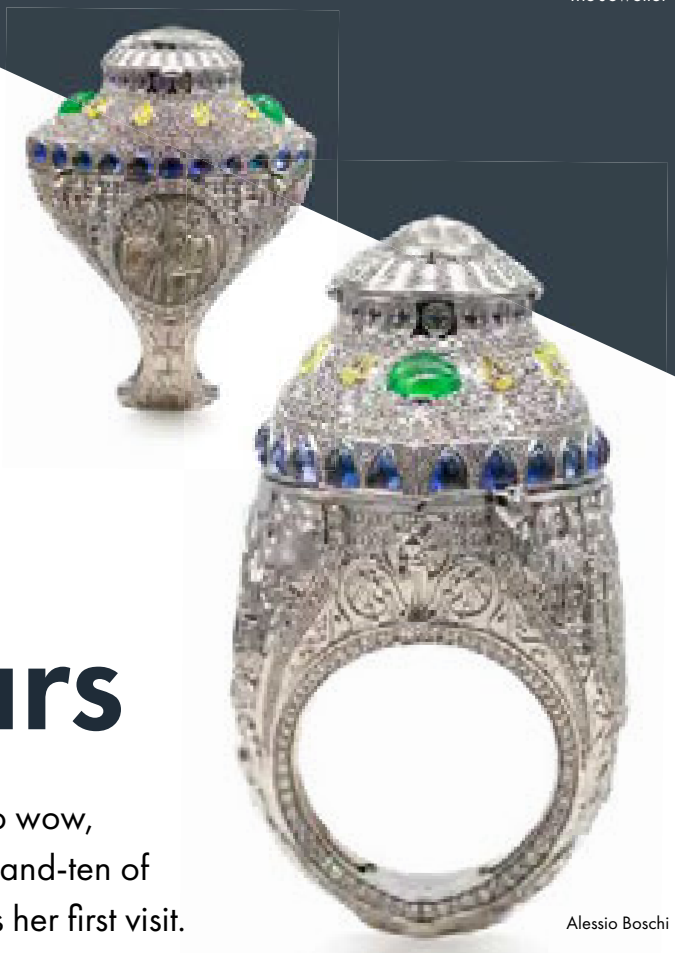
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Alessio Boschi

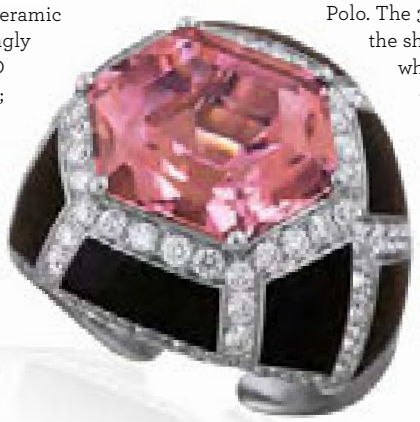
Vicenzaoro – Seventy Golden Years

The Italian jewellery and watch fair continues to wow, and this year, it celebrates its threescore-years-and-ten of beauty and craftsmanship. Belinda Morris pays her first visit.

Vicenzaoro, Italian Exhibition Group's international gold, jewellery and watchmaking exhibition, is very much a global affair. At its close on 10th September, attendance matched last September's, with visitors from 132 different countries. Held also in January, the multi-halled fair is a must for buyers of high jewellery, directional designer collections, trend-leading brands, loose diamonds and gemstones, packaging, tools, services... as well as for seekers of inspiration and content (Vicenzaoro is influencer heaven). Some visitors need all five of its days.

I had two – two days to master the geography of the huge halls, while mentally window-shopping, pen poised, eyes wide. A comprehensive review of the entire show would be impossible, so what follows are some of my personal highlights.

Masterpieces and high jewellery aside, **Picchiotti** is renowned for its Xpandable collection – ingeniously crafted jewellery with comfort and wearability woven in. New this season is a strong look for statement 18ct gold bracelets and rings featuring Burmese rubies and white ceramic or sapphires, diamonds and ceramic. Function and beauty are also in reversible expandable rings and bracelets and earrings with a drop that twists, giving a turquoise or white ceramic moment. Jaw-droppingly gorgeous, clever AND kind is a cocktail ring; a whopping 12ct pink tourmaline accented with diamonds and black ceramic, whose wide shank hinges open... perfect for negotiating troublesome knuckles!



Picchiotti



Mousson Atelier

Alessio Boschi is the master of inventive, highly detailed design. With storytelling in each piece, the reverse and inner parts are as beautiful and revealing as those facing the viewer. An 18ct rose, yellow and white gold collar necklace is a rainbow of gemstones and large Keshi pearls, the reverse of which features perfect Persian miniaturist paintings. Then, so detailed that the full reveal takes the best part of an hour, is Boschi's extraordinary ring marking this year's 700th anniversary of the death of Marco Polo. The 3D marquise shape echoes the shape of the explorer's boat, while the myriad tiny details – outside and in – tell the traveller's tales, blending Venetian and Asian motifs, architecture and anecdotes, gleaned from Boschi's exhaustive research.

Mousson Atelier is about optical illusions and the unusual. A white diamond bracelet with a centre column of yellow diamonds creates a wave effect. Tumbled tanzanites, morganites and aquamarines set in satin gold rings give off-set asymmetry, and the moulded gold in the sumptuous Silk collection has the look of a plump cushion, with the light and shade of folds created by sprinkles of pavé diamonds. One piece is a necklace, pendant and brooch all-in-one – more clever flexibility.



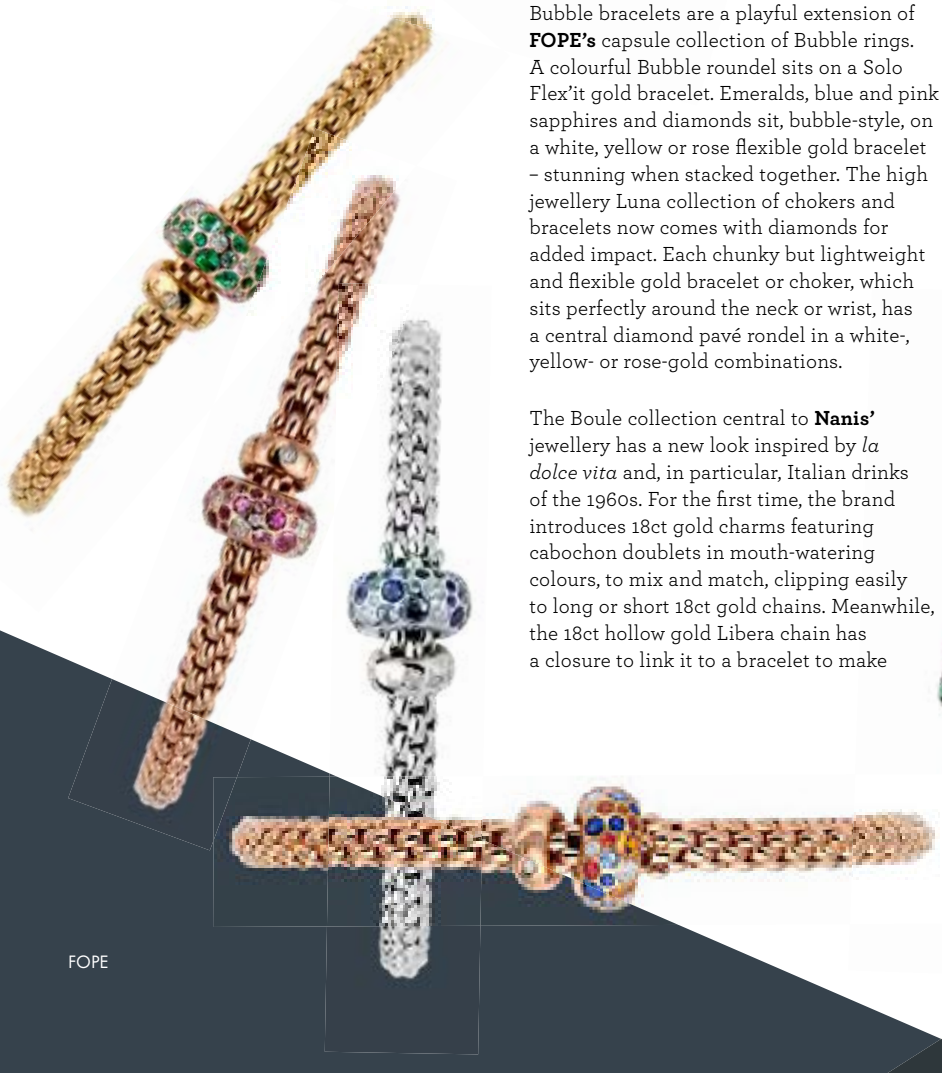
Nanis



Alessio Boschi



Mousson Atelier



FOPE

Bubble bracelets are a playful extension of **FOPE's** capsule collection of Bubble rings. A colourful Bubble roundel sits on a Solo Flex'it gold bracelet. Emeralds, blue and pink sapphires and diamonds sit, bubble-style, on a white, yellow or rose flexible gold bracelet – stunning when stacked together. The high jewellery Luna collection of chokers and bracelets now comes with diamonds for added impact. Each chunky but lightweight and flexible gold bracelet or choker, which sits perfectly around the neck or wrist, has a central diamond pavé rondel in a white-, yellow- or rose-gold combinations.

The Boule collection central to **Nanis'** jewellery has a new look inspired by *la dolce vita* and, in particular, Italian drinks of the 1960s. For the first time, the brand introduces 18ct gold charms featuring cabochon doublets in mouth-watering colours, to mix and match, clipping easily to long or short 18ct gold chains. Meanwhile, the 18ct hollow gold Libera chain has a closure to link it to a bracelet to make a longer necklace. And another necklace can be transformed into a lariat.

At **Cammilli**, three-dimensionality is a signature style. Following the success of the Firenze ring, created in 2023 to celebrate Annamaria Cammilli's 40th birthday, the brand has introduced a full collection that revolves around sculptural volumes. One version of the line has pieces encrusted in pavé white diamonds and gemstones, like rubies, sapphires, emeralds, brown and black diamonds.



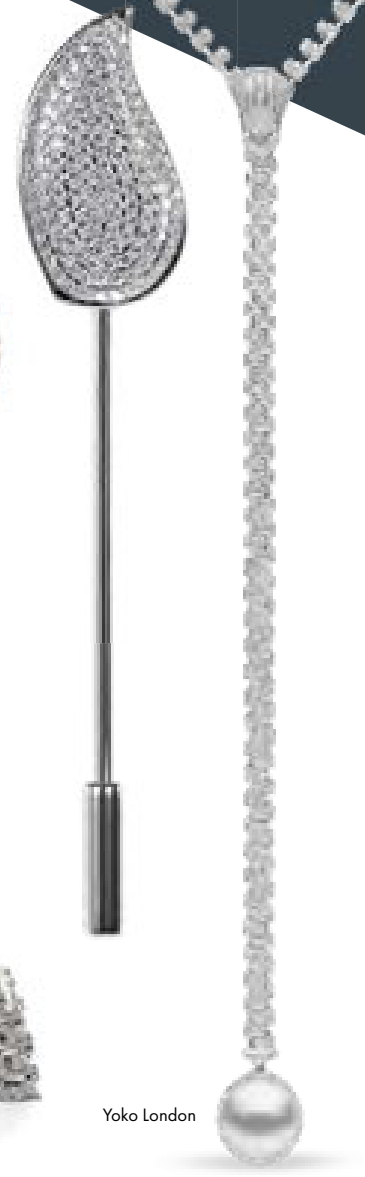
Cammilli



Tivon



Paul Spurgeon X Arihant



Yoko London

Yoko London's new campaign is Treasures from the Sea, and one masterpiece from the latest collection is Selene, a luxuriously elegant diamond necklace to zip and unzip. Inspired by the moon's influence on the tides, it seamlessly blends diamonds and pearls. The Australian pearl jewellery house **Autore** also caught my eye with a beautiful jellyfish brooch crafted from a large grey baroque pearl, with fine dark blue sapphire tentacles with small pearls at their tips.

Pavé setting also features in the first collection created by renowned goldsmith and designer **Paul Spurgeon** for Jaipur-based premier manufacturing company **Arihant**. Alongside pieces sold to support Life Cycle, an Indian charitable initiative, are two lines – Pendulum and Chrysalis – whose fluid silhouettes are recognisably Paul's signature style.

Tivon Fine Jewellery has upped its game in entry-level and medium-price-point pieces, as well as with a greater offering of traditional gemstones, such as ruby, sapphire, emerald and natural coloured diamonds. One striking example – an 18ct white-gold ring set with diamonds, tanzanite and vivid unheated, Madagascan pink sapphires from its Touch of Pink collection.

Colour is also a major draw at **Hans D Krieger** with beautiful laguna tourmaline-set earrings, rings and pendants – the simplicity of the setting allowing the stone to shine. Rainbow line bracelets, mixing different stone cuts on the same piece, and old-mine cut diamonds on matte finish 18ct white gold were also new.



Hans D Krieger

WONDERLAND – TRENDVISION'S FUTURE INSIGHT

For a global, holistic overview of important future trends, **Paola de Luca's** presentations at Vicenzaoro are unmissable. In the first of two, the founder and creative director of Trendvision Jewellery + Forecasting introduced Wonderland – co-creating the future of luxury and jewellery – an over-arching theme introducing macro influences, like gender and age fluidity, digital era attitudes, the joy economy (emphasising happiness and optimism), circular economy, new AI aesthetics, augmented experiences and the merging of knowledge.

Micro influences covered the impact of laboratory-grown diamonds, gold fluctuations and, with a guest appearance of inspirational self-taught bench US jeweller **Lorraine West**, nurture and storytelling through jewellery.

Paola's second talk introduced Trendvision's **Trendbook 2026**, giving an overview of its themes. The starting point – the new consumer culture, which increasingly seeks "a moment of joy when purchasing jewellery." Such pleasure considers the growing importance of social responsibility, environmental impact and inclusiveness. Reflecting on these, she defined the opportunities for the jewellery sector, summarising them into five main trends: **Sleek Elegance** (bold, minimal, revival of '70s/'80s vintage aesthetic), **Opulent Extravaganza** (maximalist blending of antique and new, with Asian influences through style, materials and technique), **Street Coolness** (freedom of expression through mixing eras, genders, ages), **Digital Nouveau** (disruptive use of unusual materials, pushing design to the next level) and **Wonderland** (expressing joy, fantasy, wellbeing and escapism. Expect opals).

Jewellery appraisers and experts: Unsung heroes in financial crime investigations

The services of Mehdi Saadian GIA GG, IRV, MAE, jewellery valuer, expert witness and director of GIA, have recently been required for a major criminal case. It's a side to his job that rarely comes to light, he explains.

When people imagine jewellery appraisers, they typically picture us in elegant showrooms or working for insurance companies, meticulously evaluating the worth of diamonds, gemstones and other high-end pieces. But behind the scenes, our skills are also indispensable in a very different field – uncovering financial crime.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of leading a team of experts, all members of the Institute of Registered Valuers (IRV) and The Academy of Experts (TAE), in a high-profile £27 million money-laundering case. Commissioned by the Crown Prosecution Service's Serious Economic, Organised Crime and International Directorate (SEOCID) and led by top barristers from 6KBW College Hill, the case resulted in the conviction of two criminals. These individuals manipulated a legitimate business front, using fake invoices to pass off money laundering as diamond trading. On 13th September 2024, they were handed prison sentences of ten and seven years.

This case highlights just how crucial our profession is in tackling crime. With diamonds and luxury jewellery often used to disguise illicit transactions, appraisers can shine a light on fraudulent schemes that might otherwise go undetected.

> "Staying vigilant to potential fraud is not just a responsibility – it's essential to protecting the reputation and integrity of the industry

Mehdi Saadian, GIA GG, IRV, MAE, jewellery valuer, expert witness and director of GIA

The role of appraisers as expert witnesses

In some cases, appraisers find themselves in courtrooms, providing expert testimony. As expert witnesses, we bring impartial and highly specialised insight, helping the courts to discern the truth about transactions involving jewellery. Our job is to evaluate whether declared values align with actual market standards, making sure nothing is out of place.

Unique challenges in financial crime investigations

Financial crimes involving jewellery present a unique set of challenges. Diamonds and other high-value items can be easily transported across borders, making them an attractive target for money laundering. But with our expertise, we're able to identify when these assets are being misused.

This recent case serves as a reminder of the important role we play in safeguarding the jewellery and diamond trades. Staying vigilant to potential fraud is not just a responsibility – it's essential to protecting the reputation and integrity of the industry.

Protecting the trade

Whether in court or in a more everyday setting, our role as appraisers is always to ensure jewellery transactions are transparent, fair and above board. In this case, our findings were key in exposing the misuse of diamond trading as a front for illegal activity. We provided the court with the evidence it needed to unravel the complex web of deceit, further emphasising the need for transparency in the jewellery market.

Our role doesn't stop there. The weight of responsibility on expert witnesses is immense. We offer unbiased, accurate testimony courts can rely on to make crucial decisions. Missteps can have serious consequences, which is why institutions like the Institute of Registered Valuers and The Academy of Experts are vital in maintaining high standards of integrity and professionalism.

Conclusion: Appraisers as guardians of trust

Jewellery appraisers do not just value beautiful items; our expertise is a critical asset to the legal system, particularly in cases involving financial crime. As members of IRV and TAE, we play a key role in ensuring the jewellery market remains honest and trusted. Our involvement in cases like this not only protects the financial value of gems and luxury items but also helps safeguard the integrity of the entire industry.





Megan Brown

MEGAN BROWN <

The artistry of Megan's intricately woven gold pieces fascinates me – like chain mail for teeny-tiny medieval knights. I was lusting after the Ray earrings – open woven discs with a line of little diamonds, the back part tucking behind the ear, then I saw this oxidised silver open Armure bangle with woven 18ct gold and palladium wraps and topped with emerald cabochons. Sold.



Romilly Saumarez Smith

GOLDSMITHS' FAIR '24

For two weeks, the splendid Goldsmiths' Hall hosts a curated gathering of the best of the best designer-makers – each week a different group. Belinda Morris visited during week one, and featured here are some pieces on her (fantasy) shopping list.

ROMILLY SAUMAREZ SMITH ^

I fell in love with the intricate, organic vibe of Romilly's beautiful jewellery during last year's Goldsmiths' Fair – and nothing's changed. All the nature-inspired pieces, with tangential historic jewellery references, were just as desirable, and my eye alighted on these earrings. The stick pearls are wrapped in 18ct gold, while a cluster of diamond beads frame the central gold leaf-backed, faceted diamond slices.



Flora Bhattachary

FLORA BHATTACHARY ^

Art and culture are recurring themes in Flora's arresting jewellery, with floral motifs and beautiful gemstones woven into the mix. This 18ct gold Temple brooch (I love brooches), its pattern inspired by the ceiling of a temple and topped with an emerald cabochon (I love green stones), had me at hello.



Emefa Cole

EMEFA COLE <

Emefa's bold, sculptural jewellery commands attention; I love the extremely tactile nature of this huge, heavy oxidised silver ring with its cup of treasure – small shards of pyrite. An extension of the Vulcan collection, the new rings are elliptical in shape, some with additional detail, such as magma-like rivulets of gold, filling etched grooves.

TERI HOWES >

The intricate artistry of Teri's 18ct gold crocheted pieces attracts me with its blend of fluid delicacy and the subtle quirky statement it makes. This Double Helix necklace – the crochet work flowing in two directions – is punctuated with a twinkly sprinkle of black diamonds. I might also need the coordinating long earrings.

Teri Howes



Chris Boland

Heather Woof

HEATHER WOOF <

A love of pattern and movement is evident in Heather's pared back jewellery, and once again, I'm drawn to links, in particular links in silver or 18ct gold, which form fluid, geometric earring drops. As well as the rectangular style seen here, the larger square versions, comprising four rows of links had 'me' written all over them.

Genevieve Schwartz

GENEVIEVE SCHWARTZ ^

This year's NAJ's Designer of the Year Award winner, Genevieve is renowned for her love of watermelon tourmaline, which features across her collection. Still lovely – but something different has caught my eye. Her new Golden Futures line features hidden symbols and talismans – behind the Evil Eye ring's London blue topaz stone is an engraved iris, with trillion-cut diamonds at the corners and an eye-lash edge of black and white diamonds.

Kristina Merchant

KRISTINA MERCHANT ^

I love amber and am always happy when I see it in something a little different. Step forward Glasgow-based Kristina, with her very witty, clever brooches, pins and earrings inspired by 'discarded cultural ephemera' as well as her pub-landlady grandmother. Think rolled and oxidised silver stubbed-out cigarettes set with amber pipes, ground amber waste creating the tobacco. Rubbish becomes precious.

CHRIS BOLAND ^

Chris maintains a brutalist industrial edge to his jewellery, but the strong, unyielding pieces are often softened (though not necessarily feminised) by large, statement-y gemstones set in the gold and silver. The contrast of materials and forms is arrestingly beautiful in this green South Sea pearl necklace featuring three incongruous hollow textured gold blocks – and I love the deceptively minimal look.

James Dougall

JAMES DOUGALL <

Several aspects drew me to these pretty earrings by silversmith and jeweller James – I'm a push-over for pearls (I'm a June baby), I love a fringe effect, the hammered texture of the recycled 18ct gold is pleasing, and there's no such thing as having too many pairs of statement earrings. I'm also now glad to know that the Chintimani motif of three circular forms is a symbol seen on Turkish rugs.

Ute Decker

UTE DECKER <

Since I discovered it over a decade ago, I've loved Ute Decker's minimalist sculptural work, created using Fairtrade gold and recycled silver. I'm drawn to chains, and this one makes a major statement with its large oval and circular links and random bars. The look changes as you adjust how the necklace sits, and an open link alters how it can be worn.



Abbey Protect – safeguarding people, property and valuable assets

Abbey Protect, a new member of the NAJ, is ready, willing and extremely able to be a key security solutions partner to the jewellery industry.

Security – in all its forms, to cover all eventualities – is naturally central to businesses in the jewellery industry. Prevention of attacks on premises, people and product is as vital to a business owner as every other aspect of running a business. However, there are some potential acts of aggression, some types of violence, that these days cannot be discounted, and jewellers – particularly those in certain locations – could find themselves the target of. For such situations, a new breed of security solution is required.

Step forward **ABBEY PROTECT**, the security and defence arm of award-winning Abbey Group. It is the only global company that designs, manufactures and installs its unique, patented **SECURABLINDS®** – blast blinds to protect people, assets and buildings, to enhance quality of life, worldwide. Operating independently, Abbey Protect benefits from the experience, expertise, manufacturing, research and development, design and technology of the wider group, whose HQ manufacturing factory is in Liverpool.

SECURABLINDS® demonstrated highly proficient performance in 2020 – installed at an office building in Lebanon near the devastating harbour explosion in Beirut, saving the lives of staff working inside. Abbey has installed these blinds in banks, museums, colleges, transport headquarters, military bases, police headquarters, MOD sites and apartments.

Abbey Protect knows that jewellery businesses could benefit hugely too.

"Our vision is to support the jewellery industry, to offer expert advice, to help small, medium and large businesses mitigate risks and target harden buildings to protect people and assets," explains Brendan Pakenham, national account manager at Abbey Protect. He and his colleague Simon Thomas know what they're talking about – both have extensive careers in UK mainstream and counter-terrorism policing, and they have extensive experience in managing risk and applying necessary control measures. Experts in assessing, managing and mitigating threat, harm and risk, both have vast network connections across the police and security industry, with access to many public and private key business partners. Just the type of professionals we want on our side.

"With our key focus being on **SECURABLINDS®** and other relevant building security products, our mission is to raise awareness," explains Brendan.

The patented-protected, superior quality **SECURABLINDS®**, which can be retrofitted or installed in a new build, fit internally and give a sleek aesthetic, with the functional, easy-to-use application of a normal window blind. With a stylish upmarket appearance,

they are available in a variety of colours to complement internal and/or external aesthetics.

Given that many jewellery businesses are in unique or listed buildings and spaces, bespoke design is also an option. Brendan adds that advertising can be added to closed blinds outside business hours, with stencil, video and audio possibilities, creating a promotional positive out of a necessity. Maintenance and full support are a given.

The company's full portfolio of security protection products is impressively comprehensive: forced entry intruder blinds; bomb blast and theft protection blinds; films and polycarbonate panels; security grilles, bars and shutters; window films and glass security protection and security, doors, bollards, staircases, walkways and platforms.

GOOD-TO KNOW TECHNICAL DETAILS

Abbey Protect has five versions of the **SECURABLINDS®** range, from Bomb Blast Blinds, tested to 100kg and 500kg TNT equivalent, to Intruder Prevention Blinds. The blinds are tested and accredited to the highest UK standards, which attracts attention from overseas clients. (And they are approved for government use.)

UK ENDORSEMENTS INCLUDE:

Secured by Design (SBD) – the official police security initiative in the UK that aims to reduce crime and improve physical security of buildings. It operates an accreditation scheme for products or services that meet recognised security standards and are considered of a Police Preferred Specification. The approach seeks to design out crime through high-quality products and processes. Additionally, the cross-government SBD approach aims to create consistency and clarity on security expectations for new or existing services. Loss Prevention Certification Board (LCPB National Protective Security Authority (NPSA).



HOW DO SECURABLINDS® WORK?

Forced entry mitigation blinds:

- Blinds sit behind existing frames and window apertures
- Designed and developed to fit all spaces, blind models include fixed frames, sliding, right or left opening
- Manually operated to open or close, slide or retract
- Durable and resilient with high core strength to provide an impervious barrier against a high-level attack
- Outer steel frame, aluminium blades, high stencil steel rods, stainless steel shoot rods

Blast Blinds:

- An explosion occurs radiating out a blast pressure wave in all directions
- The pressure wave smashes the window, forcing the glass and anti-shatter film or polycarbonate trigger to automatically shut the blinds
- The **SECURABLINDS®** Blast Blind absorbs the force of the pressure wave, stopping glass, shrapnel and other blast debris from entering the building

Abbey Protect manufactures all the security blinds in its own manufacturing facility, which adheres to ISO 9001:2015 standards. It builds core strength and durability into its products at every stage of manufacture. Its own in-house teams deal with the unique nature of the **SECURABLINDS®** product range. Any size or shape can be accommodated to suit the existing aperture where the security blind will be installed.

Brendan and Simon deal with all national and international enquiries and have access to research, design and lead engineer specialists. They work with a number of key preferred partners to provide turnkey security solutions.

To discuss your security needs or to book an initial assessment, contact:

Brendan:
b.pakenham@abbeyprotect.com
07447 682 766

Simon:
s.thomas@abbeyprotect.com
07305 084504

Head office:
sales@abbeyprotect.com
0151 363 6304

10% DISCOUNT to all NAJ members





TO FIND OUT MORE, WATCH OUR DEMONSTRATION VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE



What's in a name? A great deal – as Kerry Gregory FGA, GIA GG, DGA, EG of Gemmology Rocks (definitely a gemmologist) explains.

What is a Gemmologist?

I've been pondering this a lot of late, and it's bothered me for years. It seems to me, like many things in our trade, there is not a singular, robust definition of a gemmologist. Certainly not one set of universally accepted parameters. What is supposedly a science has a lot of vagueness, a lot that can be interpreted in different ways. Does that matter in this case? Is it a problem that we don't have a set of standards by which to identify and measure gemmologists? I think it is, and that is what I will try to lay out here.

Before I do though, I have asked myself, am I only bothered by this because I have spent over 25 years studying gemmology, spending thousands upon thousands of pounds on education and equipment and countless hours studying and perfecting my skills, and other 'gemmologists' have not?

Actually, I think not – mostly I get bothered when I see people claiming to be gemmologists, or, worse, teaching gemmology, when I have evidence that they cannot actually DO gemmology! I get bothered because they are operating without integrity, misleading the people they are making these claims to or doing business with.

Let's start by looking at the definitions and origins of 'gemmologist.' Most dictionaries do not specifically have the term 'gemmologist' but mention it as a derivative of 'gemmology;' Collins defines gemmology as "the branch of mineralogy that is concerned with gems and gemstones." The term 'gemmology' has been in use since 1811, as a sub-discipline of mineralogy, first recorded in a book by John Pinkerton.

The first recorded use of the word 'gemmologist,' however, was relatively recent: 1931. GIA uses it in conjunction with its gemmology correspondence course (which it spells with two m's on its website. I'm not sure when it decided it didn't want the second m, another feature maybe.) Interestingly Gem-A said it has been "producing gemmologists since 1908," before, it seems, there was a word for it. This would have been when they were a sub-section of the National Association of Goldsmiths, but so far, I have found no evidence of the term 'gemmologist' being used that early, or even before 1931. Staff at the Goldsmiths' Company Library and Archive, who kindly checked its dates and copies of dictionaries and archives, couldn't find any earlier references either, so a trip to both the NAJ and Gem-A libraries were in order to see if I could find the word in a book!

Moving to gemmological schools, again there's no simple definition of a gemmologist, but both Gem-A and GIA describe gemmology broadly and explain what you'll learn on their qualification courses. Namely, how to identify gemstones, their imitations, synthetics and treatments, as well as some grading and appraisal.

So, what do trade organisations say? Ken Scarrett, vice president of CIBJO, and president of Sector A, which specifically deals with gemstones, gave me his input: "The CIBJO Gemmological Laboratories Blue Book defines 'gemmology' as the science, art and profession of identifying, authenticating, researching and grading diamonds. Therefore, a gemmologist may be defined as someone involved in this." He gave me a very detailed and helpful longer answer, which is remarkably similar to my own thoughts and outlines roughly the same predicament I'm trying to get to the bottom of.

Here at the NAJ, we do not currently have a definition for a gemmologist, and if we were going to start a guidance or focus group on this subject, I would be the first person asked for input. So, I will give you my thoughts here.

The main issue is the lack of just one type of gemmologist; there are qualified gemmologists with some form of formal qualification. There are gemmologists with no qualifications who can identify gemstones using what they have learnt through practice, experience and handling of gemstones.

When I asked people in the industry how they define a gemmologist, around 75 per cent said, "someone with a formal gemmology qualification." The rest said, "someone who can identify gemstones." Even here, we have problems – certain schools are seen as superior or inferior to different people, and how we do measure that?

If I had to boil down what I thought the essential components of a gemmologist were, I would say: A gemmologist is a person who can competently

identify gemstones, including treatments, imitations and synthetics, using scientific tests and data to prove that identification.

What this means in reality is you do not have to have a qualification to be a gemmologist. You also don't have to do it professionally – i.e. for your job – you just have to identify (with proof) gemstones. Therefore, I would have to differentiate between a qualified gemmologist and a gemmologist.

That raises another problem, though: over the years, I have met many people with gemmology qualifications who, quite simply, cannot identify gemstones! So we have to differentiate between people who can identify gemstones, those who can't and those with formal qualifications. That's three types (An unqualified person who can't identify gemstones absolutely cannot be a gemmologist, and I would rather not count a qualified gemmologist who can't either... but I do have a solution for that. More on that later.)

This also raises a problem for those who can identify gemstones but don't have a qualification. If you have not been assessed to prove you can correctly identify gemstones, how do you or any other interested party know you can? How do you prove you can do gemmology as per my definition?

Further to that, there are different disciplines or branches of gemmology – and gemmologists. Gemmologists who work in laboratories, those that specialise in particular materials, researchers, those that work in retail, auction, pawnbroking or appraisal. Each of these has a different skill set and mode of working. Similarly, while laboratory and research gemmologists focus predominantly on gemmology, the larger percentage of qualified gemmologists practice their gemmology as part of a wider role as valuers, appraisers, pawnbrokers and auctioneer specialists.

I would class myself in the first group, as a commercial gemmologist as well as a gemmology teacher.

It comes down to competence – and that does not always come from a qualification. This is why many other professions – doctors, architects, lawyers, teachers – require additional post-qualification training and experience before you are fully signed off. Other professions also require ongoing assessment and personal development, which is mostly lacking for qualified gemmologists. Once you have your diploma, you are a gemmologist for life, regardless of how good or bad you are at it, and how much you keep up with developments. And that certainly varies a lot. Finally, in several professions, there is also a hierarchy of competency and experience. There is, for instance, a difference between a junior doctor, a doctor and a registrar. In the valuing community, we see this with members, while more experienced or skilled valuers are elevated to fellows.

In the future, I'd like to see titles differentiating between qualified gemmologists and unqualified gemmologists, showing the specialities and highlighting greater skill, experience and competency. I'd like some quality control, with only a person able to identify gems allowed to use the title gemmologist.

To get there, people need to ask more questions and challenge gemmologists' claims to the profession and expertise, and gemmologists should be clearer about what we are and how we can prove our competence.

Maybe I should start by changing the way I communicate my expertise and training. Maybe I should be a qualified, accredited senior commercial gemmologist – a title I can back up.

> "A gemmologist is a person who can competently identify gemstones, including treatments, imitations and synthetics, using scientific tests and data to prove that identification."
>
> **Kerry Gregory, FGA, GIA GG, DGA, EG of Gemmology Rocks**



Celebrating the life of Alan Hodgkinson (1937-2024)

Anyone who met Alan would not have forgotten that meeting. He had a way of making people feel special, he gave his entire attention to the person, he was interested in them, and so encouraging, and it didn't matter if that person was the head of a major lab, or a student just starting out, he gave his all to everyone.

Alan was a great gemmologist – truly inquisitive, with a mind capable of exploring and inventing, as well as explaining even the most complex thing so anyone could understand.

He will be remembered for his generosity; he was so giving of his knowledge and his time, and changed the world of gemmology with his visual optics technique. He travelled the world educating people in practical useful gemmology, and there are so many who are better gemmologists as a result of his inspiring instruction.

He will be remembered for his kindness, his humour, and his tartan trews (!), a symbol of his adopted homeland Scotland. He will be remembered for the way his eyes crinkled when he smiled or laughed, which he did a lot.

It is with great sadness, but immense gratitude and affection that we raise a glass to toast, the late, great Alan Hodgkinson. Thank you, Alan.



Code by Edge

Gemex

Hayes & Lake

Back to Busy-ness at CMJ

The Company of Master Jewellers' Autumn Trade Event was "a tremendous success," with record-breaking attendance across the two days and busy exhibition halls from the moment they opened.

Following the introduction of its new CMJ Pay initiative for this event, retailer attendance was at record post-pandemic numbers. CMJ Pay gave CMJ's full share-holding retail members an allocation of credit based on their turnover through the group, available to spend with approved suppliers at the show. And they did not leave a penny on the trading floor – by the end of the show all the available spend was allocated to exhibitors.

Emmet Cummins, CMJ MD, said, "It's extremely pleasing when a show is as vibrant and as commercially successful as the one we witnessed. It's a really positive sign that the retail sector is experiencing the upturn in consumer confidence and the slowly increasing footfall that market insights have predicted over the past quarter or so."



Ungar & Ungar

As ever, the event included new member exhibitors and guest suppliers. Among the former was the rebranded **Little Star**, which has given its children's jewellery line a more contemporary feel, with a logo and website to match. Engraving is now done in-house, with personalisation being an important trend.

Established in Scandinavia, UK newcomer **ENAMEL Copenhagen** was happy to connect with independents. "One aspect of our brand that particularly appeals is our presentation," said Darrell Granton, country manager for UK and Ireland. "The tactile nature and vibrant colours of our displays enhance the experience for the consumer." There was interest in the well-priced earrings, freshwater pearl pieces, 18ct yellow gold-plated silver and the Lola, delicate hand-painted enamel earrings, bracelets and necklaces.

"The event stood out from typical exhibitions we've attended previously," said Jack Maynard of guest exhibitor **Freeform Fabrication**. "The conversations were genuinely engaging, with more in-depth discussions and demonstrations with potential buyers. Our laser engravers and small-to-medium-sized laser welders garnered the most attention."

Many suppliers introduced new services and packages. At **Curteis**, which showed new chains-with-a-design-twist, visitors learnt about the new gold-plating service, and while 2mg of yellow gold is popular, other colours are incoming. **Stubbs & Co** attracted attention for fancy link chains, but standing out was the customer-friendly box of oval and cushion-shaped signet rings displaying examples of engravings plus six gemstones tablets. **Hayes & Lake** created a starter pack for show visitors beginning their laboratory-grown diamond journey – the three top sizes in the three best categories. Also new: a ready-made social media content pack, including reels and Instagram posts. Having moved into the engagement rings for the first time, **Allied Gold** stayed busy showing its chic, stackable boxes of engagement rings. It also showed the new, comprehensive ring-building software integrated into the customer-facing website.

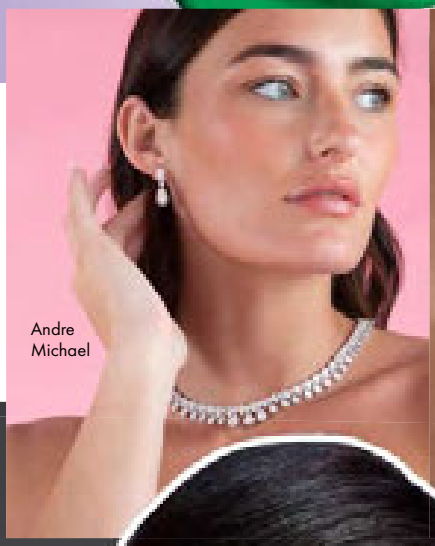
Brown & Newirth meanwhile saw "a clear shift in consumer preferences toward more delicate bands paired with elongated stones," with new Toi et Moi and engagement collections well received by retailers. The octagonal suite of earrings, pendants and rings offered a playful twist on a timeless design while embracing the reemerging rub-over trend. Enjoying an "excellent" show, **Gemex** promoted its recently launched Just Essentials range of price-conscious eternity rings, while elsewhere unusual stone cuts and three-stone sapphires proved popular.

Giving laboratory-grown diamonds "a meaningful yet contemporary" feel, designer **Fei Liu** launched Rayon de Miel, featuring bezel-set, hexagon-cut stones and the honeycomb influence for studs, hoops, drop earrings, rings and pendants. At **Emdico**, which notes a growing number of retailers looking for second-hand jewellery, old cut and baguette diamonds underscored the Art deco trend.

That period, alongside Art nouveau, is always in demand at **Ungar & Ungar**, where strong colour combinations of stones and peridot sets were popular. Increasingly known for coloured stones, **Andre Michael** found natural opals in light-blue shades gained interest, along with delicate pink sapphire pieces. **Giovanni Raspini's** gold-plated silver Loop line sees round, brightly coloured, briolette cut crystals, flattened at the poles, alternating with a hammered chain or on rings and earrings. **Code By Edge's** pretty Aquafiori pieces spell out Morse-coded messages with coloured gemstones, while unique bridal jewellery might see earrings spell the date of the wedding or engagement rings with the date of proposal set with diamonds on the shank.


Little Star


Brown &
Newirth


Andre
Michael


Giovanni
Raspini


Stubbs
& Co.

Curteis

Fei Lui

New Members

In this issue, we throw the spotlight on three businesses that have recently joined the Association.



CHARLENE BUSH

Describe your jewellery journey – is this something you have always wanted to do?

I was walking past Goldsmiths Jewellers (Aurum group) in Lakeside shopping centre when I was 16, when I needed to earn money to pay for my living. I'd moved out of a toxic environment so needed to find a way for myself. I didn't want to get stuck in a job I hated, and this looked like a pretty shop. I entered and asked the manager to give me a job. How lucky was I that he did!

I trained as a designer and maker and still do both now. I've surrounded myself with people who are better than me and still learn everything I can. I'm always looking for my work to be better, using a mixture of classic and modern techniques.

Which other jewellers did you work for before setting up on your own?

I worked for Goldsmiths and Mappin & Webb for 10 years in Thurrock and then central London. Following those, I worked for Mr & Mrs Piggott in St Ives, Cambridgeshire. I was so grateful to them for showing me the differences of an independent setting. I'm now based in Godmanchester in Cambridgeshire.



Charlene Bush opal pendant

Describe the style of your work: themes, preferred materials, ethos, etc.

I like to work with gold and platinum, recycling as much of the customer's original materials as possible. I love using old cut stones because of their individuality. They give each piece a personality of its own.

When I meet a new client, before our conversation has begun, I can see exactly what I'm going to design and how it'll look on them. I look at their style, other jewellery they may be wearing, skin tone, eye colour, hair colour, etc. When I'm designing, I'm thinking about fun classics. My current clients are usually fun-loving, classy women who love to sparkle and be individual.

I'd say my designs are polished and stately. I like everything to have a definite, highly polished finish.

I love 3D features and beaded edges too. I love to make people happy. This is my sole purpose. I love to give a new life to pieces that have meant so much to individuals who may have received, inherited or simply purchased them. I also love to design pieces for people to start a new journey with.

Is everything you do bespoke, or do you also produce collections?

Most of my business is bespoke. I've just created two collections now available on my new website. My favourite is the Vine ring and the pearl and diamond tennis bracelet.

I've been in the industry a long time now, and I've never enjoyed it as much as I do now! I hope to design for brands and build my client base! I've also just signed up to access advanced gemmology so I can become a valuer too. Never be afraid to learn.

BLAIR AND SHERIDAN, GLASGOW

When was Blair and Sheridan established?

Born of a long collaborative working relationship between goldsmith/maker Douglas Blair and jewellery designer/diamond specialist Roddy Sheridan, the business launched in 2012. A Glasgow School of Art graduate with a BA Hons degree in silversmithing and jewellery design, Douglas honed his skills at a bespoke family jewellers and now boasts an accomplished skillset across all areas of bench and metal work as well as diamond and stone setting. Less traditionally, Roddy previously was a physiotherapist with an interest in diamonds and gemstones. Under the mentorship of an ex-De Beers specialist, his passion for the jewellery industry flourished, and following training in Antwerp and London, he became a qualified polished diamond grader. Douglas and Roddy eventually crossed paths in 2007.

How has the business developed over the years?

As the small appointments-based shop in Glasgow specialising in bespoke diamond jewellery design grew, we employed an additional goldsmith in 2014, and in 2016 more than doubled our floorspace by taking over the adjoining retail unit. We could expand our consultation area as well as add a large workshop area for the growing workforce.

Today, Blair and Sheridan employs 10 members of staff. With a varied set of skills and expertise, we offer a full in-house range of design, manufacture and advanced stone setting and a CAD service.

Engagement ring commissions form most of our workload – specialising in diamonds and laboratory-grown diamonds, we involve our customers in the stone selection process. From day one, our ethos has been to create something 'unique to you.' We pride ourselves in sourcing the very best materials, taking the optimal approach in every process throughout the creation of every piece and not cutting corners.

Are you a destination store or can potential customers find you on the high street?

Glasgow has many jewellery shops, but our location outside the city centre works in our favour – we're based in the eclectic West End among boutique shops and businesses known for offering something a bit different. Word of mouth recommendations are a very powerful marketing tool for us, while we actively post across various social media channels and reach our customers through regular website blogs, email newsletters and targeted billboard advertising throughout the city.



Douglas Blair and Roddy Sheridan



Freeform Fabrication Team at Jewellery Show 23

FREEFORM FABRICATION, Jack Maynard

When was Freeform Fabrication established and by whom?

Founded in 2003, Freeform Fabrication began with a single 3D printer in a London living room. One of the founders – Efrat Sharon – recognised the immense potential of 3D-printing technology for producing precise and intricate jewellery designs. Today, Freeform has its office in Stevenage, where the team continues to innovate.

Each dedicated, loyal member of the team brings a wealth of experience and skill to the table, from photography to engineering, sales and customer relations and more. This expertise, combined with the talents of our support team, has enabled Freeform to develop and improve its product and service offerings, while maintaining high standards of customer service. By working closely with consultants and ambassadors who have extensive jewellery industry experience, solutions are perfectly tailored to meet the needs of jewellers and designers worldwide.

What products and services do you provide?

Our cutting-edge technologies include 3D printers, 3D scanners, laser engravers, laser welders and desktop lasers. Notable products include the Elettrolaser's DaDo 2.0 laser welder and FiberLux Nano laser engraver, and Benmayor's Onyx laser welder and APEX laser engraving range. Freeform also collaborates with companies like Sisma on larger laser welders and Hitachi for XRF precious metal analysers. All empower jewellers and jewellery designers, giving them full control of the manufacturing process and repairs, whether operating from a small shop or a larger business. We also offer comprehensive training, technical support and ongoing customer care to help clients fully maximise the potential of these technologies.

What are the latest developments and technology you offer?

Freeform searches globally for the latest tech and adapts the tech and training to ensure we support clients throughout. It's always on the hunt for the next big thing and investing in new solutions to keep the jewellery industry moving forward. The DaDo 2.0 laser welder, created by Elettrolaser, is proof of such innovation; Freeform helped to innovate an already popular product by adding more power and control, adding versatility and enhancing its capabilities. Freeform also offers training via its Laser Welding Academy.

Who are your key customers?

Freeform's reach extends across the jewellery industry and far beyond, catering to a diverse range of clients, including independent designers, mid-sized to larger businesses, foundries, renowned brands, universities, product designers and even medical and large engineering firms. The comprehensive product range is suitable for businesses of all sizes, from tiny workshops to large enterprises, at competitive prices.

What makes your business stand out from the competition?

Freeform goes beyond merely supplying equipment. It provides comprehensive, ready-to-use solutions that enable jewellers to start producing immediately, bringing products directly to workshops. We prioritise exceptional customer support, ensuring our customers feel valued and supported, from initial purchase to installation, and beyond. It continually enhances its offerings based on customer feedback.

Why did you decide to join the NAJ? How do you hope to benefit from membership?

We should've joined ages ago! We've always been fans and supporters, even using the NAJ's Jewellery Quarter space for our events. Freeform has grown a lot in recent years, so we wanted to get more involved with NAJ members – this is the best place to share what we're about and connect with the people who may not have heard of us yet.

Are you active in the community – events, charity activity, etc?

We've been long-time supporters of local cancer charity Maggie's Glasgow and have donated several items of bespoke jewellery to several of its charity auctions and sponsored numerous events. We also promote Maggie's in store and on our website. In the last year, Roddy took up a position on the board, so he can assist with the governance and strategic direction of the charity. At their most recent event, in May, we donated a specially designed diamond and sapphire pendant, which reflected the spirit of Maggie's work. It raised £10,000 for the charity in a single event that raised around £100K.





Please describe your business ethos.

Our ethos is to provide a one-to-one customer service-driven experience. While many of the materials we use require sourcing from a wide range of suppliers in the UK and abroad, we maintain a commitment to CSR by using local suppliers where possible for other areas, flying the flag for local businesses. For example, all our cabinets, consultation desks, display units and bespoke bar are custom made by a local specialist cabinetmaker.

By conscious sourcing, we ensure all precious metals, diamonds and gemstones we use are ethically and responsibly obtained, and we promote our remodelling services, to reduce the need for newly mined resources.

What makes you stand out from other jewellers in the area?

The very personal consultation approach, where we spend time getting to know our customers, identifying their requirements and explaining the bespoke process enables them to make informed choices. By sharing the journey, we share their vision and ideas – a beautifully creative and collaborative process. Our customers feel very involved and invested in their jewellery design.

A complete in-house service for design, CAD, stone-setting, goldsmith and creation of our bespoke jewellery gives us total control and a sleek workflow. The collaboration between us and our customers continues in the way that the Blair and Sheridan team works together – a constant channel of communication between all areas.

Above: Blair and Sheridan bespoke engagement ring and fitted wedding ring design

Squash Digital Marketing for the Jewellery Industry



Learn how the technical expertise of these digital specialists can help you deliver effective marketing campaigns.

It's a commercial truism that for a great product to sell, selling must go hand in hand with effective marketing. And marketing, in one form or another, has always been central to a successful jewellery business owner's strategy. Nothing's changed... marketing has just evolved. A traditional campaign alone isn't enough these days, and sometimes it's nice to have some guidance in this digital age.

Squash Digital Marketing offers a two-pronged approach. The team of performance marketing experts has years of combined technical experience plus a sound working knowledge of the jewellery industry. For Squash's clients, this is a useful and potent combination.

> "Squash gives your business a competitive edge online to unlock its full potential.
>
> **Hussein Taha, co-founder, Squash Digital Marketing**

"It's what makes us different from other agencies," says co-founder Hussein Taha. "Our industry experience is matched by our passion for jewellery and watches. We've worked with all types of jewellery businesses – traditional retail and e-commerce – which softens the barriers between our clients and us. They find it refreshing that they don't have to explain their business to us."

Because, naturally, there can be barriers. Squash's clients are, in the main, retail jewellers either with an existing e-commerce presence or adopting a new digital strategy. They know their market, they know their product and their in-store customer service is spot-on... but they also know they can and should be doing more online. For clients with an existing e-commerce presence, our work focuses on improving marketing efficiencies while scaling e-commerce sales. For clients newly embarking on a digital strategy, we build a clear framework for success before marketing starts.

"The older generation can be traditional and wary of change; the younger generation is motivated to make changes, but doesn't always know where to start," explains Hussein. "Many have tried digital marketing, using online tools. But without a strong framework – including such aspects as website, product data and tracking data – they struggle..."

"What we don't do is tell them to stop their traditional marketing, especially if it's working; we simply add a building block. We work to scale online presence by building on existing performance," he says.

Squashs markets businesses across digital platforms and creates a structure that allows each business to scale, as Hussein explains. "Digital marketing is a funnel, with an upper funnel, mid funnel and lower funnel. The upper funnel introduces the brand, explaining who and what it is, using memorable content to put you at the front of the customer's mind.

"The middle of the funnel prompts people to start engaging with your brand, from exploring your online content to viewing your products, taking action across social media as well as your own website.

"The bottom of the funnel is where sales happen. Audiences taking small mid-funnel actions show a positive indication they will respond to sale-focused ads," he says. "Just as you wouldn't just go straight to a sale in store – you introduce yourself, discuss a customer's needs and explain the products that may interest them – you should take digital consumers on a similar digital journey."

For Squash's clients, the key is to translate a great in-store and service experience into a great digital experience. While the success of traditional marketing campaigns can be hard to quantify, Hussein emphasises Squash offers a performance-based service.

"We ensure the client receives clear, reliable insights that show a direct return for every pound spent on advertising. We conduct rigorous audits to ensure we can monitor and improve online performance."

The experienced Squash team offers guidance and expertise throughout a client's digital journey, with transparent services that drive traffic, increase conversions and scale your brand online.

Through deep industry knowledge and leading digital capabilities, Squash gives your business a competitive edge online to unlock its full potential.

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VACHERON CONSTANTIN

The Fiftysix collection's strong identity is inspired by 1950s aesthetics and the iconic Reference 6073 created by Vacheron Constantin in 1956. Inspiration also comes from Vacheron Constantin's Maltese cross emblem, whose outline graces several details across various models in the collection. Models are available in pink gold or steel and driven by a self-winding movement in a complete calendar version or with day, date and power-reserve indication.

STERNGLAS

Sternglas' Lumatik beige 38mm stainless steel wristwatch features a double domed, anti-reflective, sapphire crystal and screw-down case back. Two-tone LumiNova on the dial complements the LumiNova hands and 3D-effect numerals. The Miyota 8315 automatic movement has up to 60-hour power reserve. The newly developed strap uses recycled Seaqual nylon.

MEISTERSINGER

The new Yaara collection is for women in every detail. The 36mm case in stainless steel or bicolour (steel/gold) features a soft flowing shape, into which the integrated comfortable steel bracelet fits seamlessly. The two-digit numerals, in gold or silver, and the silver or gold hour hand add brilliance. The five-minute markers on the edge of the dial recede into the background for greater clarity. There are three colour versions: ice blue, salmon and mint.

PERFECT

Sport, aviation, nautical, heritage, colour and the heavens provide inspiration for this smorgasbord of timepieces.





AV-8

The Bell X-1 Machbuster Automatic celebrates the pioneering spirit of the X-1 aircraft, known for achieving the first human-piloted (by Chuck Yeager) supersonic flight in October 1947. This historic milestone over California's Mojave Desert broke the sound barrier and laid the foundation for future supersonic exploration. The watch's robust design has a see-through case back with a custom rotor, inspired by the Bell X-1's exhaust, and a hybrid leather/rubber strap for durability and comfort.

ULYSSE NARDIN

Ulysse Nardin partners with Gumball 3000 to commemorate 25 years of the iconic supercar rally. The 45mm Freak X embodies Ulysse Nardin's approach to high horology, with its deconstructed movement, forged Carbonium case and Gumball 3000 orange detailing and display case back. Limited to 150 pieces, the watch is customisable for Gumball drivers to match team numbers. Iridescent orange Super-LumiNova® on the hour markers matches the vivid Delugs® orange rubber strap.

PANERAI

Panerai reinforces its military DNA with the new elite Navy SEAL-inspired capsule. The collection draws its aesthetic and functional cues from desert camouflage, as seen in the design and functionality of the watches. The four new Panerai Submersible models feature the Navy SEAL decal at 6 o'clock, a small second counter resembling a target and a case-back engraved with the official Navy SEAL logo. The indexes are coated with sand-coloured Super-LumiNova®.



TIMING

CERTINA

The new DS-7 Chrono Auto draws inspiration from the popular sport of padel, which Certina has been involved with for years. The latest watch celebrates the sport with the dial's grid structure reminiscent of a padel court net and an anti-magnetic silicon balance spring on the automatic movement. The 42mm stainless steel case is water resistant to 10 bar, and the protected crown, classic mushroom push-buttons and tachymeter scale combine sports style with functionality.

SEIKO

The Prospex Speedtimer Mechanical Chronograph pays homage to Seiko's archive of 1970s motor sport-influenced chronographs. Beneath the dual-curved sapphire crystal, three sub-dials and a date window at 4.5 o'clock add accent to the blue or black dial. The finish of the flow-shaped case and intricate multi-row bracelet is a super-hard coating for enhanced scratch resistance and long-lasting durability. At the watch's heart is Seiko's in-house 8R48 mechanical chronograph calibre.

ZEPPELIN

The Zeppelin Friedrichshafen classic analogue watch with GMT features a blue dial with Clus de Paris embossing and black numerals. Made in Ruhla, Germany, the 44mm stainless steel case houses a Japanese automatic movement, Citizen-Miyota 9075, 24 jewels and is water resistant to 5 bar.



RADO

Rado has gained popularity for its high-tech ceramic watches and regularly adds to its broad palette with new shades in the material. Having started with black and white, it now introduces the True Square in two bi-colour options: black and white. The distinctive square shape, the Open Heart design and diamond hour markers (in white and black diamonds), make a statement. The sandblasted titanium case back has a sapphire crystal and engraving: 'Limited Edition one out of 888.'

ROTARY

Rotary's automatic Seamatic GMT is a first and represents a true innovation for the brand. With its dedicated 24-hour hand and 24-hour graduated two-colour, bi-directional bezel, the watch displays a second time zone alongside conventional time... a perfect travel companion. The 42mm case's aluminium bezel comes in three colour options: red/blue, blue/black and black/silver. The black silicone strap has an alternative Rotary buckle for versatile styling.

CITIZEN

Two new Eco-Drive satellite wave GPS F950 models from the Citizen Attesa line have launched, both incorporating the latest technologies. The Super Titanium™ cases and bracelets have a Duratect DLC*4 finish, giving a black sheen and making the watches lightweight, resistant to scratches and comfortable to wear. One model combines a black case with blue-violet striped dial; the other features a black sapphire bezel and city names finished in a pink-gold colour.



ORIENT STAR

The M34 F8 Date is the flagship of Orient Star's Contemporary Collection M34. There are two new models: a 160-piece limited edition white-dial model and a regular blue-dial model. The dial design takes inspiration from the Perseid meteor shower in the Perseus constellation, and the optical multilayer film controls light reflectance and transmittance through multiple layers of nano-thin transparent film. A high-performance movement is mounted with a silicon escape wheel.

TUDOR

Marking its partnership with the Visa Cash App RB Formula One team, Tudor's Black Bay Ceramic Blue combines contemporary, high-tech details with subtle references to its heritage. Its matt-black ceramic case has sand-blasted surfaces with mirror-polished bevelled edges. The black ceramic insert of its rotatable bezel has a sunray satin finish. A leather/rubber strap with Snowflake motif on the inside and blue stitching, plus a complimentary black fabric strap, completes the look.

BULOVA

Bulova revives its iconic Super Seville model, paying homage to the design aesthetics of the 1970s while embracing contemporary watchmaking technology. The new models have a 38mm rounded square case, with a fluted bezel, inspired by the original vintage watches, and a tapered integrated bracelet. In silver-tone stainless steel with blue, green or white dials, and in gold-tone stainless steel with a white dial, the watches are powered by the Precisionist (HPQ) 3H date movement.

DOXA

Sea Emerald has become the eighth official colour in Doxa's SUB family. This vibrant shade is now available across five key collections: SUB 200, SUB 300T, SUB 300, SUB 600T and SUB 300 Carbon. These new SUB models also carry the characteristic sunburst finish on the dial, capturing the light to create a display of reflections and nuances. The SUB 300T and SUB 300 have subtle gold accents for an added touch of sophistication.

FESTINA

Paying homage to its Swiss heritage, Festina has unveiled the stainless steel Rivé collection, a testament to the brand's enduring passion for refined timepieces – classic designs reimagined with a touch of modern sophistication. Details include concentric guilloché dials in a variety of shades, intricately fluted bezels and open hearts that reveal the automatic movements within. The timeless Rivé collection blends Swiss craftsmanship with cutting-edge design.

AUTHORISED ROLEX SUBMARINER BOOK

Rolex, with global design authority Wallpaper, has published the first authorised history of the Oyster Perpetual Submariner watch. Written by author and watch expert Nicholas Foulkes, the 252-page book, Oyster Perpetual Submariner, is the first in a series of titles exploring the brand's watches. The wide-ranging account of the Submariner, the first divers' watch guaranteed waterproof to a depth of 100 metres, chronicles the technical innovation that went into creating the watch, alongside the adventures of the pioneers who tested the prototypes. (£100, Wallpaper)



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Michael Jones Jewellers



Above: Gold Street showroom. Below: Staff in the Grosvenor Centre showroom

The business has traded in Northampton for over 100 years and recently completed a £3million investment in its flagship store. Belinda Morris spoke to the co-operative's managing director, Stuart O'Grady.

Please tell us the history of the business. Who founded it and when?
Founded as a pawnbroker in 1919 by Claude S Jones, the father of Michael Jones, our business has a rich history, evolving over the years into a renowned independent jeweller.

Claude had served as a sergeant in the Royal Medical Corps while his wife Laurie worked with the Voluntary Aid Detachment. They committed all their savings to their new venture and Laurie would later recall how they even sold their own wedding gifts to make ends meet in the early days.

Michael joined the family business after leaving school, gaining valuable experience through his parents' trade connections. When he took over the business in the 1960s, he transformed it into a fine jewellers, focusing on expert staff, high-quality workmanship and the best products.

Michael Jones Jewellers now has showrooms in both Northampton and Banbury, offering a wide range of high-quality jewellery and watches, including being an official retailer for Rolex.

The co-operative aspect aside, how did the store change over the years?
In 1969, we moved from the outskirts of the town centre into our 1 Gold Street site. (In July this year, we expanded into 1a to 3 Gold Street, creating a dedicated Rolex area over two floors).

We opened the second store, The Grosvenor Centre Northampton, in 1975, and 11 years later, we reduced the shop size by 60 per cent. Then, in 2023, we expanded back into our original space to meet business growth. The third store, we opened in 1980 in the High Street, Banbury, which in 2006, moved into a double unit, four times the size of that original store. In 2020, the dedicated Rolex area was created when we acquired the unit next door.

Our customers were asking for bigger and more unusual jewellery, so we are constantly looking for new pieces from our loyal suppliers, both at home and overseas.

When and why did it become a co-operative?
In January 1970, Michael Jones Jeweller officially became a co-operative. Michael Jones had strong beliefs about employee rights and equality, long before employment protection laws came into existence. He believed businesses should provide good working conditions for employees as a fundamental principle and not as a privilege granted by employers. He felt it was only right all the employees should have a share in the business.

How did that development change the strategy of the business (if at all)?
Our co-operative model is quite unique in the jewellery industry. Here's how it works:
Employee ownership: Our business is owned by our employees, so each staff member has a stake in the company. This fosters a sense of responsibility and pride among the employees, as they are directly invested in the business's success.

Decision making: We make decisions collectively, with input from all co-owners. This democratic approach ensures everyone has a voice and can contribute to the direction and policies of the company.

Profit sharing: We share profits among the co-owners, which can lead to higher motivation and job satisfaction. This model aligns the interests of our employees with the success of the business, as everyone benefits from the company's prosperity.

Customer service: Because our employees are co-owners, they are more committed to providing excellent customer service. They have a personal interest in ensuring customers have a positive experience and return in the future.

We believe this model benefits our employees and enhances the overall customer experience, making Michael Jones Jeweller a trusted and beloved business in Northampton.

What makes Michael Jones Jewellers stand out from other jewellers in the area?
We take pride in offering the highest quality jewellery and watches from renowned brands at competitive prices. Our distinctive business model ensures that when you visit our showrooms, you're attended to by co-owners committed to delivering exceptional service.

From welcoming customers with a complimentary beverage to providing our signature gift wrapping, we believe these small touches make a significant impact. We take great joy in guiding customers through their shopping journey – whether it's answering initial enquiries, sharing our product expertise or helping them make the perfect purchase. Our commitment continues with ongoing support for any after sales and service needs they may have.

Are there more expansion plans/ developments in the pipeline?
For now, we don't have any plans for further shopfloor expansions. We're extremely pleased with our recent developments in the expansions of both our Grosvenor Centre and Gold Street showrooms.

Behind the scenes, we have our plans for an extensive watch workshop remodel in our Gold Street showroom. We hope these enhancements will allow us to continue delivering exceptional service to our customers, and we are optimistic about the future.



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Getting Better Business Ready

Helping you stay compliant and profitable.

In the final Better Business instalment of 2024, our experts explore digital advertising and regulations, making sure you stay legally compliant and profitable as we enter the golden quarter.

First up, check out the NAJ's Year in Review to see what your Association is doing for you, from growing our influence with government to increasing our membership base with refined services and better education and training courses.

As a manufacturer or retailer of fine jewellery, how do you know your products are fit for purpose and comply with the ever-changing regulatory environment? Birmingham Assay Office guides you through your legal obligations.

Growing a digital presence during the festive period is crucial for many of our members, so Squash Digital shares the golden rules of online advertising so you can spend your pennies wisely.

Finally, consultant Sally Leonard addresses a common question for many designer-makers – do you need to handle every stage of production in-house?

Better Business

If you are an NAJ member, you can get more Better Business advice on our website, **naj.co.uk/Member-Area/Better-Business** (login required)

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Setting New Standards



As we step into 2025, the National Association of Jewellers continues its commitment to strengthening the jewellery industry across the UK.

This year, the NAJ continued its focus on its four key strategy areas: Representation, Professional Standards, Education and Training and Membership Benefits and Services.

Let's take a closer look at the successes and what the NAJ is working towards in these crucial areas.

REPRESENTATION

Representation has always been at the forefront of the NAJ's mission, ensuring the jewellery industry has a strong voice in government and wider trade discussions. In 2024, the NAJ ensured the jewellery sector was adequately represented at the highest levels.

The UK Jewellery Silverware and Allied Crafts (UKJSAC) Industry Roundtable, for which the NAJ is presently the secretariat, will play a pivotal role in setting the stage for discussions about the future of the jewellery industry. Roundtables, such as the one in February, where we hosted Sir Chris Bryant MP, engage stakeholders in discussions about the jewellery trade's future as well as enable the industry to better communicate and collaborate.

The Roundtable's work continues with the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), having successfully secured official recognition for jewellery in the department. Recognising the jewellery trade as a creative industry allows us to engage with broader markets and promote the creativity within the trade that makes it such a distinct sector. This included an invitation to represent the industry at the 40th celebration of London Fashion Week at 10 Downing Street this September.

Jewellery is now also included in the Department for Business and Trade's (DBT) Luxury Export Group, a collection of trade bodies from luxury sectors that report on trade challenges to help the British luxury export agenda. In addition, the NAJ continues to participate in quarterly calls with DBT ministers, providing input for significant policy decisions. The Association also collaborates with other groups to input into agendas such as participation in an Autumn Budget submission through the The Independent Retailers Confederation.

Looking ahead to 2025, the UKJSAC will continue to evolve, forming into a sustainable coalition. The group's four-facet projects – covering economy, people, practice, and value – will drive policy discussions, ensuring that the jewellery industry remains competitive and resilient in a changing economy.

Ben Massey, chief executive, shares,

"As an Association, we have considerably increased our representation activity to better reflect the needs of our members and wider industry to the key decision makers. Although there is much still to do, we are proud of the progress being made, and with the UKJSAC, we are determined to ensure that the industry moves forward as one."

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The NAJ is dedicated to setting and maintaining professional standards within the jewellery industry, providing a clear and accessible framework for its members. In 2024, the NAJ focused on collaborating with key organisations, such as Trading Standards, to ensure members receive the guidance they need on crucial industry issues.

One of the major initiatives this year was horizon scanning – an ongoing process to identify emerging trends and challenges before they become significant issues for the trade. This allows the NAJ to provide proactive guidance to its members, keeping them informed on standards and legislative changes.

Over the past year, the NAJ Resolve department dealt with 103 formal complaints, with the top issue being poor-quality items. The NAJ is continually updating its Codes of Practice and Guidance Notes to assist its members in addressing these and other challenges. In 2024, new guidance on gemstone descriptions, valuations and hallmarking will be released, with further updates on customer expectations, intellectual property and environmental claims to follow.

By 2025, the NAJ plans to introduce even more guidance, including responsible sourcing, postal losses and managing manufacturing expectations. This will ensure NAJ members have the resources and knowledge to maintain the highest professional standards.

Katie Gillespie, compliance and policy manager, concludes,

"This year, we made our codes available to anyone in the jewellery trade, irrespective of whether they are NAJ members or not. This was an important step in further demonstrating the standards of NAJ members and helping businesses that aspire to be members understand the requirements. We will continue to push our agenda of raising standards to ensure this confidence grows."

7*

NEW CODES OF PRACTICE

*by the end of 2024

103

RESOLVED COMPLAINT MEDIATION CASES



519
JET STUDENTS ENROLLED

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The NAJ continues to champion education and training within the jewellery sector, ensuring that professionals across the industry have access to high-quality development opportunities. In 2024, the JET Management and Leadership qualification was successfully launched, with six students from independent retail and manufacturing already enrolled. This course represents a key milestone in the NAJ's efforts to upskill the next generation of industry leaders.

The four-yearly review of JET2 has also been completed, with updated modules set to launch in mid-2025. Additionally, the first cohort of apprentices in the Level 3 Jewellery, Silversmithing, and Allied Trades programme are nearing their end-point assessments, with more on the horizon as the NAJ continues to support apprenticeships in the industry.

The NAJ's educational reach extends beyond traditional courses, with new tools such as Moodle Workplace providing a more user-friendly experience for students enrolled in JET qualifications. Meanwhile, tutor teams have been expanded to meet growing demand, and more practical experiences are being introduced, such as the forthcoming Valuations Practical Experience Day developed with the Birmingham Assay Office.

By 2025, the NAJ aims to expand its offerings further, with more practical qualifications and hands-on experiences to keep professionals at the top of their game. This includes a review of the Foundations of Appraisal Practice qualification and the development of a dedicated retail team leader apprenticeship programme.

Marie Garnett, head of education, states,

"Whether supporting apprenticeships or launching brand new management qualifications, the NAJ is here to help ensure all levels of the trade receive the necessary skill and training to succeed. We are excited to see further development in 2025, particularly with our move to a new learning management platform to provide more engaging courses."

MEMBERSHIP AND BENEFITS

Membership is the heartbeat of the NAJ, and in 2024, the Association focused on sustainable growth while ensuring the highest quality of member experience. With 185 (and counting!) new members joining in 2024, the Association has seen a significant rise in membership numbers and engagement.

The membership team is growing to meet this demand, and the NAJ is now offering a new member journey, detailing what members can expect during their first year. This initiative includes improved due diligence and a more interactive application process to maintain the integrity of the NAJ's professional standards.

In 2024, the NAJ has reached its highest renewal rate yet, with 94 per cent of members renewing their membership. Additionally, traffic to the NAJ's online directories – Find a Jeweller and Find a Valuer – has surged, with a 14 per cent and 29 per cent increase in visitors, respectively, compared to this time last year. These statistics demonstrate the NAJ's growing influence as a trusted resource in the jewellery industry.

Looking forward to 2025, the NAJ aims to refine its benefits package further to ensure greater value and ease of access. Members will have more opportunities to engage with the NAJ team through monthly benefits focus sessions or business visits. If you want the membership team to visit you, please email membership@naj.co.uk.

Paul Smith, membership member, said,

"Despite the economic challenges facing many businesses, the high member retention and new member recruitment demonstrates the value of being part of the NAJ. In 2025, we are keen to refine this membership offering to bring even greater value and targeted benefits and services."

As the NAJ continues to grow and evolve, its commitment to representation, professional standards, education and training and membership support remains unwavering. The initiatives outlined for 2025 set a strong foundation for the future, ensuring the jewellery industry can thrive in the years to come.

The NAJ is poised to continue its leadership role, providing a vital voice and essential services to the jewellery trade across the UK.

185
36% INCREASE
NEW MEMBERS

47K
+12%
SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

14% INCREASE
FIND A JEWELLER VIEWS

29% INCREASE
FIND A VALUER VIEWS

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Does product compliance matter?

As a manufacturer or retailer of fine jewellery, how do you know your products are fit for purpose and comply with the ever-changing regulatory environment?

Compliance with the Hallmarking Act only assures and certifies the article's precious metal content meets the national standard. Testing an article for compliance is a much broader term, and the onus is on the retailer to ensure the article meets the minimum requirements of further legislation, such as REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) and the General Product Safety Directive, which comes into force in December 2024.

Merely assuming the jewellery you sell does not contain nickel, lead or cadmium and it will comply with the stipulated release properties is not sufficient and would not be a defence.

All parties have a duty of care throughout the supply chain to ensure compliance and consumer safety.

It could be argued that fine jewellery does not contain these metallic elements. But how do you know, and how do you prove it? During the assay process of hallmarking, articles are generally tested using XRF technology, and the assay office responsible simply validates the fineness of precious metals to meet the standards stipulated in the Hallmarking Act. The assay office does not examine the chemical compliance for lead, cadmium, nickel or other toxic base metals. The following summary can help guide your business's due diligence.

TRADERS

As a trader, you must ensure product integrity. By sourcing your products/materials from reliable sources, you can rely on provided test reports, validating whether the items or raw materials are lead, cadmium and nickel compliant. To validate this, you must always request test reports for the specific article. If this is unavailable, test the items yourself or push back on your supplier until you have this information to support the items you purchase. Ensure compliance is a contractual stipulation – for your protection.

MANUFACTURERS

For manufacturers, the responsibility is quite heavy, but ensuring compliance is a simple process. Always share test reports to meet the REACH and General Product Safety Directive standards through an accredited ISO/IEC 17025 laboratory. Also validate the laboratory's schedule of compliance includes the tests they are undertaking. You can do this by creating a sample that your customer confirms is acceptable and that replicates the final production. This report is a binding confirmation that your buyer accepts the final production version should nothing in the supply chain or manufacturing process change. You will both commercially agree upon these steps as part of your transaction.

BRANDS AND RETAILERS

For your peace of mind, request a test report for each range/batch you purchase – it is the easiest and most robust way to ensure compliance. Your suppliers should have this ready for you. If you want to take it to the next step to ensure total compliance, test random samples in a due diligence checking exercise to gather more data and product information to ensure they are fit for purpose and safe for the consumer. Remember, it's your brand reputation on the line if anything goes wrong.

OVERVIEW

You can easily send an item to the Birmingham Assay Office for XRF analysis to determine if these elements are present in a non-destructive test. This gives you a tangible percentage value of these three metallic elements. Similarly, you can send an item to the Birmingham Assay Office to validate the REACH compliance for full lead, cadmium and nickel release, which will provide you with accurate data relating to a batch.

Only one item will be tested (destructive) when following lead and cadmium **(Lead Content: Entry 63 of annex 17 of REACH Directive (1907/2006), Cadmium Content: Entry 23 of annex 17 of REACH Directive (1907/2006)**, and three items for full nickel as per **EN1181:2023**.

You could, alternatively, follow the Birmingham Assay Office's method of AnchorCert Protect, which tests all three elements in a single test to save testing and product-wastage costs.

Birmingham Assay Office offers a comprehensive range of testing and certification services, including those required for product safety compliance under REACH, RoHS and US regulations.
Visit, **www.theassayoffice.co.uk/our-services/analytical-chemical-lab/**

Do you really need to do it all?

There's a unique joy in making a piece of jewellery – the sense of achievement from conceiving an idea, working on it and bringing it to life. But as a small business owner, is doing everything yourself really the best decision for your business?

THE DILEMMA OF DOING IT ALL

Over the last 20-plus years, I've seen many designers run their businesses in many different ways, but a common theme is the desire to handle every stage of production in-house. While this hands-on approach can be satisfying, it's important to ask: is it the best strategy for growing your business?

A successful jewellery brand strikes a balance between in-house production and using the skilled network of incredible tradespeople we have in the UK. This ensures the highest quality pieces made in optimal timeframes and at competitive prices, while giving a designer time to focus on their brand, sales and socials.

"BUT MY CUSTOMERS LIKE THAT I MAKE EVERYTHING MYSELF"

One common belief is that customers value products more if every stage is done by the designer. In my experience, this isn't necessarily true. Customers appreciate handmade work and love the idea of supporting independent creators, but they don't usually care if you set the stones or polished the piece yourself. They're interested in the final product and the connection with you, the designer.

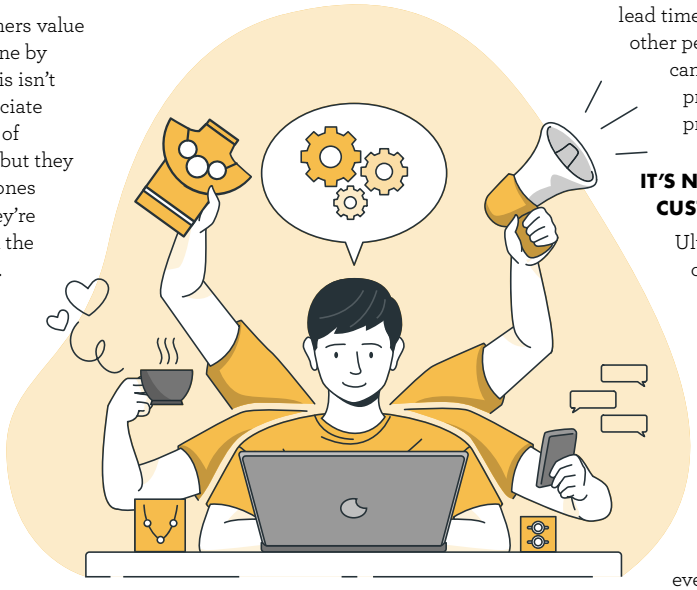
ENHANCING QUALITY BY OUTSOURCING

Jewellery making involves a multitude of skills and processes. It's unlikely that any one designer has perfected all these skills to the highest standard. Professionals, like setters, polishers, engravers, casters, and mounters, spend their entire careers refining their crafts. Why not leverage their expertise to improve your product?

When you outsource certain tasks, you're improving the quality of your work and tapping into the knowledge and skills of experts. I often chat with my team, from the start of the design process. Working together is fun, and it pushes my creative boundaries beyond what I could do on my own.

CASE STUDY: THE POWER OF PROFESSIONAL POLISHING

Years ago, I needed to change the way I made things to keep on top of all the work. To see if polishing was something I should be outsourcing, I made two identical pairs of cufflinks, polished one pair myself and gave the other pair to a professional. When I asked people to assess the two, they consistently believed the professionally polished pair was made from a more expensive material and priced it significantly higher than the pair I'd polished. Lesson learned: why do it yourself when others can do it better?



EFFICIENCY AND COST

Handling every part of the process yourself can lead to inefficiencies. It's tempting to hide the true amount of time spent on a piece or work extra hours to meet a specific price point. However, working with others introduces fixed timelines and prices, leading to more accurate project planning and costing.

Outsourcing doesn't just save time – it can save money. For example, if it takes you several hours to clean up a casting or set a stone, outsourcing these tasks to someone more experienced can be faster and cheaper. You can then focus on the most valuable activities – like designing and selling – rather than spending time on tasks that others can do more efficiently than you (often to a higher standard).

THE FEAR OF LETTING GO

One barrier to outsourcing is not knowing where to find the right people. I encourage you to join networks – online and offline – for recommendations. There are skilled tradespeople across the country who can elevate your work to the next level, and personal introductions are a great way to meet and start working with them. Yes, your lead times will increase as you incorporate other people's workflows, but this adjustment can allow you to work on multiple projects simultaneously, boosting your productivity and potential earnings.

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU – IT'S ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Ultimately, jewellery is made for customers. Once you've committed to creating a piece for someone, it's no longer about you; it's about the person who'll connect with and wear your work. Their opinion is what matters most.

IS THIS A HOBBY OR A BUSINESS?

If your goal is to keep jewellery making as a hobby and make everything yourself, that's fine. However, your earning potential will be limited by the time and capacity you have. If you want to grow your business, you'll need to make strategic decisions about which stages of production you can outsource. Focus on what you do best, and let others handle the rest because outsourcing can help you produce higher-quality work, save time and grow your business.

Ask yourself: do you really need to do it all?



ABOUT THE WRITER

Sally Leonard has been a consultant to the jewellery industry for 20 years, specialising in working with small jewellery business across the UK. For more information on her experience, her workshops and with any questions, visit **www.pendeloque.consulting** or email her: **sally@pendeloque.consulting**

How do you benchmark your retail jewellery business?

On emotion, opinion, hearsay or actual data? Asks JET Business Network facilitator Michael Donaldson.



Online illustrations by Storyset

How relevant is your data in terms of timing – current or historical. Reliability – actual or guesstimate. Consistency – ad hoc or regular? Sample – random or the same businesses? Geography – UK market or European/US markets. Sector – independent jewellery stores or multiple jewellery stores?

Benchmarking is the comparison of one thing with another thing: apples with apples as the popular saying goes. JET Business Network (JBN) membership enables you to compare your business with other retail jewellery businesses with similar apple profiles in similar channels (online, bespoke, pre-owned), categories (diamonds, weds, pendants, earrings) and cities and towns (from Liverpool to Dundee, Canterbury to Chester).

Submitting a monthly performance report is a commitment of JBN membership. It enables members to compare their monthly performance across the key indicators of sales, margins, stock holding, staff ROI (return on investment), sales per square metre and much more. All under a confidential store number known only to the member and the JBN Facilitator.

Another way of benchmarking your business is by participating in surveys.

The JBN conducts surveys three or four times a year – participation is optional and is again shared using a member's confidential store number, but you do have to be in it to get it. These relevant and timely topics are requested by retail jewellers, completed by retail jewellers, for other retail jewellers.

This type of benchmarking assists decision making by helping to size opportunities, clarify costs and reduce the risk exposure. And as is often the case, there's usually someone at the JBN table who has been there before.

Surveys, if used properly, are certain to save you money and make you money, by challenging your mindset in the circles of your influence around your people, product and process.

Over the years, JBN members have shared valuable information and data with each other on:

- **Salaries** for sales assistants to store managers, for those who change batteries to those who create beautiful bespoke pieces at the bench. How else will you know if you are paying the right salary and a competitive salary to retain your best employees?
- **Repair charges** for basic solder, clean and polish, battery change, sizing, claw work, CAD work. It's a survey that usually triggers a review of supplier costs as well as their own retail price list. After all, the profit is in the detail.
- **Website** set up, maintenance and marketing costs. What a great community to be in if you are thinking about selling online for the first time or wondering how to join the JBN members regularly reporting five-figure-plus online sales.
- **Workshop** experiences and numbers for those with them and those without them. What do stores get by having them visible or not visible and what do those who don't have one miss out on when it comes to customer engagement and spend.
- **Marketing** surveys answer the questions every retail jeweller wants to know: what return am I getting on every marketing pound I spend? What do I have to spend to generate a higher return? Where and how should I be spending my budget?

And we've just completed a survey on **percentage profitability** as reported in the members' annual accounts. I was delighted 83 per cent of the members shared this data on such a sensitive yet vital topic. There was no surprise that some made money and some lost money, but that's not why we did the survey – we did it to enable retail jewellers to bench mark their profit performance with other retail jewellers and to start asking the how, why, what questions in the areas they can influence, namely their people, product and process. But as I said you've got to be in it to get it.

JBN JET BUSINESS NETWORK

If you're interested in joining the JBN, contact me, Michael Donaldson on **07817 305 122** for more information or visit **www.naj.co.uk/jbn**

TISH LYON

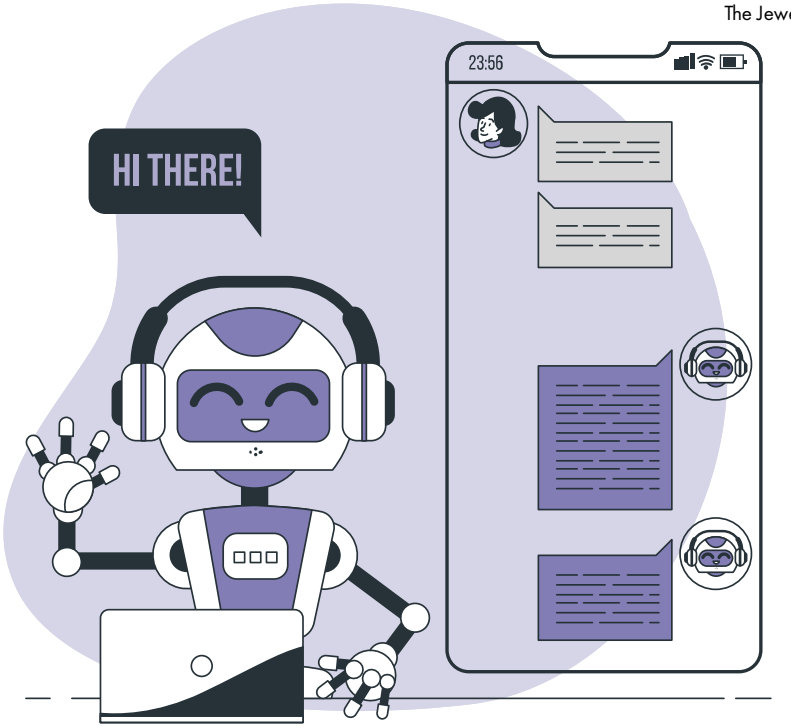
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SaferGems
THE JEWEL IN CRIME PREVENTION

SaferGems: Understanding the risks and benefits of AI tools



Online illustrations by Storyset

Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools presents risks and benefits jewellers need to consider. Understanding these risks and benefits is crucial for making informed decisions about adopting and using AI tools.

HOW DOES AI WORK?

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines. AI systems perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, perception, understanding natural language and interacting with the environment, and they learn to do so using machine learning (ML) techniques.

BENEFITS OF AI TOOLS

- **Efficiency and Productivity:** AI tools can automate repetitive tasks, streamline processes and optimise resource allocation, leading to increased efficiency and productivity.
- **Insight and Prediction:** AI techniques, like ML, can analyse vast amounts of data to extract valuable insights and make accurate predictions, aiding decision making and strategy formulation for your business.
- **Personalisation and Customisation:** AI-powered recommendation systems can provide personalised experiences and tailored recommendations to users and customers, enhancing satisfaction and engagement.
- **Safety and Risk Mitigation:** AI tools are effective for predictive maintenance, fraud detection and risk assessment.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** AI can help generate novel solutions, inspiring creativity and fostering innovation in art, design and engineering.

RISKS OF AI TOOLS

- **Privacy Concerns:** AI tools often require large amounts of data for training, which raises concerns about privacy infringement, especially when dealing with sensitive information from your customers.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Complex AI algorithms can be difficult to interpret, hindering accountability and leading to challenges in understanding how decisions are made.
- **Bias and Fairness:** AI models can inherit biases present in the data they are trained on, leading to the perpetuation of societal inequalities, unfair outcomes and discrimination.
- **Overreliance and Automation Bias:** Relying too heavily on AI tools without human oversight can lead to errors caused by AI hallucination (false or made-up information presented as fact) or missing important factors AI may not account for, resulting in detrimental consequences.

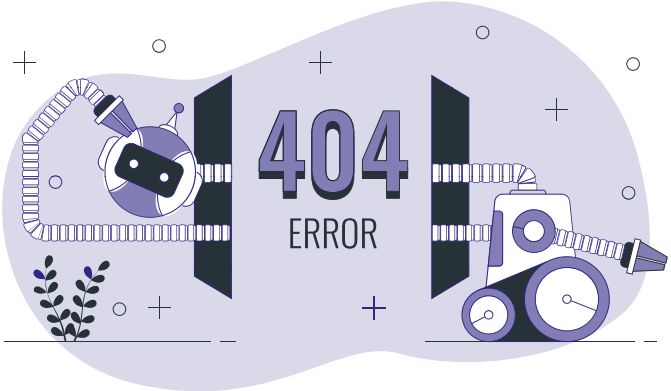
CHATBOTS AND AI ASSISTANTS

Chatbots and AI assistants are gaining popularity for integration and enhancing the customer experience. Websites, messaging platforms and mobile apps often deploy to assist users by answering questions, providing customer support and executing simple transactions. AI assistants, also known as virtual assistants, are advanced chatbots with AI capabilities. They can understand natural language, learn from interactions and perform more complex tasks.

SUMMARY

Sooner or later, AI will automate many business operations. While AI provides insights and benefits, human judgment and empathy are irreplaceable in certain situations. Chatbots and AI assistants are useful across applications and devices to enhance user experiences and streamline interactions, but the results can vary depending on the complexity of the problem.

AI content is only as good as the data we train it on, and there are concerns about what this means for security and brand reputation. The technology contains some serious flaws, including AI hallucination, privacy concerns and bias. However, by implementing rigorous quality control measures, AI could present a future where businesses are increasingly innovative, advanced and secure.



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SHERLOCK 4.0

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BIG SHERLOCK

Checks up to 108 rings at a time or 60 rings on 5 rotating finger ring holders

Approximately 1000 CT loose diamonds

Visible Checking are 8" by 11", 20 cm by 30cm

Checking area height 4", 10 cm

Add & delete users

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A fond farewell to retiring JET tutor Anne Kings

One of JET's longest-serving, best-loved course tutors, Anne Kings is retiring after 37 years in this vital post. Belinda Morris asked her about her time at the forefront of the Association's education offering.



WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A JET TUTOR? DESCRIBE YOUR JEWELLERY INDUSTRY JOURNEY.

After studying at Salisbury School of Fashion, then gaining work experience in London, I became a fashion and bridal buyer for an independent department store. The fashion business and jewellery trade are alike, but so much more product knowledge is required to be a jewellery retailer, so good training programmes are important.

In 1984, after a short career break to have my two daughters, I joined Allum & Sidaway Jewellers, where I gained my retail jewellers diploma. I was promoted to manager, obtained a management degree, and accepted a place on the board of directors in 1989.

Through my then-boss, the late Peter Allum, I became very involved with all aspects of the jewellery industry. He was a founder member of the CMJ, and an active board member of the [then] NAG. I gave many training sessions on customer care for the CMJ, which led me to tutor for the NAG – part time. We actively supported the work of the Diamond Trading Company and the World Gold Council, and the enormous amount of trade knowledge I gathered at events like the Carat Clubs, NAG Conferences and buying meetings, was invaluable.

Unfortunately, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and it took the support of work colleagues to get me through the surgery and treatment. I had to step back from what I'd been doing, but I couldn't give up this wonderful trade, so I decided it was time to give something back, so I became a full time NAG tutor, which I could do from home.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN OVER THE DECADES?

Tutorials happened regularly, some in London and others wherever the tutor felt would be a good location. We'd also take students on training days to places like assay offices, or to see private collections. The final examination for JET1 and 2 was a day of theory and practical.

When the NAG reached out to members outside of London, I travelled to the different registered members, who due to distance, work pressure etc. found it impossible to consider using the JET training courses. I'd hold open evenings, so members could attend with their staff and see the course materials. This led to many new enrolments – not just the younger staff members, but often more mature staff who'd missed out on training.



In 2005, I was asked to revamp the JET1 and JET2 course material – a massive job, which I loved. I included chapters such as Pawnbroking because the trade was seeing more and more high-street jewellers becoming pawnbrokers, and Diamond Simulants and Treatments, which wasn't something that needed teaching previously. This was also an opportunity to make hallmarking more interesting – traditionally a subject students struggled to understand.

Inevitably, with advancing technology, online courses replaced the correspondence JET courses. This transition took a while, and it wasn't easy, for the tutors and the students, but as time went on, everyone became more computer literate. Gradually, the piles of grading delivered to my door became less as everything moved online.

Over my years, the JET courses have been regularly updated, tweaked and added to, and the tutors were responsible for doing this. Originally, they were retailer focused, but in 2015 when the NAG amalgamated with the BJA, they introduced other aspects of the trade.

DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF THE IMPACT YOU HAVE HAD ON THE STUDENTS YOU HAVE TUTORED AND SUPPORTED?

I have to say, the more mature student makes excellent progress once they've got their confidence. I get a real buzz from having a student who needs just a little bit more encouragement, because I know how rewarding it will be for them when they complete their JET1 or JET2.

I like to think that, as a tutor, I was always there to listen, advise and be helpful. And I was always completely made up when students dropped me a line, sent me a card, flowers, invited me to their wedding and babies' christenings – I've even babysat for them – over the last few decades.

WHAT DID YOU GAIN FROM BEING A TUTOR?

As a tutor, I feel totally blessed. Being able to see so many students gain their awards in Goldsmiths' Hall every year, with their family and friends around them sharing the occasion, and knowing I played just a small part in their lives, really is one of the best feelings. I will miss being a tutor more than anything, and even now, while I'm winding down, I'm feeling withdrawal symptoms.

Above: Anne (left) was presented with a certificate by Gillingham Mayor, Cllr Sharon Cullingford at Gillingham's Coronation Concert, as a fundraising event for Dementia Friendly Gillingham.

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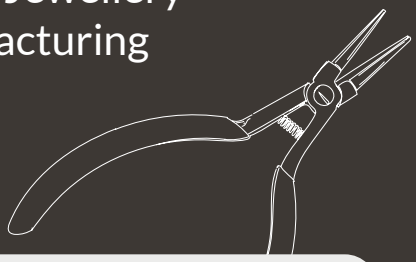


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How Jewellers can maximise digital strategies this year



Hussein Taha from Squash Digital shares some golden rules of online advertising for the golden quarter.

Peak trading season for jewellers offers significant opportunities to drive revenue. Whether you're already running online ads or planning to launch a campaign, having a focused digital strategy is essential.

Below, we outline steps to make the most of this critical period for both jewellers already advertising to improve efficiency and scale as well as for those new to online advertising.

1. SCALING AND OPTIMISING FOR JEWELLERS ALREADY RUNNING ADS

For jewellers already advertising and selling online, Q4 is the perfect time to scale existing strategies. The increased consumer intent around Black Friday, Christmas and January sales presents considerable potential to drive revenue. Here's how to ensure your campaign is impactful:

a) Refine your audience targeting
Use historical data from past campaigns to identify top-performing segments. This Month Last Year customers can suggest which customers are more likely to return. Retargeting is particularly effective during this period, so consider increasing your budget in this area. Shoppers often browse multiple stores before deciding, so ensure your retargeting focuses on key selling points throughout Q4.

b) Gradually increase budget and start today
As the season progresses, increase your budget gradually in line with rising demand. Simply raising media spend on key dates alone can lead to inefficiencies. Instead, incrementally increase your budget by 10 to 20 per cent in the lead-up to events like Black Friday and Christmas. This approach aligns with most advertising platforms' best practices, helping avoid inefficiencies and allowing you to build key audiences before significant trading events.

c) Highlight time-sensitive offers
Run promotions with deadlines, such as limited-time discounts around crucial dates. Also, consider service-based offers, such as extended returns or upgraded shipping to help convert gift buyers. Even a great promotion can be overshadowed if consumers are concerned about delivery times.

2. STARTING A SMALL CAMPAIGN FOR JEWELLERS NEW TO ONLINE ADVERTISING

If you're new to online advertising, Q4 is an excellent time to test the waters with a small, targeted campaign. Here's how to get started:

a) Setting and monitoring goals
With a smaller budget, it's essential to have clear expectations and performance goals. Make sure you can monitor your business objectives online through effective conversion tracking. If you have an e-commerce site, your goal may be online sales; if you have an informational or lead generation site, it could be the number of leads, phone calls or even direction requests to your store.

b) Set an affordable budget and stick to it
Don't spread your budget too thin by trying to do too much at once. After setting your goals, pair them with a budget aligning with your desired investment return. Monitoring a clear budget can help you evaluate how changes to your offers or website content impact your digital performance by comparing data before and after these changes.

c) Keep ads simple and effective
Simplicity is key. Create ads encouraging users to take actions that align with your business goals. High-quality images of your products paired with clear, compelling copy can make a significant impact.

Whether optimising an existing campaign or launching a new one, a solid digital strategy is crucial for driving results.

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INHORGENTA 2025 WELCOMES UK DESIGNERS TO MUNICH

Belinda Morris chats to Stefanie Maendlein, Exhibition Director of INHORGENTA, about the fair's dedicated platform for contemporary, individual design.

It's very exciting that INHORGENTA in February will host a UK Pavilion. Are you happy to welcome UK designers to the fair?

We're thrilled to be showcasing UK design talent at INHORGENTA 2025 because the UK has a rich heritage of craftsmanship, innovation, and cutting-edge creativity in the jewellery and watch sectors. British designers are known for their ability to blend traditional techniques with modern design, producing pieces that stand out for their originality and quality. INHORGENTA provides a fantastic international platform – an exciting opportunity for UK talent to shine on a global stage. This event helps to strengthen our connections with the international jewellery community while showcasing the diversity and creativity that British design offers. We're excited to support our designers in reaching new markets and audiences, making the UK Pavilion a celebration of the best in contemporary jewellery and watch design.

How will UK designers benefit when they exhibit at INHORGENTA?

There are several key benefits. First, it provides unparalleled exposure to an international audience, including retailers, buyers, and industry experts. This opens doors to new markets business opportunities that can significantly enhance their global reach. Second, the fair is renowned for its focus on innovation and design trends, allowing UK designers to position themselves at the forefront of the industry and showcase their creativity alongside other leading brands. Finally, INHORGENTA offers valuable networking opportunities, while also helping them stay updated on the latest developments and consumer demands. It's a unique platform for gaining recognition, building relationships, and growing their businesses globally.



We anticipate around 25,000 visitors from approximately 90 countries. Our diverse audience will include professionals from various sectors of the jewellery, watch, and gemstone industries. Notable countries represented will include Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain, the UK, the USA, China, and India – a unique opportunity for British designers to engage with a broad range of potential clients and partners.

I'm sure UK designers will be keen to explore other halls at the fair – so, useful connections to be made.

Absolutely! INHORGENTA offers a comprehensive experience across various halls, including those dedicated to gemstones, software, and packaging. Designers will find valuable opportunities to connect not only with buyers but also with suppliers and service providers. These interactions can lead to fruitful collaborations and insights into industry trends, enhancing their overall experience at the fair. We encourage all attendees to explore the full range of offerings and make the most of these connections!

Meet our latest NAJ JET Stars

The latest winning students of the NAJ's monthly JET1 Awards.



HANNAH MACKAY, BANKS LYON JEWELLERS (June winner)

"I've always loved jewellery and began working at Banks Lyon Jewellers in my last year of university because my dissertation was about jewellery. The beauty of design and the relationship with the wearer drew me in, and I continued working at Banks Lyon when I graduated in 2023.

I'm part of the sales floor team and was recently asked to assist the repairs and valuations departments, so I can help a customer from the initial sale through to the resizing or adjustment process. It's been an incredible experience, developing my sales ability while also learning much more specialised skills, such as valuations, making my job varied and fulfilling.

The management team is hugely supportive of professional development and encourages new starters to complete the JET1 course, so we have a solid foundation. After two of my colleagues talked about how much they enjoyed the course and how much it helped them, I signed up.

I found the entire course enjoyable, but the project was particularly fascinating. It allowed me to consolidate foundational knowledge in the diamond related questions, while also providing space to express my individual interests in the designer related ones. It was also the most challenging as I had to condense everything I wanted to say – and there was so much I could say!

I wrote about Andrew Geoghegan because the first item of jewellery I fell in love with was one of his Reveal rings, which I wear every day. His designs have a unique quality of intimacy and showmanship. Andrew allowed me to interview him, and it was incredible to match his inspirations to the elements that drew me in initially. The combination of inspiration, ethos and attention to detail has made his designs stand out to me even more since.

Taking JET has provided knowledge about diamonds and gemstones that help me correctly identify what a customer needs and explain that information. Learning about the history of the diamonds and, in particular, the Kimberley Process has enabled me to reassure customers and has built my confidence in both the product and the industry standards. I also loved learning more about the manufacture and repairs process.

I'm definitely going to continue my studies. I've enrolled in JET2, and I'm enjoying it even more than JET1. I hope to enrol in the JET Foundations of Appraisal Practice next. My goal is to become a valuer and eventually a member of the Institute of Registered Valuers. The education offered by the NAJ is an incredible foundation I can build on to reach this dream, and I'd recommend it to anybody looking to learn more about this fascinating industry."

DALIA NATION, HARRIET KELSALL BESPOKE JEWELLERY (July winner)

"From my earliest memories, I've been creative and artistic – I used to spend hours collating and creating new necklaces out of my grandmother's damaged jewellery. My love of design sent me to Hertford Regional College to complete an art and design foundation degree. From there, I went on to University Arts London to complete a BA in fashion textiles, which is where my passion for creating one-of-a-kind custom pieces took off and led me onto my career today.

I'm one of the assistant designers here, designing bespoke pieces, whether wedding rings or customising jewellery, as well as designing ready-to-wear pieces for the collection.

I learnt about JET from colleagues at work who had gained lots of knowledge from the course and loved the experience. They highly recommended it.

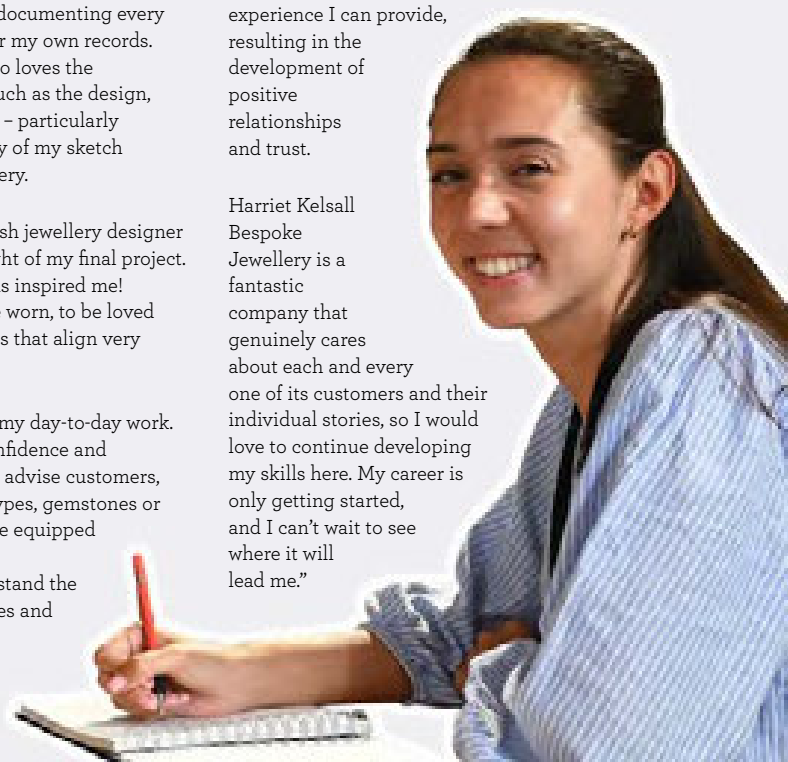
My favourite section was learning about the differences between casting and hand-making rings. I enjoyed extensively researching and learning about every step of the process.

We're extremely fortunate to collaborate closely with our exceptionally skilled goldsmiths at Harriet Kelsall, so I appreciated learning more about their processes and documenting every stage, with photographs for my own records. Ultimately, as someone who loves the construction process as much as the design, I'm inspired by their talent – particularly watching the whole journey of my sketch becoming a piece of jewellery.

Exploring the work of British jewellery designer Alex Monroe was a highlight of my final project. His nature-inspired designs inspired me! His jewellery is made to be worn, to be loved and to be treasured – values that align very much with mine.

JET1 helped me a lot with my day-to-day work. It's given me a boost in confidence and knowledge I can share and advise customers, whether regarding metal types, gemstones or repairs. Therefore, I'm more equipped to offer informed advice to customers, to better understand the value of different gemstones and ultimately share my own personal recommendations. This knowledge has improved the customer experience I can provide, resulting in the development of positive relationships and trust.

Harriet Kelsall Bespoke Jewellery is a fantastic company that genuinely cares about each and every one of its customers and their individual stories, so I would love to continue developing my skills here. My career is only getting started, and I can't wait to see where it will lead me."





RUTH CAVIN, CHISHOLM HUNTER (August winner)

"I joined Chisholm Hunter in October 2023. I've always been interested in jewellery and was ready for a complete career change – I'd been a supermarket manager before. With the support of my family and Chisholm Hunter, I made the jump and haven't looked back.

My job title is sales professional, but I've recently stepped up to trainee assistant manager. I'm very fortunate to work where we have seven boutiques, giving me access to most Chisholm Hunter's stock holding. Although I'm based in a diamond store, I have plenty of opportunities to sell gemstones and prestigious watches.

My amazing manager, Seeta, told me how much she learned from completing the JET course, and I felt that for my progression and understanding, taking it would benefit my career. I learned about gemstones and diamonds, which has greatly increased my confidence in my day-to-day work and in the consultations with my clients.

I really enjoyed the final project – it was the area I was most challenged and able to add my own stamp. It was broken into sections: give a timeline of diamonds from where they were found to production to jewellery and how we see them today, and to detail popular diamond cuts. In doing the research, I advanced my level of knowledge – besides cut, I researched colour and clarity specifications and which cuts hide inclusions best.

I chose Niessing as a brand to write about as I thought this would be the most beneficial for me in day-to-day consultations – as we sell it. Having been asked lots of questions about the unique design by clients and other team members, it was beneficial to know more. I found the final project challenging because I really wanted to push myself and increase my knowledge from earlier JET assignments – to show how much I'd learned.

JET has helped me in every aspect of my career. Before starting, I had a very basic knowledge of diamonds, gemstones and hallmarks. This was enough information for me to consult with clients and help them make their perfect purchase, but I believe knowledge is everything in this industry. My job has become easier because I have this knowledge when I need it. The confidence I've gained is fantastic too. I plan to continue my JET studies, and I look forward to learning more about the wonderful world of jewellery, diamond and gemstones."



SHARON DAVIES, MARMALADE FINE JEWELLERY (September winner)

"This recognition coincides with my two-year anniversary of joining Marmalade Fine Jewellery and of entering the jewellery industry. My previous career was in business systems and IT, and my last role was with the NHS. As a child, I loved collecting minerals and crystals, and for the past 15 years or so, I've wanted to find a path into gems and jewellery and achieve my qualifications.

I'm proud to work for Marmalade, an independent family-run business that's grown, adapted and innovated over its 20+ years. As it's a small team, I can work across many areas of the business. I support all aspects of the retail experience, focussing on customer service and sales. I've been introduced to creating bespoke jewellery designs; it's such a thrill to see a finished piece when you've helped someone bring their ideas to life. With a gem lab on-site, Marmalade gives me the opportunities to learn from colleagues and apply my gemmology education.

I enjoyed most of the course assignments. I gained a deeper understanding of the history of hallmarking and assaying of metals in the UK and the differences internationally – something I can use daily at work. Covering gemmology, diamonds, geology, mining, manufacturing methods and retail, JET gives context to the roles and disciplines that combine to present great jewellery to a customer.

Diamonds are my favourite gemstone. I've completed a few complementary Gem-A diamond courses, and the material covered by JET provided all the foundations of the diamond pipeline, diamond formation and diamond qualities for me to create a meaningful narrative for customers and to answer their questions. Researching and understanding the Kimberley Process and System of Warranties, and articulating them in my own words, is so helpful in my work.

For my jewellery designer project, I wanted to focus on an individual – someone who'd made an impression on me. I met Francesca Amfitheatrof at the V&A Museum last year – she was being interviewed during a book launch. She spoke about her design process and that gems and jewellery can connect us to the ancient past and the unseen future, as they can persist and outlive us. The romance of that vision gave me a hook to explore her life and work at Louis Vuitton. Formally trained at Central St Martin's and the Royal Academy of Art, she's a bench jeweller, and despite now leading LV's high jewellery collections, she's also been responsible for creating some of the iconic, recognisable and arguably more accessible collections for LV and previously at Tiffany & Co.

Marmalade's management team suggested I take JET1 as learning on the job and training and education are highly valued here. The JET1 course content is relevant in so many aspects of my role. It's one of the broadest and most comprehensive jewellery-focussed courses I've completed, and I use the knowledge I gained every day."



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‘If Jewels Could Talk’. ‘Paraiba’



Lorenz Baumer©
Chanel – ‘Camelia’ high jewellery collection

There’s just time to add one (or both) of these books to your Christmas list.

Paraiba – The legacy of a color

By Kevin Ferreira and Katerina Perez

(Watch Print. $150.00. www.heparaibabook.com)



To give us an idea of how rare Paraiba tourmaline is, in his foreword, Stanislas De Quercize, former CEO and president of Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpels, states “for every 10,000 diamonds mined, only a single Paraiba can be found.”

Arguably, though, its rarity comes second to its beauty, specifically its colour. The vivid electric turquoise blue has lured the designers of top jewellery *maisons*, such as Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Boucheron, Chaumet and many more, despite being a relative newcomer to the jewellery world – it was discovered in the state of Paraiba, Brazil in 1989.

As is explained in an early chapter, Paraiba’s distinctive colour ranges from an electric or neon blue (the most sought-after colour) to emerald green and bluish-green hues. The colours are caused by the interaction of copper and manganese in the tourmaline. Adding a frisson of mysticism and ancient lore, the shade of blue is “known to stimulate the release of dopamine, the neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward.” A useful later chapter outlines the quality factors of the stone.

Author Kevin Ferreira, a gemmologist, is a specialist in Paraiba tourmaline through his family’s involvement in the mining of the gem. His experience and expertise are evident as he traces the origins of Paraiba in Brazil and later in Mozambique and Nigeria. The in-depth, detailed account of the discovery, mining, price fluctuations, ebb and flow of fortunes and eventual resurgence of market interest in the stone – with images of the mines and rough stones – is fascinating.

The globally recognised jewellery influencer Katerina Perez discusses Paraiba’s role in jewellery design as both a central gemstone and to enhance overall jewellery design. Speaking with academics, designers and heads of luxury brands, she shows the versatility of Paraiba in high jewellery design through her firsthand experiences, the words of the experts and many visual examples.

And what visual examples! Full-page photographs of work by designers and houses from around the world (Doris Hangartner, David Morris, Alessio Boschi, Lydia Courteille, Gübelin, Mousson Atelier, Stephen Webster, Fabergé, to name just a few) are stunning, as is the work of jewellery illustrator Barbara Brocchi, who uses the traditional technique of gouache to capture, with amazing precision, Paraiba’s distinctive colouration.

If Jewels Could Talk – seven secret histories

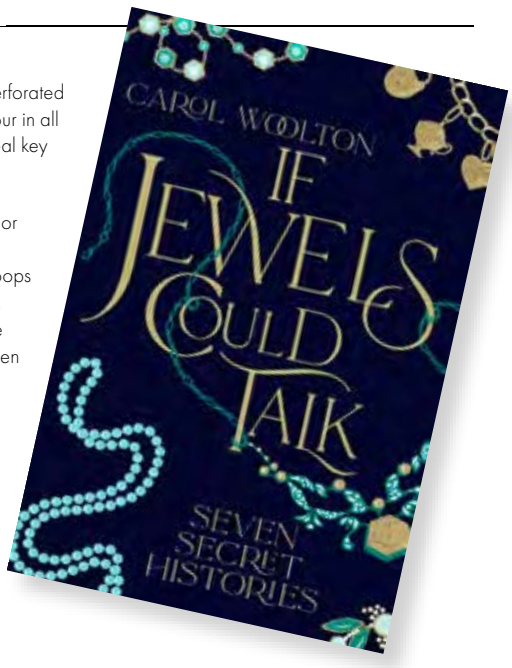
By Carol Woolton

(Gallery Books. £16.99. www.simonandschuster.co.uk)

Jewellery historian and jewellery editor of British *Vogue*, Carol Woolton is perfectly qualified to take us on this journey through the history of jewellery – not just the what and when but also the why. Taking seven items – hoops, rings, beads, charms, brooches, cuffs and head ornaments – she uncovers the (sometimes ancient) stories, cultural significance and random odd facts, enriching our knowledge and understanding. To take the simplest of the seven... a bead is definitely not ‘just a bead.’ As Woolton points out, “these small, perforated discs have witnessed the evolution of human behaviour in all its positivity and ugliness and have the power to reveal key stories about our past.”

Each item chapter is broken down into origins, types or historically famous examples of, for instance, Creole hoops, tribal hoops and Egyptian-inspired hoops (hoops being, in Woolton’s view, the first fashion accessory). A “symbol of love” for around 4,000 years, rings are traditionally associated with solidifying bonds between individuals – it’s all about love, loyalty and trust.

But as she delves deeper, we learn about the beginnings and meanings of toe rings, clasped hands fede rings, motto poesy rings and vinaigrette rings. Beautiful though these things may have been – and still are – they’re filled with significance. There’s so much to learn – it’s a fascinating read.





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The last word goes to...

Jason Allum

The managing director of third-generation jewellers Allum & Sidaway – winner of this year's NAJ's Jewellery Retailer of the Year Award – goes under the Last Word spotlight.

Who has been the biggest influence on your working life?

My grandfather, who sadly passed in 2002, was my biggest influence. He grew our business over the years, through the good, bad and ugly, expanding when times were good – although not always with my grandmother's approval – and tightening the belt through recessions. He was also one of a group of likeminded professionals who formed the Company of Master Jewellers. And from small acorns... the CMJ has grown into the largest buying group in the UK.

Tell us about your career journey in the jewellery industry? Was it a foregone conclusion you'd join Allum & Sidaway or was there a Plan B?

After finishing college and travelling around Europe, (in my head) I was heading to the big smoke to earn my fortune! Thankfully, my parents sent me off to work for my grandfather, and within a few years, I was managing our Dorchester store, then managing director. I was extremely lucky and blessed that my grandfather trusted me to make decisions, and I have never looked back. I feel privileged to be part of this wonderfully sparkly industry and for the friends I have made along the way.

What three words describe you best... in your view AND/OR according to others?

Jason's wife, Ivonna Poplanska [Allum & Sidaway's bespoke jewellery design director], to answer this one! So apparently the three words are kind, fair and hard-working.

Which industry character (with us today OR departed) would you love to sit and chat with, why and what would you talk about?

My grandfather, to have him back for a day, give him a hug and ask him all about his life. I'd like to know all those details that weren't so important to me in my younger years. If only...

What challenges do you envisage for the jewellery industry over the next year or two?

Wars or declining economies – no matter what trading conditions lie ahead, we will keep doing what we do. We are sparkle and joy to our customers. It will be important to stock the right products and move quickly with fashion.

Allum & Sidaway presented a very strong entry, which saw the store beat off the competition in the recent NAJ Awards.

Is it possible to sum up the qualities/attributes of a successful retail business? What key lessons have you learned since you joined/took over the reins?

First, surround yourself with solid, hard-working people with the same passion – people who challenge you and your ideas. Our board of directors is very strong, with a deep sense of belonging and dedication. Most have been with the company for 15 to 30 years, with my son, Jack Allum, joining recently.

Over the years, I have learnt to sometimes give myself time before answering a question. I tell the person I'll think about it and come back to them... and make sure I do!

If you could wave a magic wand, what would be the one thing you would change about the jewellery industry?

Laboratory-grown diamonds... we obviously sell them and advise our clients of the pros and cons of them versus mined diamonds. However, morally, selling something for thousands of pounds today, only for them to be worth a fraction of the purchase price in years to come, doesn't sit well for me. I am also a bit of a romantic and don't see a great deal of romance coming out of a laboratory.

What keeps you awake at night?

Harley, my two-year-old son!



Over the years, I have learnt to sometimes give myself time before answering a question. I tell the person I'll think about it and come back to them... and make sure I do!

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