

PRISM

AGTA



AMERICAN

VOL 3 – 2015

Burtis Blue Turquoise Mine

New Gen Men-
Trends in Menswear Jewelry Fashion

MEMBER PROFILE
John Ford

Out of the Box-
Innovations in Jewelry Packaging & Display

Ming-Na Wen

JEWELS OF THE TRADE

CINDY YEUNG of Emperor Watch and Jewellery is as passionate about her family business as she is her customer relationships, and it shows.

Were you reluctant at all about getting into the family business? My father wanted to immerse me early on, but I wasn't ready. Then at 21, an amazing diamond caught my eye and my passion was born.

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Is there a special piece of jewelry that has been important in your life? The necklace I designed of yellow diamonds and pearls for my wedding. My husband presented it to me on our wedding day.

What advice would you give someone starting out? Always remember that this business is very personal. My customers have become friends, I enjoy being a part of important moments in their lives. They rely on my knowledge and integrity, the same way I rely on GIA—the international standard. GIA reports provide security and confidence, not only for our customers but our company too.

GIA would like to gratefully acknowledge those using our resources to further worldwide expertise in gems. Read Cindy's full interview at WWW.GIA.EDU



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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The American Gem Trade Association is a not-for-profit Association of United States and Canadian gemstone professionals dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of natural colored gemstones and cultured pearls.

Founded in 1981, the AGTA has over 1,200 Members representing leading colored gemstone and cultured pearl wholesalers, retailers, manufacturers,

AGTA Members are proud to uphold the highest ethical standards, agreeing to the Association's strict Code of Ethics & full disclosure of gemstone enhancements.

Membership provides you with many exclusive benefits and services: Members are eligible to exhibit in some of the most important annual events in the gemstone and jewelry industry, including AGTA GemFair™ Tucson, AGTA GemFair™ at the JCK Las Vegas Show, and AGTA Pavilions at the JA New York Summer Show & The Smart Jewelry Show in Chicago.

Members are featured in the AGTA Source Directory, both the printed and online versions. This is a powerful tool that gives access to a valuable network of fellow gemstone professionals. Over 15,000 copies are distributed!

Members stay informed about the AGTA, hot topics surrounding our industry, gemstone & jewelry fashion with the quarterly *Prism* & weekly *ePrism*.

Members have access to leading industry programs. These programs include Bank of America Merchant Services, FedEx Express®, FedEx Declared Value, FedEx Office, Association Health Programs, the Office Depot: Taking Care of Business program and car rentals with Avis and Budget.

Members can also access our AGTA Online Community and gain valuable knowledge from our AGTA GemFair™ Tucson Seminar DVDs and eLearning Platform.

The professionalism of AGTA Members continues to set them apart from the competition. 🌈

Prism

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Trace Boyd, *Marketing Manager*

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3030 LBJ Frwy., Ste. 840, Dallas, TX 75234

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COVER: **Ming-Na Wen**

Producer/Fashion Stylist – Tod Hallman for Ivy Eleven Agency. Photographer – Andrew Macpherson for Copious Management. Makeup – Julianne Kay for Cloutier Remix. Hair – Steven Lewis for Exclusive Artist. Manicurist – Tracey Sutter for Ivy Eleven Agency. Dress: Romona Keveza – ruched emerald green cocktail dress. Earrings: Erica Courtney, Erica Courtney, Inc., 18K yellow gold “Milky Way” earrings featuring Opal drops (46.06 ctw.) accented with Diamonds (1.98 ctw.) and Paraiba Tourmalines (2.03 ctw.). Necklace: Robert Pelliccia, J.R. Dunn Jewelers, 18K yellow gold pendant featuring Opal accented with Paraiba Tourmalines (1.02 ctw.), Aquamarines (.48 ctw.), Tanzanites (1.09 ctw.), Sapphires (.21 ctw.) and Diamonds (1.13 ctw.). Ring: Ryan Roberts, Ryan Roberts, Ltd., 18K yellow gold ring featuring a 11.25 ct. Chrysocholla accented with tsavorite Garnets (.56 ctw.) and Diamonds (.62 ctw.). Brooch: Daniel Allen, C. Kirk Root Designs, 18K tricolor gold Fire-Fly” brooch featuring a 15.30 ct. Opal.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

RUBEN BINDRA



DEAR FRIENDS,

THIS PAST MAY, ICA (INTERNATIONAL COLOR STONE ASSOCIATION) INVITED ME TO BE a guest speaker at their Congress in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I addressed the issue of transparency of the supply chain of gemstones from mine to the end user. I would like to share my thoughts with all of you here. The following is my presentation at ICA Congress, Colombo 2015:

ICA President, Mr. Benjamin Hackman
ICA Congress Committee Chairman, Mr. Imtizam
ICA Board of Directors
Respected dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the International Colored Gemstone Association (ICA) for inviting me to speak at this Congress. It has been an honor and a great pleasure to be here. Events like this Congress are very important venues for our industry to come together and talk about the current state of our industry and discuss current issues that are vital, demand our attention, and need to be discussed in open forums. As a group we can discuss what could and should be done to address these issues.

One such issue is the transparency of the supply chain of gemstones. Meaning the tracking of a gemstone from mine to market. In other words, the end user.

There has been a lot of talk and discussions by various groups about this topic. But these groups have not been able to acknowledge the fact that the colored gemstone industry differs from the diamond and precious metals industries. The diamond and precious metals industries are very large international corporations, sometimes subsidized by governments. These corporations are at several levels of our industry, mining to manufacturing to retail. These are sometimes publicly traded companies, and they often operate under different circumstances than ours. We are mostly small family businesses, with most companies having fewer than 50 employees, the majority with less than 10 or 20 employees.

Tracing a gemstone from mine to market is not an easy task. I think all of us will agree to that. We all know that a parcel of rough can sometimes travel across continents before it is cut and polished. And the same can travel again long distances before it is sold to the end user. Unlike diamonds, colored gemstones are mined in many different countries and most times at several different locations within that country. It can be difficult, if not impossible, to actually trace a gemstone's original mine.

This is a new and a very recent discussion. The topic and the issue are not going to go away. As of now, there are few laws on the books that require us to do this diligence. But I feel our industry needs to address this issue voluntarily rather than wait until we are regulated by our respective governments. The information going to the different government agencies should come from us and not from corporate entities who know little or nothing about our businesses.

Our leaders will have to get together and we all will have to get on board to come up with a voluntary solution to create a road map, so to speak. I think until a time comes that our industry collectively comes up with a solution, we as individual companies and businesses can follow the most ethical path that we can to ensure that the supply chain is legal, ethical and transparent.

Conducting our businesses in an ethical manner is not new to American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) members. I feel proud and privileged to tell you that since its inception, almost thirty-five years ago, AGTA members have adhered to the highest ethical standards in the industry. We sign an annual code of ethics document to maintain our membership in the association. It is one of many things that differentiate us from others.

The AGTA is an association of members who are dedicated to promoting, educating, and maintaining fair business practices in buying, selling and trading natural colored gemstones, cultured pearls, natural colored diamonds and gemstone jewelry. We all must understand that the success of the colored gemstone industry depends upon the respect, trust, and confidence of the industry and of the public. To continue to earn this respect and industry-wide confidence we, as a group, must maintain the highest ethical standards and principles in our business practices.

We encourage our members and everyone else who deals in gemstone industry at any level to abide by all local and federal laws and when doing business overseas to obey and abide by the laws of that country. We certainly encourage everyone to be cognizant of the impact that mining has on land. Land anywhere.

Now I am here to encourage ICA members to join us in this quest. I have had several discussions with ICA President, Mr. Hackman, and we agree that we need to work together, as our goals are common and sincere. Let me assure you that any conversation regarding the issue of transparency of the supply chain of gemstones, any conversation at all, is neither valid nor complete without participation by both ICA and AGTA. Who knows colored gemstone business and its intricacies better than our members? Members of ICA and AGTA represent both producing countries as well as consuming countries. In my opinion, this discussion has to be led by our esteemed associations. As I mentioned, I have had open and sincere discussions with Mr. Hackman and recently with CIBJO President, Dr. Gaetano Cavalieri, regarding this issue and we all agree that it requires our immediate attention and that we need to lead the discussion, not join the discussion at a later date. Third party-initiated discussion on this matter would be self-serving in their commercial interests and not necessarily in ours.

In the new world of instant and unlimited access to information we have no choice but to be as transparent as we can. We need to deal with ethical people at all levels to keep this honorable business just that; honorable.

In conclusion, a few words about our host country. I have been coming to Sri Lanka for years, decades actually. I came here to find gemstones and was very fortunate to have found friends, many of whom I consider family. Their warmth and their hospitality is unparalleled. I feel privileged to come here. Relatively speaking, Sri Lanka is a small island nation, but I think per square kilometer Sri Lanka produces gemstones more efficiently from mine to trading table than any place in the gem mining world.

In closing, I thank the ICA once again, and I thank the ICA Congress Committee for this amazing undertaking. You all have done an extraordinary job and I feel that this event has met or exceeded everyone's expectations.

I thank you all and God Bless you all.



Ruben Bindra
President



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FROM THE CEO

DOUGLAS K. HUCKER



DEAR RETAIL JEWELER,

THE AMERICAN GEM TRADE ASSOCIATION HAS HAD MANY REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION regarding lead glass-filled rubies, and the proper way to disclose them to customers. Hopefully, this letter will help clarify those questions and put your mind at ease.

Stones that combine corundum (ruby or sapphire) that are lead glass-filled are considered by the AGTA to be a composite, manufactured material and cannot be considered “natural” rubies. The use of the unqualified word “ruby” or “rubies” with corundum that is lead glass-filled is not appropriate and disallowed according to the *AGTA Code of Ethics*. These lead glass-filled composite rubies are under consideration by the Federal Trade Commission in their finalization of *Guides for the Jewelry Industry*. The FTC’s position, once the *Guides* are finally released, will most likely align with the language that the AGTA uses, so therefore, presenting a lead glass-filled composite ruby as a “natural” ruby would then be considered a deceptive practice.

Lumping rubies treated by the traditional heating process together with lead glass-filled composite rubies (LGFCR) is at best confusing to the consumer and may lead to the type of negative publicity that has been generated lately on national television.

If you are purchasing these LGFCR from suppliers, they are required to present them to you as composite materials if they are AGTA Members. If they are presenting them to you as “heated” they are in violation of the *AGTA Code of Ethics*. If they are not AGTA dealers then they either may not have sufficient knowledge to be a reliable source or are being duplicitous with you. If they make the representation that they “did not know” then you should seriously consider ending your business relationships with them as they are either being less than straightforward with you or are willing to let you accept the liability and responsibility for misrepresenting LGFCR as natural ruby.

Additionally, as this is very important, the requirements of the FTC extend beyond just the nature of the material. FTC requires the seller to state when a material (natural or manufactured) requires special care or handling to avoid damage. It is well known that these LGFCR are very unstable and can be significantly damaged through exposure to common household chemicals, ultrasonic and the like. Just as you are responsible for this appropriate disclosure to your customers, your dealers are responsible to you. They must clearly disclose that the material is LGFCR and must advise you, in writing, that it requires special care. I have attached below the wording that we include in our *Gem Information Manual*, available at <http://www.agta.org/gemstones/agta-gim.pdf>, page 21. It is sufficient for suppliers, when working with you, to use these codes to inform you and should include the code “SC” to indicate that the material requires special care:

IV. Composite Materials

Examples:

CMP Rubies – Lead Glass-Filled Composite

CMP Sapphires – Lead Glass-Filled Composite

CMP Emeralds – Pieces Bonded with Polymer

CMMP Turquoise – Reconstructed and bonded with Polymer

The “CMP” coded stones require special care; avoid household chemicals, heat, abrasives, ultrasonic and sudden shocks.

I hope this information helps clear up any misunderstandings or questions regarding LGFCR. Please feel free to contact me should you need additional information.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DKH', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Douglas K. Hucker
Chief Executive Officer

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Turquoise Mine Cripple Creek, Colorado

FOR CENTURIES, CRIPPLE CREEK, COLORADO HAS been associated with the 1800's gold rush. There is still significant gold production in the area to this day. One family has been quietly mining, not gold, but the December birthstone Turquoise, and, if current trends continue, the area may become best known, at least within the trade, not for gold, but for Turquoise. We highlight AGTA member, Burtis Blue Turquoise, owner of the Burtis Blue Mine, the only active commercially viable turquoise mine remaining in Colorado.

The privately-owned Burtis Blue Mine has yielded many prized Turquoise gemstones and is also the oldest active Turquoise mine in Colorado, having been in operation for 75 years. The mine, also known as the Florence Lode, is owned and operated since 1939 by Wallace Burtis, Sr., of Cripple Creek, Colorado, and his descendants.

Turquoise, a hydrous basic copper aluminum phosphate, is a favored and cherished colored gemstone among a select group of jewelry artisans. In Cripple Creek, located near the western base of Pike's Peak, it is said that native Americans have worked the deposits for centuries.

In the interesting history of the mine, there is a 25 year period when Wallace Burtis, Sr., gave the city of Cripple Creek the waste tailings from the mine site. The city would haul it away for free to spread it along their road system. A fun activity for local residents would be to go "Turquoise hunting" on the roads of Cripple Creek following a good rain!

Wallace Burtis, Jr. grew up visiting the mine often and actually started mining Turquoise with his father at the age of seven. Initially, they worked a tunnel leftover from the gold rush era located on the claim, it also just happened to produce turquoise. Ultimately for safety sake, surface excavation began. In 1961, Burtis, Sr., patented the claim.

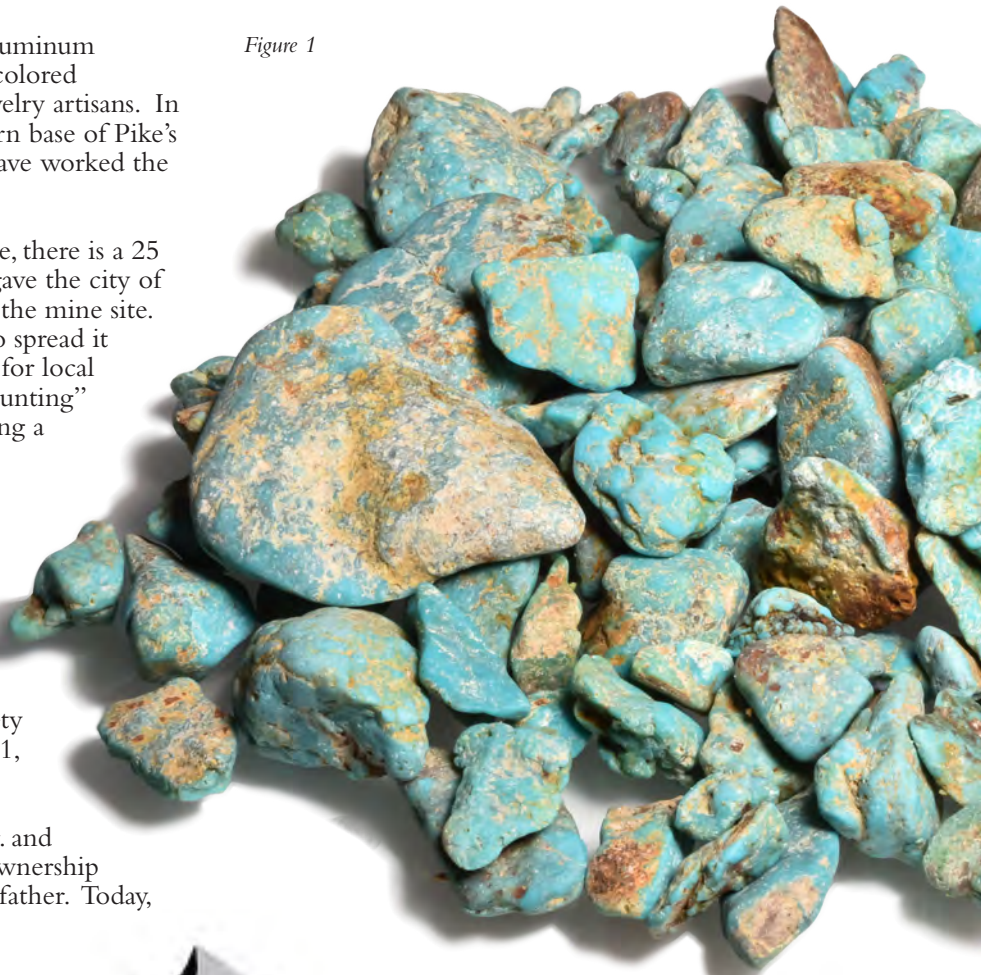
It was in 1982 that Wallace Burtis, Jr. and his wife, Joanne, took over the mine ownership and operation upon the passing of his father. Today,

at age 84, Burtis, Jr. continues, from time to time, to remain active in mining activities, often with his grandson, Peter, age 14, by his side.

Three years ago, the Burtis family brought in the expertise of Clinton Cross, a member of the Sokoki tribe of the Missiquoi Abenaki Nation with a mining and gem cutting background, and his wife, Louisa McKay, to assist with management of mining activities, increase production, and market their Turquoise.

FIGURE 1: Actual Burtis blue Turquoise natural/untreated gem quality rough.

Figure 1



Says Cross, “With the consent of Mr. and Mrs. Burtis we decided to facet this beautiful blue gem material for the first time.” The Turquoise found at Burtis Blue Mine has an unusual hardness, higher than the typical Turquoise found at 5–6 on the Mohs scale. This higher hardness, from a possible silicate presence, results in higher luster than normally found. Cross adds, “I thought of this as a great way to show the gems high hardness and unique characteristics of the Burtis Blue Turquoise gemstones.”

One other very important aspect of marketing has been disclosure to customers that Burtis Blue Turquoise is completely natural, with no treatment or enhancements. Cross says, “The fact is less than 3 percent of turquoise available today is natural.” He continues, “It is mind boggling to think there is so little untreated, natural Turquoise in the marketplace. This led us to contact AGTA member, Stone Group Laboratories with the intention of submitting samples to obtain a ‘legitimate assay’ to provide documented proof confirming the Burtis Blue Turquoise has No Evidence of Treatment or Enhancement.” He acknowledged, “With that we confidently disclose to the consuming public the unique natural properties of the Burtis Turquoise gemstones.”

Cara Williams of Stone Group Laboratories stated, “In early 2015, several samples were submitted to Stone Group Laboratories for analysis and confirmation of lack of treatment. These included several small rough pieces that represented the range of colors produced – from a light powder blue to a medium greenish blue. One striking piece was an intricate nodule. Clinton Cross said these are rarer formations. Infrared analysis with FTIR confirmed all samples to be Turquoise and there were no indications of polymers, waxes or even polishing residues on the cut samples. Variations in color were attributed to iron and copper concentrations and this was confirmed by chemical analysis with ED XRF.”

According to Cross, Burtis Blue Turquoise comes in a variety of light to darker blues and greens with a beautiful golden brown Limonite, and black manganese matrix, and it has an unusual hardness compared to other Turquoise because of its silica-rich solution deposits. And heavy aluminum oxide concentrations mixed together with quartz aluminum phosphate iron and copper. This makes for a magnificent natural product.”

He proceeds, “The Burtis Blue requires no stabilization or treatment of any kind. It is faceted but also cabbed, often set completely natural, without any finish polishes, maintaining its natural beauty and shine.

As one of the Nation’s First People, Cross loves working with the turquoise and believes in the spiritually of this colored gemstone. He says, “Turquoise is considered to be a giving colored



Figure 2

gemstone. It is given to us by the Great Spirit. It has brought peace among the indigenous people of America through trade. It is considered to be a healing stone, it is called “the sky stone,” and is a protector.”

David Baker, AGTA, Clinton Cross & Louisa McKay, Burtis Blue Turquoise, & Cara Williams, Stone Group Laboratories

Lab Report information courtesy of Stone Group Labs and Burtis Blue Turquoise.

Photo Acknowledgements Fig 1 & Fig 2, JL Gross Photography.

Clinton and Louise would like to give special acknowledgement and thank you to - The Great Spirit God, Wallace Jr. and Joanne Burtis, Jeff and Karen Gross, and Max Washburn.

FIGURE 2: Faceted Burtis blue natural Turquoise, with no enhancements. Shown here in sky color and powder blue color. The beautiful faceting shows the gem quality nature and high hardness/luster. Tear Drop: 12×17mm, round: 11mm, larger oval: 9×11mm, smaller oval: 6x8mm.

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side out the box

GROWING UP IN THE BAY AREA, EVERYONE, AND I mean everyone went to Joseph Magnin Co. to purchase their Christmas gifts. J. Magnin was a holiday destination. It wasn't that they had better prices. They didn't. They did however have a more stylish merchandise collection. But in addition to signature goods, J. Magnin did something clever and unexpected to keep customers flocking back year after year. What kept customers giddy with anticipation were the holiday boxes. The packaging was always fun and creative; almost more important than the contents. Every year there was a different theme - desserts, toys, buildings, psychedelic graphics, etc. And the theme was expanded upon through a variety of sizes and shapes. For instance, I recall packaging fashioned like small boxes of candy, a wedge of pie, and even a huge layered cake.

When asked to write this article my first thoughts went back to this genius marketing concept. I then went online, and to my pleasant surprise learned that these vintage and whimsical J. Magnin gift boxes can still be purchased today.

We should all be so clever in branding ourselves and our businesses. Who can forget Tiffany's iconic little blue box? And speaking of boxes, why aren't more businesses thinking outside of it in terms of marketing?

When marketing your business, the most important thing you can do is to have a clear, cohesive, consistent image. This is essential to your brand, and should distinctively reflect you, your business and your product. As stated in their book "Branding Yourself," Erik Decker and Kyle Lacy define branding as "an emotional response to the image or name of a particular company, product, or person." Everything associated with your business should reflect your unique brand; from your retail store signage, to your booth design, to your business cards, to your answering machine message. But it doesn't stop there. Consider your packaging and displays.

PACKAGING

Your packaging is among the first impressions your customer receives. Why not make the most

of this moment? Be thoughtful and imaginative with presentation so that the client becomes enthusiastically engaged before the contents of the package are unveiled. Make sure this experience makes a lasting impression.

A potential customer can tell a lot about you from the manner in which your goods are presented. Think through the consumer experience. What companies stand out as having strong and identifiable packaging? How does it make you feel when you purchase or receive an exquisitely packaged piece? How important is it to you to bring a high degree of professionalism and artistry to this arena of your business identity? How could you be more imaginative and resourceful about packaging your treasures? And what story can you tell about your



own product or business via the presentation?

Just like my experience with J. Magnin, quality packaging will reflect the quality of your business and be something customers remember for years to come.

And with a broader array of new packaging materials available today, you're sure to be inspired. Explore fresh concepts utilizing paper, cardboard, metal, wood, glass and plastic to wow your gift recipients.

ABOVE: *Rivage Collection by Stuller featuring uniquely shaped boxes in a variety of colors.*

You can even create boxes from patterns found online! Your packaging can be high-tech or handcrafted to accompany the jewelry it contains.

And don't stop with the box. The interior possibilities are endless; from tissue paper, flower petals, confetti, and even candies. Perhaps you would like to include a beautiful care card inside the container? And then consider what the box or other packaging item your treasure might be toted home in so that the customer becomes a walking advertisement for your store.

DISPLAY

According to Jayne Redman of Jayne Redman Jewelry in Maine there are three things to consider when displaying your gemstones and gemstone jewelry.

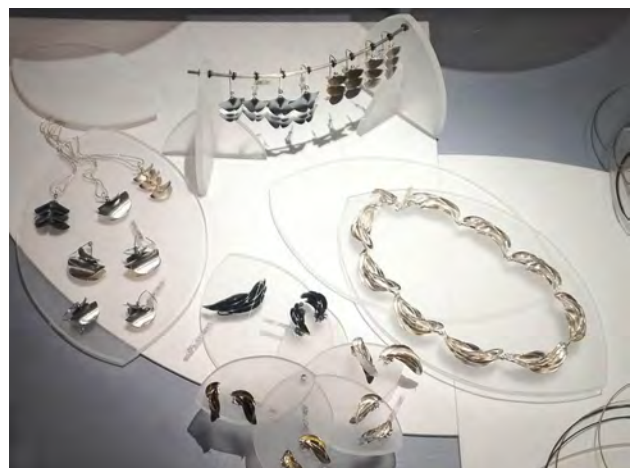
1) "How do the displays relate to the work? 2) Do the displays overwhelm the work?" And 3) Will the displays attract people to your booth or store?" She also adds that by getting creative with your displays you are setting yourself apart from the crowd.

Think of it this way, your displays are a significant part of the first impression your business makes. Are you making the impression you want?

If your aim is to differentiate yourself from a traditional look, make a trip to your local toy store, grocery market or hardware store and explore unexpected materials. When I had a gallery I created displays from children's wood blocks, bathroom tiles, and vellum paper. Clean and edited space signifies importance. The more "white space" you have around a quality piece, the greater the visual impact will be. Just thumb through any fashion magazine to see what I mean. Often you'll find a full-page ad promoting only one piece. Incorporate this theory when displaying jewelry. The more space you put around a "wow" piece the more significant it becomes. Think "less is more." Also, remember to hold some items in reserve outside the case. Bringing them out during the buying process will make the client feel special. Avoid lining up row after row of rings in ring trays. Nothing will stand out because everything will look the same. Many customers will simply glaze over as they scan the contents. By contrast, you will stop your clients in their tracks when you set up displays at varying heights, different distances from each other and in little vignettes.

Take your cues from J. Magnin and have an appreciation for presentation. Take a moment to reflect on how you are displaying and packaging your fine jewelry and loose gemstones. Be inspired to put as much thought into your displays and packaging as you do your product. Remember, your brand is on the line. Get creative. Have fun. Make a statement. And most of all, think outside the box!

By Marlene Richey



TOP CENTER: *Rivage Collection by Stuller featuring boxes in a variety of colors.*
 ABOVE RIGHT: *Unassembled display parts which reflect the flora nature of Jayne Redman's jewelry.*
 BELOW RIGHT: *Assembled displays with the jewelry of Jayne Redman.*

an open letter



I write this in order to express my thoughts regarding what I understand is an effort by others (in my opinion, not qualified to do so) to take ownership of an international gem-dealer position regarding “transparent chain of supply,” and “Fair Trade” practices.

Many years back, when Ray Zajicek was President of the American Gem Trade Association, we printed the first production run for our “Gemstone Enhancement Manual,” then with the shortened title, “GEMPIG.”

As we know, “putting lipstick on a pig” still only gussies up a porker. So we edited, updated and worked hard to improve the initial document, establishing a means for our members to disclose what had been done to the gems they sell and how to report that information in a uniform acronymic language. We went further, providing a “special care” information resource, and we made that available to every echelon of membership.

This was a unique achievement in the Trade; one that our leadership recognized was necessary if AGTA was truly to be “The Authority in Color.” It was tedious and often-contentious work, going over innumerable details, arguing whether to use the letter “E” to describe traditional, historically accepted treatment methods as “enhancements.” We had to logically differentiate use of the word “enhancement,” as opposed to “treatment,” and create acronyms for all manner of methods utilized in processing natural colored gemstones. The blue Topaz irradiation issue, for example, was most troublesome at the time. How to disclose so people wouldn’t think they’d glow in the dark if they knew their blue Topaz had been irradiated?

There were so many issues, so many discussions (“heat” for example, being one of the “E” or traditionally accepted enhancements for gem corundum). But we got there. And we’re still getting there. We update, we rewrite, we learn and pass along our learning to our membership and even to non-members through our website access.

We do it all and we do it well.

And within what we do is our members’ commensurate requirement to comply with the G.I.M. (Gemstone Information Manual’s) disclosure language protocols as indicated in our binding Ethics Pledge. Each year AGTA members must sign this pledge, vowing to conduct our trade activities according to its strict ethical guidelines wherever we do business throughout the world, not just on our home turf. So we do it all. And we literally “wrote the book” that has been adopted by CIBJO (The World Jewellery Confederation), ICA (International Colored Gemstone Association) and other international trade entities across the globe.

We don’t need yet another bureaucratic behemoth to tell us how to conduct ourselves in the world. We KNOW how to conduct ourselves in the world and we put our money and our reputations on the line when we sign on to become Members of AGTA.

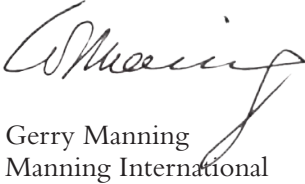
Personally, as one who has been there since the beginning, who has served on just about every committee AGTA has had and continues to have, who has worked to establish legible, literate, universally understandable language in disclosure and ethical practice matters, I find it insulting and even arrogant that Johnny-come-lately special interests are considering how to implement rules to regulate our AGTA through a trumped-up threat of government intervention if we don’t sign on to protocols that are less effective, less concise and less meaningful than that which AGTA has always required of our members. And to what end? This new “service” won’t come cheap. Everyone who feels pressured to sign on to this new protocol will likely have to pay for the privilege of doing what (we) already do. In other words, creating yet another layer of oversight, one that generates revenue for the overseers is a rather transparent attempt in and of itself to build a market for a “special interest” that has its own – and only tangentially – the interests of the entire community at heart.

Recent claims by a spokesperson for the JA/Signet/JVC amalgam made reference to “terrorist funding” being subsidized through trade in natural colored gemstones from “troubled regions.” By implication, these statements pointed an accusatory finger at our membership. Many of us deal in gemstones that are mined in regions where “terrorist” activities do occur. This spokesperson made wide-ranging and unsupportable claims that trading in natural colored gem materials from these regions provides the wherewithal for “terrorists” to fund their activities. This scare-tactic (based upon no known factual evidence) claims that unless we sign on to a vague new set of protocols, the United States government will make all of us comply with yet more restrictive regulations. So, rather than have THAT happen (and they refer to the Myanmar embargo as example of the Hand of Big Government coming down to squash our freedoms to trade according to our own set of business standards) they suggest that we empower THEM to act as the arbiters of transparent trade practice, setting THEM up as the layer of protection from government oversight.

Sorry. This is just uninformed. AGTA members already do what we know how to do to promote fair and equitable trade. We know how to provide much needed revenue to artisanal mining communities across the world. We know how to promote human rights and how we can effectively improve the lives of those who provide us with the gems we buy and sell.

AGTA has, in principle, agreed to develop a “transparency and chain of supply protocol” along with ICA and CIBJO, provided that it incorporates the ethical constructs that AGTA has long woven in to our Association’s fabric. We’ve gone the extra mile to make our Trade Association a model of ethical, authoritative and trustworthy partnering in mining, processing, marketing and trading of natural colored gemstones. We’re more than willing to assist others who wish to make the journey to implementing source transparency information and ethical trade practice policies similar to those that our AGTA has long required of our membership.

Respectfully,



Gerry Manning
Manning International



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NEW MEN

INSPIRED BY SOCIAL NETWORKING, GENDER-NEUTRAL FASHION AND CELEBRITY TRENDS, TODAY'S MALE JEWELRY CONSUMER SEEKS ELEVATED DESIGNS DETAILED WITH COLOR

ANDROGYNY IS IN. FEMININE LOOKS SUCH AS elongated cuffs, draped tunics, botanical-print suits and lace shirts were ubiquitous on the menswear runways for fall 2015 and spring 2016, giving a clear indication that gender neutrality is a top trend. Coinciding with this trend is an increased opportunity for men to wear jewelry—particularly with color—a market segment significantly on the rise.

According to management consulting firm Bain & Co., men's accessories outperformed across the board globally in 2014 compared with 2013, while there's been an overall positive trend in men's categories in the American luxury goods market specifically since 2012. Market research firm NPD Group concurs: sales of men's accessories nationwide increased 9 percent to \$13.6 billion in the 12 months ending May 2014, with the jewelry sector increasing 3 percent to \$3.3 billion.

What's causing the growth? Industry experts cite three main reasons: the Internet's proliferation of style-related information, a gender-defying concept of fashion and the powerful influence of celebrity.

"Men are becoming more bold when it comes to adornment," says Juliet Hutton-Squire, head of global strategy at Adorn Insight, a London-based market intelligence agency for the jewelry trade. "They're influenced by the digital domain and social networks where events such as men's runway shows and image-sharing are becoming much more prolific. There's also the emergence of the gender-neutral phenomenon, which gives men opportunities to wear jewelry that they might not have considered before." Michael O'Connor,

jewelry expert and president of Style & Substance Inc., agrees, adding that urban musicians, sports figures and celebrities such as Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp and Justin Bieber are also having an influence by showing men it's cool to wear jewelry, as well as shows such as *Mad Men*.

While the men's jewelry market has grown, so has the selection of jewelry being offered, says Liz Chatelain, president of MVI Marketing Ltd., who has seen a 17 percent increase in men buying jewelry for themselves since 2010, as well as a 12 percent increase in women selecting or buying jewelry (other than a wedding band) for men.



ABOVE: William Travis Jewelry Spike ring from the Gladiator collection featuring five round brilliant-cut cognac Diamonds (37 ctw.) set in a stipple-finished 18 ct. rose gold band accented on each side by two brush-finished 18 ct. yellow gold bands detailed with spikes.

New York City-based David Yurman now offers more than 20 men's collections with items ranging from belt buckles inlaid with rare and unique gemstones handpicked worldwide for their coloring, composition and symbolism, to jewelry items centered on exotic, vividly colored gemstones in a variety of cuts, carvings and settings. In a recent interview with *WWD*, Yurman said the men's category "currently accounts for 18 percent of total retail business and has emerged as one of the fastest-growing mainline product divisions," with men "increasingly willing to spend more on great design."

Great design is the primary driver behind sales of men's jewelry at least doubling in the last three years

At D. Muscio Fine Jewelry Studio in Atlanta, where the primary business is commissioned pieces, owner and AGTA Spectrum Award™ winner Dawn Muscio says men are mainly attracted to unique designs inspired by architecture and engineering, with a combination of high-karat gold, alternative metals and gemstones. They're also very interested in how their piece gets made.

"Our custom process is very experiential, and I think that really resonates with our male customers," says Muscio. "There's also an increased interest in colored gemstones, in particular, and our gemstone roundtable events allow for another experience in picking out the perfect stone."



at Chapel Hill, N.C.-based William Travis Jewelry, winner of nine AGTA Spectrum Awards™. The bulk of the business is generated from rings and large-link chains, particularly with unusual details such as a mix of high-karat yellow gold, oxidized and plated metals, and colored gemstones with interesting cuts and inclusions.

"Style is the key factor," says William Travis Kukovich. "Men today are mainly interested in wearing jewelry that reminds them of something personal and meaningful, like a nonpermanent tattoo. They tend to like pieces that have a worn or lived-in look over the flash, just like a favorite pair of jeans."

Case in point: the Gladiator line, originally conceived for breast cancer survivors, which was expanded into a men's line that's become the company's best-selling ever; in fact, they're selling a piece a week. Of particular note is the Spike ring (preceding pg), which features a stipple-finished rose gold band set with cognac Diamonds, accented with brush-finished yellow gold bands detailed with spikes. Another is the ring that won Honorable Mention in the Men's Wear division at the 2015 AGTA Spectrum Awards™, which features a 13.17-carat Citrine with the company logo set beneath, in yellow gold and oxidized sterling silver.



ABOVE: David Yurman bracelet from the Spiritual Beads collection featuring tiles of Malachite and black Diamonds set in sterling silver framed by a black nylon cord finished with black Onyx beads.
BELOW RIGHT: Dawn Muscio gothic-inspired cross featuring a red Garnet set in 18 ct. yellow gold and stainless steel with colorless-and black-Diamond accents (.47 ctw.).

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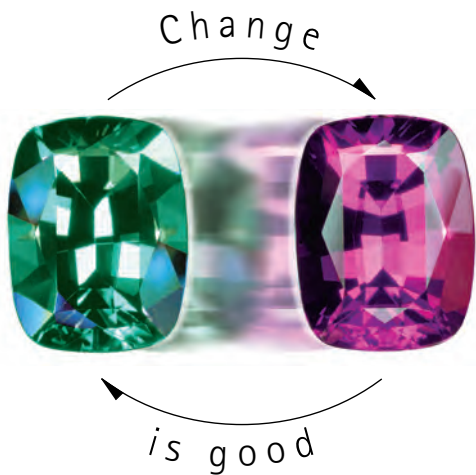


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Colored gemstones are the catalyst behind Mark Schneider's inimitable jewelry creations for men, known more as "wearable art" to admirers. Based in Long Beach, Calif., the multiple AGTA Spectrum Award™ winner—who's seen an upsurge in sales of his men's wedding bands—tends to start his creative process for men by first picking out the gemstone.

"I like to focus on making the design complement the shape and color of the gemstone, making it the focal point of the piece," Schneider says.

New York City-based designer Naomi Sarna, winner of 15 AGTA Spectrum Awards™, has also seen a spike in men seeking unique and beautiful jewelry for themselves—particularly rings and lapel jewels—and feels necklaces and cufflinks may soon share the spotlight as another way for men to display color and personal style.

Cuff links are already a bright spot for designers such as Pamela Huizenga and Michael Kanners. Huizenga, based in Port St. Lucie, Fla., enjoys creating cufflinks, as well as bracelets, for men that combine gold and unusual gemstones, minerals and fossils into chic and timeless jewels. Kanners, meanwhile, who won an AGTA Spectrum Award™ in 2015 for a cufflink design showcasing Tanzanite and Tavorite Garnet has seen an "enormous increase" in men purchasing his sophisticated yet whimsical creations for themselves (think pasta and rabbits popping out of top hats).

"My male clients want something special that only they, and possibly very few others, have," Kanners says. "By incorporating rare materials and complicated, often historical techniques, I guarantee my cuff links are different from the rest of the market."

Gregore Morin of Santa Barbara, California-based Gregore Joailliers also emphasizes the exclusivity of his distinctive pieces for men—which center on cufflinks, rings, tie tacks and brooches—but the multiple AGTA Spectrum Award™ winner tends to use a more neutral colored gemstone palette. The same goes for Todd Reed. The Boulder, Colorado-based designer finds his industrial-chic designs featuring mainly raw diamonds in subtle shades resonate with men.

"What I like the most is that men are wearing more elevated looks, not just pieces such as daggers and skulls," says the two-time AGTA Spectrum Award™ winner. "Men are choosing designs that are wearable, elegant and unique enough to make them stand out as individuals."



TOP TO BOTTOM: 1) Mark Schneider Pearl Wave ring featuring a 13.5mm black Tahitian pearl accented with Diamonds (.74 ctw.) and pink sapphires (.43 ctw.) set in platinum with a sandblast finish. 2) Naomi Sarna Pasha ring featuring a hand-carved 63.5 ct. smoky Quartz set in platinum, 18 ct. yellow gold and 18 ct. white gold with Diamond accents (1.17 ctw.). 3) Gregore Morin tiki-set featuring 18K yellow and white gold cufflinks featuring pink Opal, 18K white gold cufflinks featuring Turquoise and Coral, and blackened-silver cufflinks featuring faceted Moonstone. 4) Todd Reed cufflinks featuring 11.2 ct. fancy-cut Diamonds and raw Diamonds (1.13 ctw.) set in 18 ct. yellow gold.

O'Connor also finds men gravitate toward neutral-color gems that will work with anything, as well as those that are opaque or featured in rough form, as cabochons or in flat cuts to avoid too much sparkle. He also sees more men wearing pendants (think dog tags with black spinel, garnets or rubies), as well as ear studs in colored gemstones, traditionally Diamond territory.

But while men are becoming increasingly more discerning about the jewelry they wear to express their personal style, O'Connor feels the fine jewelry market is slow to the party.

"We're seeing an entirely new generation of men who have not grown up with the stigma of wearing jewelry," O'Connor says. "Once they achieve career success, where do they go to illustrate that with jewelry? As a result, I think the watch market has reaped the benefit because they offer more options."

Chatelain feels it's an underserved category as well: "MVI has seen an increase in desire from both male and female consumers for more men's jewelry selections in stores. Men tell us the more they see other men they know wearing jewelry, the more they think about doing it also. It's definitely a major trend."

What does tomorrow hold? Who's to say. But what seems clear is that a new door is opening to male expression. Let's hope this trend becomes a movement as gender becomes one of this decade's most relevant topics and color is no longer exclusively female domain.

Here's to more beauty to companion a man's brawn...more style to reflect a man's success...and more color to differentiate the male species. Not just on the runway, but in real life; the boardroom, the bedroom, the bar, and the beach. 🌈 By Jerilynn Kraus



ABOVE RIGHT: David Yurman dog tag from the Exotic Stone collection featuring pavé-set color-change Garnets set in sterling silver. BELOW RIGHT: Pamela Huizenga bracelet featuring a 40 ct. fossilized Bamboo on an 18 ct. yellow gold and dark-brown leather band.



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MEMBER PROFILE

JOHN FORD



IN 1987, JOHN FORD JEWELERS was opened as a brick and mortar jewelry store in Galveston, Texas specializing in wholesale jewelry repairs and manufacturing, as well as serving the local customer base. John's penchant for giving back to the community spurred his numerous leadership roles in Galveston. John has served

as an elected official, in the capacity of president of the Galveston Independent School District Board of Trustees; an appointed official in the capacity of chairman of the board of trustees of the Port of Galveston; vice chairman of the Central Appraisal District Board of Directors for Galveston County; and numerous other boards and commissions. John currently serves as president of the Rural Rail Transportation District of Galveston County.

Aside from designing exquisite jewelry, the joys of John's life are his two sons, John Jr., a second-year law student at Southern Methodist University; and Christopher, a junior majoring in business at Texas A&M University. John is undeniably proud that both sons are active in the promotion of the Lightning Ridge Collection.

What is your favorite AGTA Memory?

"I have many fond AGTA memories, the most special being last year's AGTA Spectrum Awards™ Gala, where I received my Spectrum Award. Sharing that experience with my sons, John Jr. and Christopher, as well as close friends from Australia, made for a very happy table!"

What drew you to jewelry, and more specifically, Opals?

"I fell in love with Lightning Ridge Opal 30 years ago; it was love at first sight. The colors, the brilliance, and the beauty- combined with the fact that it's 100% natural - is overwhelming and deeply resonates with me."

How long have you worked with Lightning Ridge Opals?

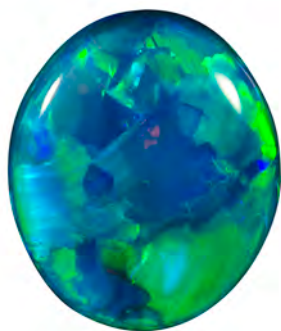
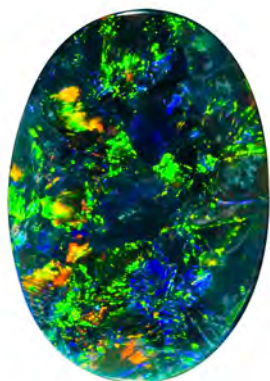
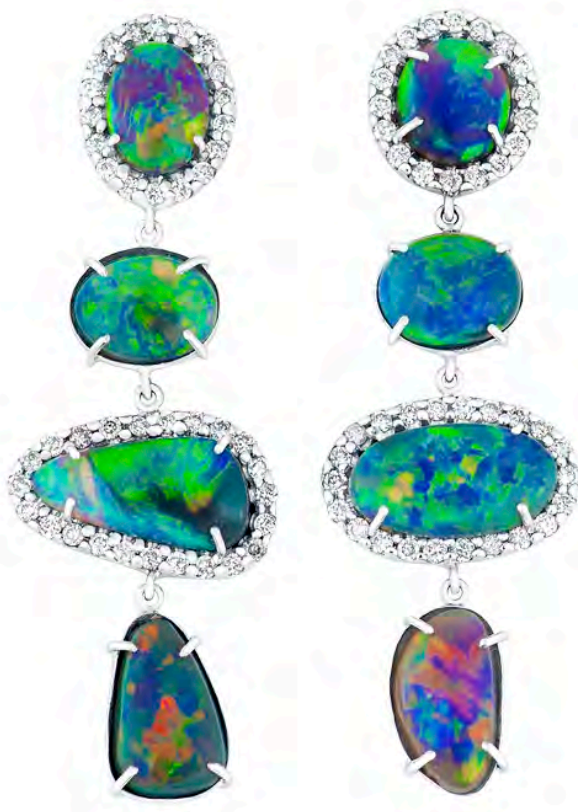
"I started working with Lightning Ridge Opal in 1985. I designed a few pieces a year and wholesaled a small number of gemstones, but mostly I sold Diamonds and did wholesale custom design work. Then in about 2000, by pure chance, I met and became close friends with an Australian who reawakened my interest in Opals. In 2008 Hurricane Ike devastated my life and showroom and I had a lot of time to reflect on what I really wanted to do with the rest of my life. I came up with the idea of starting the Lightning Ridge Collection and designing Lightning Ridge Opal and Diamonds my way."

What are the main characteristics that make Lightning Ridge Opals different?

"The main characteristics that make Lightning Ridge Opal so unique and special are its vibrant colors: red, blue, green, yellow, and orange; coupled with infinitely unique properties that ensure that no two gemstones are ever alike. Further, since Lightning Ridge Opal is 100% natural from nature, it only needs a skilled gem cutter to unlock its inner beauty."

What's it like to see someone on the street wearing one of your creations?

"It's the greatest feeling in the world- and it's happened a lot over the years. I must admit seeing my designs worn at this year's Academy Awards® was a very emotional and immensely gratifying experience."



ABOVE CENTER: 18K white gold earrings featuring four freeform Lightning Ridge black Opals (8.72 ctw.) accented with Diamonds (.79 ctw.). BELOW LEFT: 6.15 ct. Lightning Ridge black Opal. BELOW RIGHT: 6.84 ct. Lightning Ridge black Opal.

What advice would you give to someone interested in getting into the jewelry design business?

“Besides getting involved with AGTA, I would advise them to gain a mastery of the production side of jewelry design. In order to be a good jewelry designer you have to understand production processes, costs and have a strong gemological knowledge of the gemstones you are working with.”

What is your favorite piece you’ve ever created – and what made it so special?

“My favorite piece would be the “Maxine,” which won an AGTA Spectrum Award™ in 2014. I had a great idea for the design, found a special Opal in Lightning Ridge, and I serendipitously named the ring after Maxine O’Brien, the manager of the Lightning Ridge Miner’s Association, with the condition that if I won she would come see me receive the Spectrum Award in Tucson. And she did!”



How do you approach a new collection? Where do your ideas evolve from?

“It’s just inspiration. In the case of the Lightning Ridge Collection, I loved black Opal and wanted to design jewelry so others could also fall in love with it. My designs normally start with a mental picture followed by a quick sketch and then it’s to the bench or to my gem cutter. Some ideas pan out, others don’t. Some days I tell my friends I came up with 5 great designs, and then it’s weeks without an idea. I think Edison crystallized it best when he said “it’s more perspiration than inspiration.”

“I fell in love with Lightning Ridge Opal 30 years ago; it was love at first sight.”



What’s next? What’s your vision for the future of your brand?

“Thanks to the exposure from winning an AGTA Spectrum Award™ and participating in multiple AGTA events my line will be in showing in about 12 stores nationwide between now and Christmas. My goal is to have relationships, either with my line in store or exhibited at trunk shows, in a limited number of stores...about 24 or so nationwide. I will be exhibiting for the first time at AGTA GemFair Tucson™ in 2016 and look forward to exhibiting my finished designs and loose Opals, and hope to add more stores in the future.”

What type of person do you have in mind when designing the line?

“I want to expose the Lightning Ridge Collection to someone who only thinks Opal is white-based. To see Lightning Ridge Opal is to love it, I want to share this special gemstone with as many people as possible.”

How would you describe your designs?

“I would describe my designs as predominantly classical, but with a number of modern elements incorporated.”

What are your favorite materials to work with?

“My favorite materials begin, of course, with Lightning Ridge Opals, mixed with Diamonds set in either 18K gold or platinum.”

What are you working on now? Any new designs you can hint at?

“The line is expanding and I am working with earrings, pendants and bracelets that incorporate multiple black Opals that don’t necessarily match. I have a new line of men’s jewelry on the drawing board, as well. As for hints, if time permits, I am hoping to have an example of each in this year’s AGTA Spectrum Awards™ along with a couple of special surprise pieces.”

Name two icons you admire and why.

John Wayne; I always enjoyed watching his movies with my father growing up. The Duke’s on-screen persona is a perfect match for someone like me from Texas.

Elvis Presley; I was a big fan growing up, loved the way he wore his jewelry with such zeal. I admired his rags to riches story and the lessons of the pit falls of his success that we can all learn from.

It’s happy hour. What are you drinking?

“Devil’s Cut or Jim Beam Kentucky Bourbon.”

Do you have a most treasured item in your personal jewelry collection?

Yes, a simple gold cross made by a good friend, Hal George. Hal was a talented goldsmith who died way too young. I have worn it for over 25 years.

By Megan Whitmire, AGTA

ABOVE LEFT: 18K white gold ring featuring a 2.91 ct. Lightning Ridge black Opal accented with Diamonds (.61 ctw). BELOW LEFT: 18K white gold ring featuring a 2.43 ct. Lightning Ridge black Opal accented with round brilliant-cut Diamonds (1.82 ctw).



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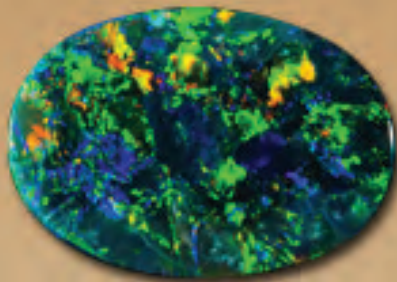


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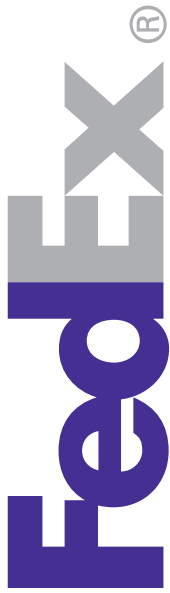


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