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Shifting forms, lasting craft

Jewellery has always lived at the intersection of permanence and reinvention. While precious metals and gemstones may endure for generations, the way we design, sell, wear, and value them is constantly evolving. This issue arrives at a time when the industry is embracing that evolution—not by abandoning tradition, but by building upon it in thoughtful and unexpected ways.

Across these pages, you'll find stories that examine how innovation is reshaping long-established practices, how shifting consumer expectations are opening new opportunities, and how the definition of value is becoming broader than ever before. The common thread you'll find is adaptation with purpose.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is perhaps the clearest example. Rather than replacing artistry, Eliran Dahan and Tal Kenig explore how AI is quietly transforming the operational backbone of jewellery retail, streamlining everything from image production to customization and content management. As they write, the opportunity lies in “rethinking workflows that were never designed for today’s volume of digital content.” Sometimes the biggest breakthroughs happen behind the scenes.

Consumers, meanwhile, are rewriting the rules of self-expression. Chris Ploof explores the growing momentum behind men’s jewellery, where Damascus steel, carbon fibre, alternative metals, and bold bracelets reflect a new confidence in personal style. Karen Howard follows that conversation from the appraiser’s bench, observing that “what consumers are buying today will become the appraisal assignments of tomorrow.” As tastes evolve, so too must the knowledge and standards that support the industry.

Elsewhere, history reminds us that reinvention is not new. Lauriane Lognay revisits August’s birthstones—peridot, sardonyx, and spinel—uncovering the rich traditions, symbolism, and surprising stories behind gems that continue to captivate each new generation. Duncan Parker, meanwhile, turns our attention to platinum, offering a timely perspective as soaring gold prices dominate headlines and challenging long-held assumptions about one of jewellery’s most prestigious metals.

We also step onto the show floor at JCK Las Vegas, where this year’s standout designs, materials, and emerging trends offered a glimpse into the industry’s next chapter. Together, they paint a picture of a market that is increasingly diverse, expressive, and willing to experiment while remaining firmly rooted in exceptional craftsmanship.

Perhaps that’s the enduring beauty of jewellery. Every piece carries a story—of the earth it came from, the hands that shaped it, and the person who ultimately wears it. As our industry continues to evolve through new technologies, fresh perspectives, and changing tastes, those stories only become richer.

We hope this issue inspires you to discover a few of them.

Until next time. 🌐

Linda

Linda Dalke
Publisher

*“The measure of intelligence
is the ability to change.”*

– Albert Einstein



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Contributors: Chris Ploof, Duncan Parker, Eliran Dahan, Karen Howard, Lauriane Lognay, Sara Belyazid, Tal Kenig.

Jewellery

CANADA'S JEWELLERY MAGAZINE BUSINESS®



on the cover

Model Suki Yeung wears Xander Jane's Eclipse engagement ring—18K yellow gold and black ceramic with a 2.70-carat centre diamond and 0.35 carat total weight (ctw) reverse-set diamond halo—captured in a black-dominant palette with warm accents.

PHOTOGRAPHER: NATALIE OZHYK

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This month, *written in stone*

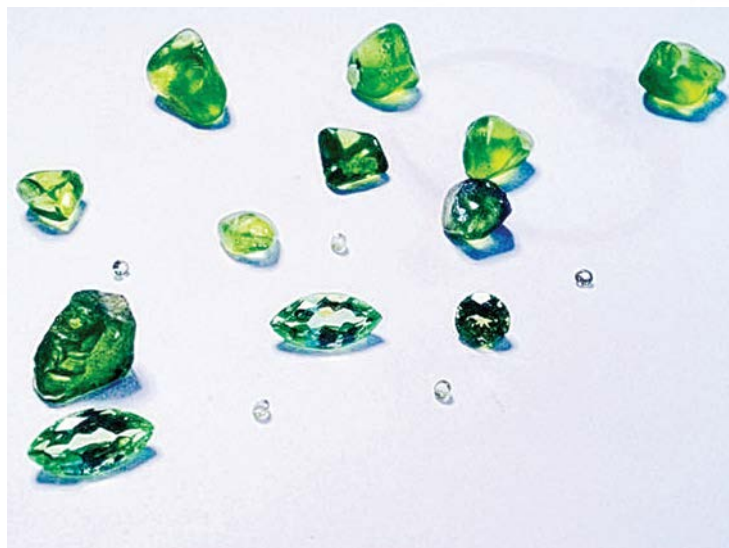
By Lauriane Lognay

The tradition of birthstones is a long one. It dates back thousands of years, and it is deeply rooted in religion, culture, and astrological beliefs. Even today, people underestimate the impact birthstones can have on us. Each month of the year gets, in general, two or three gemstones assigned to it. The origin of those assignments is rooted in religious belief, symbolism, and later, in more modern times, the jewellery industry standardization.

Birthstone jewellery is a great market for jewellers, and a classic to get for presents and events alike.

The month of August is a very special month, because unlike many other months that have different birthstones in American and European traditions, August was historically associated with just one primary gemstone in each tradition. But from 2016, the month of August got a new gemstone assigned to it, totalling three gemstones we'll see today.

PHOTOS COURTESY RIPPANA INC.



With a hardness of 6.5 to 7 on the Mohs scale, peridot is hard enough for jewellery, but generally fragile to chemicals and heat. So, one must be cautious when handling it.

PHOTOS COURTESY RIPPANA INC.

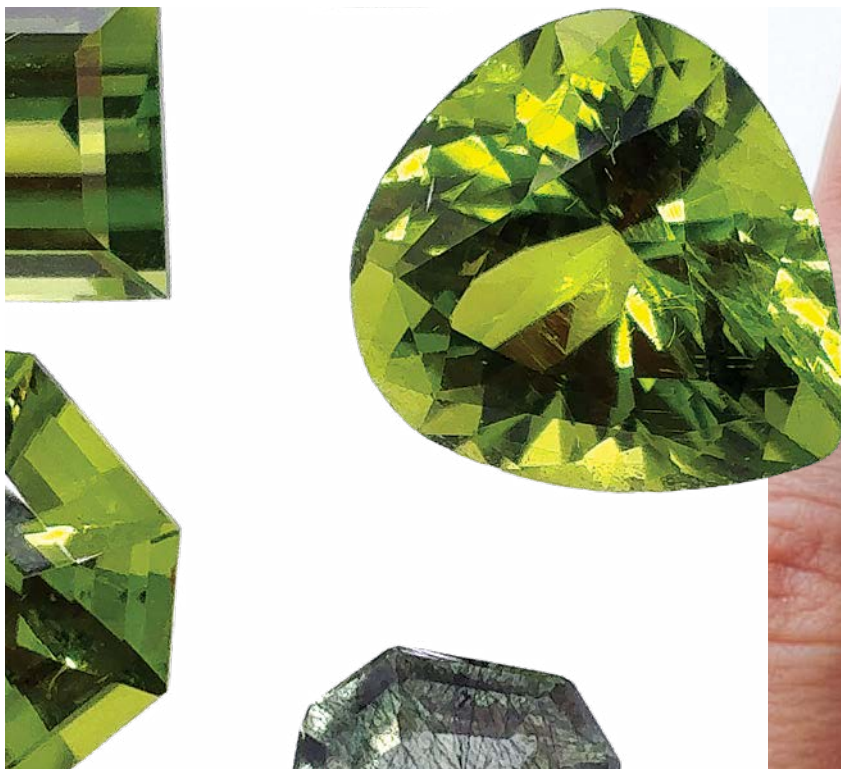
Peridot

The one we all know is peridot, this semi-precious variety of olivine, also called forsterite. Known for its vibrant olive green to yellowish colour, it is well-known and loved. The ancient Egyptians referred to it as the “gemstone of the sun.” They believed it offered them protection and brought them good fortune.

With a hardness of 6.5 to 7 on the Mohs scale, this gem is hard enough for jewellery, but generally fragile to chemicals and heat. So, one must be cautious when handling it. It is easily recognizable under the loupe or microscope for its strong double refraction, meaning you see the facet edges and inclusions in double!

The green colour is associated with summer and abundance. Although the exact reason is unclear, the National Association of Jewelers (now Jewelers of America) in the United States has recognized peridot as August’s birthstone. Peridot is not a stone that is generally treated. It doesn’t take the heat well, and while some rough peridot will have oil on it to make it look better, what you see on the market is often without treatment.

Peridot is an inexpensive gemstone until it hits three carats or more in size. When it gets big and clear of inclusions, the prices often double or even triple, because bigger and cleaner peridots are very hard to find today.



Peridot is one of the rare gemstones that can be found in Pallasite meteorites—meaning some peridot have celestial origins!



Some important sources for peridot include China, the United States, Myanmar, Egypt, and Pakistan.

Fun fact: Peridot is one of the rare gemstones that can be found in Pallasite meteorites—meaning some peridot have celestial origins!

Some important sources for peridot (historically and presently) include China, the United States, Myanmar, Egypt, and Pakistan.

Sardonyx

Sardonyx is the original and first August birthstone and is more popular in Europe than in America. It's a variety of chalcedony that comes from the Quartz family (the same big family that has citrine, amethyst, onyx, jasper, smoky quartz, and so on).

Sardonyx is typically a layered semi-precious gemstone, with sard (the reddish-brown colour) and white chalcedony. This gives it a banded pattern from deep red to orange, to red and white, or orange and white.

Often used to make cameos, this material has a hardness of 7 on the Mohs scale. The bands, if there are any, are usually parallel to each other, creating a unique look to the gemstone.

As unassuming as it looks, it's one of the most important gemstones of the ancient world. When you come across some antique rings that have cameos on them, and the cameos themselves are white, with a red or orange background, those are generally natural sardonyx.

It was used extensively by the ancient Greeks and Romans for seals and rings with portraits (signet rings), and it was loved by artisans around the world for its potential as a carving material.

It is believed to be one of the original gemstones associated with the breastplate of Aaron, which is believed to be the first artifact used to depict the birthstones.



Often used to make cameos, sardonyx has a hardness of 7 on the Mohs scale.

SARDONYX PHOTOS BY CANVA AI

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Some important sources for sardonyx (historically and presently) include India, Brazil, Uruguay, Germany, and Madagascar.



Sardonyx is typically a layered semi-precious gemstone, with sard (the reddish-brown colour) and white chalcedony.



Spinel has a Mohs hardness of 8, indicating it is a highly durable gemstone that withstands heat well and remains chemically stable overall.

PHOTOS COURTESY RIPPANA INC.

This gemstone is highly resistant to daily wear, making it ideal for all types of jewellery.

Sardonyx treatments typically involve dyeing to enhance colour contrast and heating to darken certain bands. Otherwise, the stone remains untreated.

Sardonyx today is not an expensive gemstone, but I would be careful of collector's stones like handmade and antique cameos, or items with historical value. That's where the treasures are with sardonyx!

Some important sources for sardonyx (historically and presently) include India, Brazil, Uruguay, Germany, and Madagascar.

Spinel

Spinel is the newest and latest addition to the birthstone family. The Jewelers of America added it as the August birthstone in 2016—only 10 years ago!

Spinel is arguably one of the most underrated but fascinating gemstones there is. The name comes from Latin “spina,” meaning arrow, because of the arrow-like shape of the rough (double pyramids or octahedra).

Spinel has a Mohs hardness of 8, indicating it is a highly durable gemstone that withstands heat well and remains chemically stable overall.

The colours range from a pale reddish orange to a deep red to a beautiful cobalt blue, easily competing with the ruby and the sapphire beauty. Bright pink, grey, and even black are colours found in spinel. Like garnet and tourmaline, spinel has a large arsenal of colours available to us.

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In partnership with the American Gem Trade Association, Stuller proudly introduces the Stuller Color of the Year Award at the 2026 AGTA Spectrum & Cutting Edge Awards. This new award celebrates exceptional interpretations of Stuller's 2026 Color of the Year — Signature Red — honoring the creativity, craftsmanship, and artistry of contestants with both loose gemstones and jewelry.

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Before modern science was invented, no one could tell the difference between a spinel (MgAl_2O_3) and a ruby (Al_2O_3).



The colours range from a pale reddish orange to a deep red to a beautiful cobalt blue, easily competing with the ruby and the sapphire beauty.



Some important sources for spinel (historically and presently) include Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Vietnam, among a few others.

Fun fact: Before modern science was invented, no one could tell the difference between a spinel (MgAl_2O_3) and a ruby (Al_2O_3); the colours can be extremely similar, as is the chemical composition. It wasn't until the late 18th century that we developed the technology necessary to distinguish spinel as a separate mineral from ruby. However, gem traders in Myanmar were the first to recognize spinel as being distinctly different from ruby in the late 1500s. This all led to some spinels being mistaken for rubies in the past. Amongst them is the famous Black Prince's ruby in the British crown jewels (still called a ruby in the museum description of the royal crown today). Balas ruby and spinel-ruby are some of the old names we used before people simply decided to call it spinel. Some important sources for spinel (historically and presently) include Sri-Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Tanzania, Madagascar, Vietnam, and a few other countries lucky enough to have them in the soil.

Some important sources for spinel (historically and presently) include Sri-Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Tanzania, Madagascar, Vietnam, and a few other countries lucky enough to have them in the soil.

Lucky August babies

In the end, August is one of the most fascinating months when it comes to birthstones. From the bright green glow of peridot to the historical importance of sardonyx, and finally the colourful and newest addition of spinel, each gemstone tells a different story shaped by history, culture, and astrology. Together, these three gems represent thousands of years of human fascination with beauty, symbolism, and rarity. Whether chosen for their meaning, their durability, or simply their appearance, August birthstones continue to hold a special place in both the gemstone world and in jewellery traditions around the globe. I'll add that August has a special place in my heart because it's also my birth month. 🌟



Lauriane Lognay is a fellow of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain (FGA) and has won several awards. She is a gemstone dealer who works with jewellers to help them decide on the best stones for their designs. Lognay owns Rippana, Inc., a Montréal-based company that offers coloured gemstone, lapidary, and jewellery services. She can be reached at rippanainfo@gmail.com.

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A pair of platinum, diamond, and black pearl earrings, ca. 1990.

Platinum

The original prestige metal

As gold prices soar, platinum's rich history reveals its enduring appeal

By Duncan Parker

The entire world is watching the price of gold soar. Ten years ago, it would have been very rare for a regular member of the public to be able to tell me the current price of precious metals. Sure, there were those who had just been out shopping and asked in shock, "Do you know how much they want for a simple gold chain?" However, if I asked them if they knew how much gold was per ounce, they really couldn't tell me.

These days, nearly everyone who sits across from me to discuss auction options starts by asking questions like, "What happened to gold?" and "How did gold get to \$5,000 an ounce?" I point out that the \$5,000 price is in United States dollars, and it's even more in Canadian.

How is this pertinent to a discussion of what is considered the most prestigious and luxurious precious metal, platinum?

Historically, platinum has also almost always been the costliest of the precious metals. Often, platinum has been twice the price of gold. When I mention the price of the precious metal, I am speaking of the pure raw material, not finished jewellery made in the metal.

So, today, when we discuss the price of precious metals, we are essentially comparing pure gold to pure platinum or pure silver. Ingot to ingot, ounce for ounce.

Metals are mined and refined, and the refining process produces the pure and distinctly separated precious metals. The Royal Canadian Mint

PHOTOS COURTESY DUNCAN PARKER, DUPUIS AUCTIONEERS



A 1920s emerald and diamond necklace.

is famous for its ability to refine to 99.99 per cent pure gold, and also produces a premium 99.999 per cent pure gold!

In jewellery, we rarely use pure metals; they are usually alloyed, or melted together with other metals, such as copper, to produce the metal we wear. The precious metals are used in exact proportions, but the exact alloying metals are not dictated by regulation; the aim is to produce jewellery metals that are the most resilient, avoid wear and tear, or are simply more affordable.

In Canada, we use gold in different purities for jewellery, such as 10 karat, 14 karat, and 18 karat. When we understand pure gold to be 24 karat, these are proportions, with 10 karat meaning 10 parts gold to 14 parts other metals.

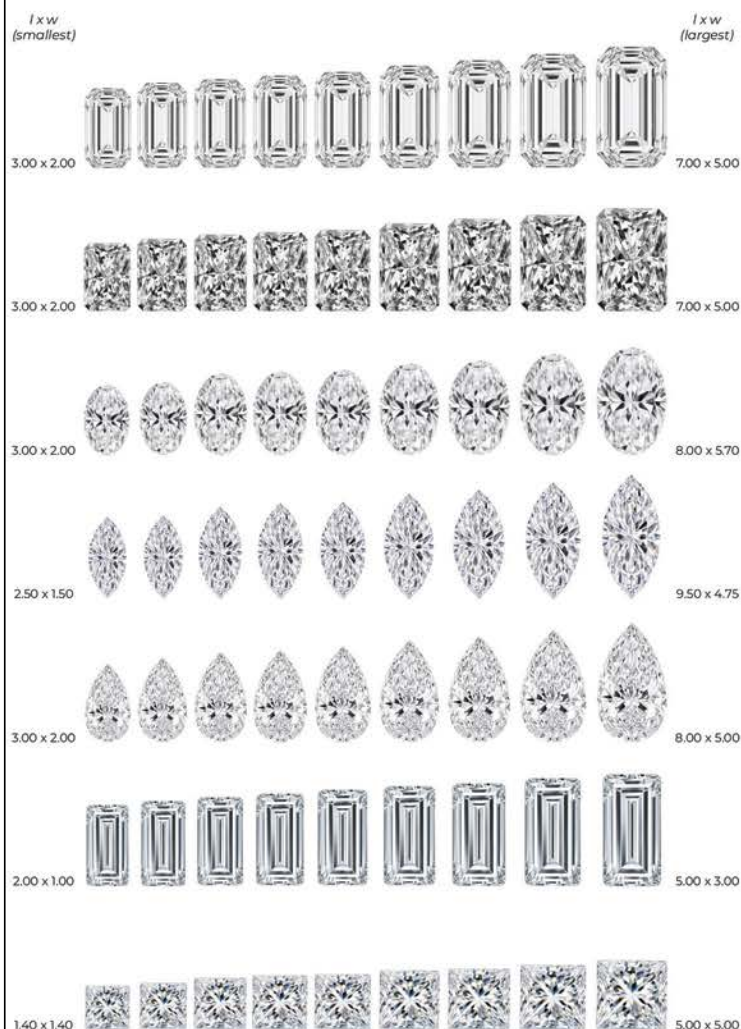
Platinum, on the other hand, is mainly used in one purity. We don't use karat proportions when describing platinum; we use the name of the metal and don't identify the ratio, because 95 per cent pure is essentially the only purity we use. In Canada, according to the *Precious Metals Marking Act and Regulations*, "Platinum," "Plat," or "Platine" (*en Français*) are the permitted marks, and when stamped on jewellery, it means the item is at least 95 per cent pure platinum, or at least 95 per cent platinum and iridium or ruthenium.

Hold on, what's iridium or ruthenium? Platinum is one metal in a group that is often found together. Platinum, iridium, ruthenium, osmium, palladium, and rhodium are all platinum group metals, and while we

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A 1930s aquamarine and diamond necklace.



A Belle Époque diamond and platinum brooch featured in Ryrie catalogue 1911.



A 1930s platinum and diamond brooch, Art Deco.

don't make jewels out of many of them, palladium is also occasionally used for jewels, and we do use rhodium as a starkly white and bright metal for plating jewels. However, we do use platinum regularly.

These metals are all related but are quite different. The density of a metal is its weight by volume, specifically the weight of a cubic centimetre of the metal. For reference, one cubic centimetre of water weighs one gram, so its density is 1.00. Platinum's density is 21.45, gold's is 19.32, and palladium's is 12.02. So, palladium is a little more than half the density of platinum. If you encounter palladium jewels, they are surprisingly light for a metal that otherwise is visually somewhat similar to platinum.

Gold has been known for thousands of years; gold jewels are found in ancient collections from around the world. Platinum, like gold, is a noble metal, meaning that it is not affected by environmental factors such as light, humidity, or chemical attack, so why don't we find platinum in ancient collections, tombs, and graves?

We tend to think of platinum as a metal that didn't exist before the 20th century. Well, obviously, it didn't suddenly arrive. Platinum has been around for as long as gold, but it wasn't until the 20th century that people worked out how to reliably and routinely melt the metal.

However, while Europeans didn't make any quantity of platinum jewellery before the 20th century, the use of this extraordinary metal takes us to pre-colonized South America.

It's very rare to find pure metals in nature. If I'm fortunate enough to find a giant gold nugget (my retirement plan includes finding a giant gold nugget!), the yellow treasure will not be pure gold. Metals found in nature are usually combinations, or natural alloys, of several metals. The combinations of metals will vary based on the geology of



A 1930s platinum and diamond brooch with diamonds.

one location compared to that of another. Platinum found in nature is generally not alloyed with gold, but the two metals are found essentially affixed to each other, as separate components.

Gold was one principal desire of the Spanish conquistadores in the Americas, and they felt that they had hit the jackpot, finding or capturing huge amounts of gold. However, they almost gave up because the gold was “contaminated” with what they called “platina” (a variation in the Spanish name for silver). The Spanish found that the gold was mixed with particles of this unusual white metal that could not melt (Oppi Untracht, in his book *Metal Techniques for Craftsmen* (Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975), states the melting point of gold is 1,063 C and the melting point for platinum is 1773.5 C), and these pesky white metal particles could only be separated by essentially physically pulling out the “platina” which, in the 1700s, they threw away in the Bogota River and the Cauca River (it might be worth going on South American holiday with a sieve?).

A gold nugget might be 70 per cent to 95 per cent gold, give or take, with silver, copper, iron, and other metals. In the erosion process, particles of metals separate and combine, and as they are carried by rivers, particles of platinum and gold can bind into a cohesive combination.

The early peoples of South America could not melt platinum, but had developed good metallurgical skills, and worked out how to separate platinum from gold by melting gold and holding the melt while the denser platinum sank to the bottom and then cutting the different colours of metal apart.

Mueso del Oro, in Bogotá, Colombia, features an extraordinary collection of artifacts made before Spanish colonization. Some of these gold items feature elements that are entirely platinum, but date to at least 1,300 (or more) years ago.

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A Belle Epoque necklace, platinum and diamond, ca. 1930.



A platinum, rubellite tourmaline, and diamond ring, ca. 1990.



A platinum and diamond pendant brooch, ca. 1915.

Jewellery historian Jack M. Ogden, in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 62 (1976), pp. 138-144, "The So-Called Platinum Inclusions in Egyptian Goldwork," describes the analysis of ancient Egyptian gold archaeological artifacts in the British Museum, and the finding that particles of platinum are found in a good number of these ancient golden items. While some have contended that the ancient Egyptians were aware of platinum as a distinct metal, it seems likely that they thought of it as a type of silver, and, unlike the ancient peoples of the Americas, didn't use it intentionally as a separate metal.

The Spanish, determined to solve the "contamination" problem with South American gold, sent specimens to scientists in Europe, but the metal had not yet been identified as a unique element. In 1751, Swedish scientist H.T. Scheffer, student of Anders Celsius (of temperature fame), pronounced that platinum was a "new metal."

With limited ability to work it and, therefore, low demand for platinum, the metal was cheap, and into the 1800s, British and Spanish gold coins were being counterfeited in platinum and then gold-plated. Because platinum and gold are both quite dense, the coins "felt" right in the hand.

By 1819, platinum had been discovered in good quantities in Russia and methods had been devised for a chemical process for purifying platinum. By 1829, Russia was producing platinum coins, and the metal increased in availability and use. The price of the metal increased, making platinum a metal that eventually became more valuable than gold.

However, it was still not possible to melt platinum, so there was very little use of the metal in jewellery. In 1859, Cartier made a set of shirt buttons with a platinum component, and small items with some parts in platinum were produced. In 1881, Tiffany & Co. produced teacups with a platinum component.

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VIEW
DISPLAYS



A platinum and diamond maple leaf, ca. 1990.



A platinum and diamond brooch, ca. 1930.



A Belle Époque aquamarine diamond and platinum brooch/pendant, ca. 1910.

The big change occurred in 1903, when two Frenchmen, Edmond Fouché and Charles Picard, discovered that a torch burning a combination of oxygen and acetylene could produce a temperature high enough to reliably and repeatably melt this complicated metal.

We never looked back. This seismic development in our ability to effectively work with platinum put the Western world in line with the ancient peoples of what we now know as South America. We entered the 20th century with the ability to make jewellery in metal for a new age. Platinum is a durable and hard-wearing metal that allows for fine and delicate jewels to be made.

The period known variously as Belle Époque or Edwardian is best known for light tracery and fine open-work in platinum. Jewels of the period were a distinct break from the heavy jewels of the Victorian period. Queen Victoria died in 1901, and the 1903 discovery of the oxy-acetylene torch coincided perfectly with social and scientific changes, leading through the Belle Époque to the Art Deco period, and onwards.

In the 19th century, silver was the standard white metal used for setting diamonds, with platinum not being available and white gold only really coming into wide use in the 1920s. With platinum entering the jewellery market, fine jewels were made in this resilient white metal, and the form of diamond jewellery quickly changed.

Platinum became the go-to diamond setting metal. However, according to mining information I have found through Statistics Canada, by 1925, gold was \$20.66 per ounce (U.S. and Canadian dollars were at par) and platinum was \$118.21 per ounce. So, platinum was definitely the prestige metal. Commonly, among jewels from the 1920s and 1930s, we see brooches in 14K gold, often die-struck with a very thin layer of platinum bonded to the front, giving the look of platinum without the cost of platinum.

Platinum has always been used in a higher purity in jewellery than gold (with certain exceptions, such as traditional Chinese 24K gold jewels), with platinum being 95 per cent pure and 18K gold being 75 per cent pure. Also, platinum has been more costly to work with because it requires different methods, and only specialists work with the metal. Platinum remains the prestige and luxury metal it became in 1903 when we worked out how to melt the stuff.

However, February 2015 was about the last time that gold and platinum were the same price per ounce. Essentially, since then, gold has accelerated in price, leaving platinum as a marvellous, durable, and unmatched jewellery metal that is now competitive with the price of 10K or 14K gold. It's definitely worth adding platinum to your offerings, if this striking metal isn't already in your showcases. ☺



Duncan Parker, FGA, FCGmA, CAP-CJA, is vice president of Dupuis Fine Jewellery Auctioneers, based in Toronto. He has worked as a gemmologist and jewellery specialist, appraiser, and consultant for many years. Parker is an educator and lecturer on jewellery subjects and has been a speaker at international conferences with a focus on jewellery history. He has served as president of the Canadian Gemmological Association (CGA) and Jewellers Vigilance Canada (JVC). Parker can be reached at duncan.parker@dupuis.ca



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Today's jewellery market is far more diverse, trend-driven, and emotionally complex than it was even a decade ago.

PHOTO © NATALIJA_RASHEVSKA/COURTESY BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM

Today's trends, tomorrow's appraisal challenges

By Karen Howard

The jewellery industry has always evolved alongside fashion, culture, technology, and consumer behaviour. Yet, in recent years, that evolution has accelerated dramatically. Men's jewellery has moved from a niche category into a major retail focus. Alternative metals have expanded beyond novelty into mainstream bridal and fashion collections. Contemporary consumers are mixing luxury pieces with fashion jewellery, lab-grown gemstones, and unconventional materials in ways previous generations rarely considered.

For retailers and designers, these changes create opportunity.

For jewellery appraisers, they create a new set of challenges.

The modern appraisal profession can no longer rely solely on traditional assumptions about precious metals, gemstones, or long-established market patterns. Today's jewellery market is far more diverse, trend-driven, and emotionally complex than it was even a decade ago. As jewellery trends evolve, appraisal standards and methodologies must evolve alongside them.

The reality is simple: what consumers are buying today will become the appraisal assignments of tomorrow.

And many appraisers are not fully prepared for what that means.

The expansion of men's jewellery

One of the most noticeable shifts within the jewellery industry is the rapid expansion of men's jewellery categories. Historically, men's jewellery was often limited to watches, wedding bands, cufflinks, or signet rings. Today, the market is considerably broader.

Chains, bracelets, gemstone rings, mixed-metal pieces, black diamonds, leather combinations, and custom-designed statement jewellery are now common across multiple demographics. Younger consumers, social media influence, celebrity culture, and changing fashion norms have all contributed to making jewellery a more visible and accepted part of men's self-expression.

From an appraisal standpoint, this growth presents important considerations.

Many traditional appraisal templates and valuation approaches were developed primarily around women's jewellery categories. Men's jewellery often incorporates different materials, construction methods, finishes, and branding influences. Some pieces emphasize design and craftsmanship over intrinsic metal value. Others derive significant value from branding, limited production, or cultural relevance rather than gemstone quality alone.

This creates a need for appraisers to understand not only materials and manufacturing, but also current market positioning.

A titanium bracelet with diamond accents may require entirely different replacement sourcing than a traditional gold bracelet. A branded designer chain may carry market significance beyond the weight of its materials. A custom men's ring combining alternative metals and laboratory-grown diamonds may present documentation challenges that older appraisal formats simply were not designed to address.

As consumer tastes continue to evolve, appraisers must broaden their understanding of what modern jewellery ownership now looks like.

Alternative metals and modern materials

Perhaps no category illustrates the changing landscape more clearly than alternative metals.

Titanium, tungsten, cobalt, stainless steel, zirconium, carbon fibre, ceramic combinations, and other contemporary materials have become increasingly popular across both fashion and bridal jewellery. Consumers are drawn to these materials for their durability, lightweight feel, modern appearance, affordability, and perceived individuality.

However, these same qualities can complicate the appraisal process.

Unlike traditional gold or platinum jewellery, alternative metals often present unique identification, repair, and replacement issues. Some cannot be resized conventionally. Others are difficult to repair entirely. Certain materials scratch differently, polish differently, or must be replaced rather than restored after damage.

From an insurance perspective, this matters greatly.



Younger consumers, social media influence, celebrity culture, and changing fashion norms have all contributed to making jewellery a more visible and accepted part of men's self-expression.

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BRACELET: PHOTO © LENA42R/COURTESY BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM

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Clients trust appraisers to document accurately, communicate honestly, and provide defensible professional opinions. That responsibility becomes even more important as the marketplace grows more diverse and complex.

PHOTO © MIHAİLO K/COURTESY BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM

An appraisal is not simply about assigning a number. It is about documenting what exists today while anticipating what would reasonably be required to replace that item tomorrow. If replacement sourcing is limited, if manufacturing methods differ, or if repair possibilities are restricted, those realities must be reflected in the documentation.

Consumers frequently assume that all jewellery functions similarly regardless of material. Yet, alternative metals can behave very differently from traditional precious metals in both wearability and replacement logistics.

For appraisers, detailed documentation becomes increasingly critical.

The more unconventional the material or construction, the more important it becomes to accurately identify components, finishes, manufacturing methods, trademarks, and design features. General descriptions that may once have been acceptable are no longer sufficient in many modern assignments.

Fashion trends vs. long-term value

Another growing challenge within modern jewellery appraising is the intersection between fashion trends and long-term market value.

Fashion has always influenced jewellery design. However, social media and digital retail environments have accelerated trend cycles dramatically. Consumers are now exposed to new aesthetics almost daily. Styles that become highly desirable one season may lose popularity rapidly the next.

This creates an important distinction between emotional appeal, retail popularity, and lasting market relevance.

Many clients assume that popularity automatically translates into future value retention. Unfortunately, that is not always the case.

Appraisers must carefully separate fashion desirability from objective market analysis. A highly fashionable piece may command strong retail pricing today while having a much narrower resale or secondary market tomorrow.

Conversely, some contemporary designs may eventually become highly collectible due to craftsmanship, innovation, or cultural significance.

Predicting long-term collectability is never simple.

However, understanding current market positioning remains essential.

This is particularly important when documenting custom-designed jewellery, branded collections, or trend-focused pieces that may not fit neatly into traditional valuation frameworks.

Clients are also increasingly emotionally connected to jewellery purchases that reflect identity, personal milestones, or self-expression rather than purely investment-based motivations. Men's jewellery, alternative materials, and fashion-forward design often carry strong personal meaning even when secondary market demand may fluctuate.

The role of the appraiser is not to diminish emotional significance. It is to provide clarity, documentation, and professional interpretation within an evolving marketplace.

Consumer expectations are changing

Today's consumers are also more informed—and more overwhelmed—than ever before.

They research online. They compare prices instantly. They encounter conflicting information about natural versus laboratory-grown diamonds, precious metals, treatments, branding, and value retention across multiple platforms.

As a result, consumers increasingly seek reassurance.

They want transparency.

They want explanations.

They want confidence in their purchases.

This places appraisers in a unique and increasingly important position within the jewellery industry.

Modern appraising is no longer simply technical analysis hidden within formal paperwork. It has become part of broader consumer education and trust-building.

Clients often arrive with uncertainty:

- Why does one piece cost significantly more than another?
- Does branding matter?
- Will alternative metals hold value?
- Are laboratory-grown diamonds treated differently in appraisals?
- What actually determines replacement value?

The ability to communicate clearly has become just as important as technical expertise.

Appraisers who can explain valuation concepts in understandable language help reduce confusion and build consumer confidence. Those who remain disconnected from current retail trends risk appearing outdated or inaccessible to modern clients.

Why trend awareness matters

One of the greatest misconceptions about jewellery appraising is that it exists separately from the retail marketplace.

In reality, appraisers must remain deeply connected to industry changes.

Retail trends influence sourcing.

Consumer behaviour influences demand.

Manufacturing innovations influence replacement possibilities.

Fashion influences market perception.

An appraiser who is unfamiliar with emerging jewellery categories may struggle to properly document or contextualize modern pieces. Likewise, outdated assumptions about what consumers purchase or value can create inaccurate or incomplete reports.

Trend awareness does not mean chasing every passing fashion movement. It means understanding how evolving consumer behaviour affects the jewellery landscape overall.

The profession requires continuous learning.

That includes:

- monitoring changing market trends
- understanding new materials
- recognizing evolving consumer expectations
- staying informed about manufacturing developments
- and adapting documentation standards accordingly

Jewellery itself has changed significantly over the past decade.

The appraisal profession must continue changing as well.

The future of jewellery appraising

The future of jewellery appraising will likely become even more complex.

As personalization increases, more consumers are choosing custom designs, mixed materials, unconventional gemstones, and non-traditional jewellery categories. Digital commerce continues to expand access to global brands and emerging designers. Younger generations often prioritize individuality and design identity over traditional luxury expectations.

All of this affects valuation work.

The appraiser of the future will need more than gemmological knowledge alone. They will need market awareness, communication skills, adaptability, and an understanding of how fashion, branding, technology, and consumer psychology intersect with valuation.

At its core, jewellery appraising remains built on trust.

Clients trust appraisers to document accurately, communicate honestly, and provide defensible professional opinions. That responsibility becomes even more important as the marketplace grows more diverse and complex.

Today's jewellery trends are not simply passing fashions. They are shaping the future of appraisal work itself.

And the appraisers who remain curious, informed, and adaptable will be the ones best prepared for what comes next. 🌐



Karen Howard, FCGMA, RMV, is a veteran gemmologist, best-selling author (From Start to Success), and former appraisal business owner with more than 30 years in the jewellery trade. Through her platform, Jewellery Appraisers Coach, she now coaches new appraisers to overcome the challenges of their first year in business—covering everything from client communication to ethical practices. Her work has been featured by more than 20 media outlets, including Yahoo Finance, Fox4, NBC, and WGN Chicago, highlighting her contributions to professional standards and training in the appraisal industry. <https://jewelleryappraiserscoach.com>

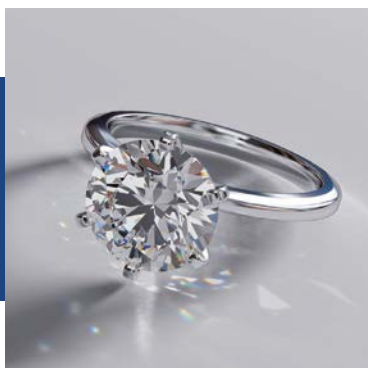
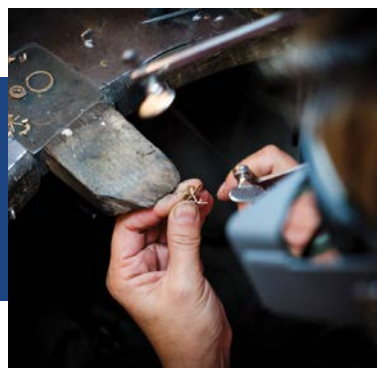
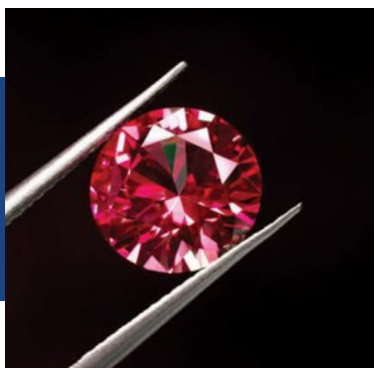


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Building a resilient industry

As autumn begins to arrive across Canada, the jewellery industry enters its most exciting time of the year. It is the season of preparation, creativity, and expectation as businesses across the country begin planning for the busiest sales period on the retail calendar. Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Cyber Monday, the holiday shopping season, Christmas, and Boxing Day are just around the corner, bringing countless opportunities to connect with customers, showcase exceptional collections, and finish the year on a strong note. It is a time when months of planning come together and when our industry's passion, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurial spirit genuinely shine.

Before turning our attention to the holiday season, we proudly celebrate another remarkable edition of Expo Prestige. As the longest-running jewellery trade show in Canada, Expo Prestige continues to play a defining role in strengthening the Canadian jewellery industry. It remains an essential gateway to the Québec market. Each year, it brings together retailers, suppliers, manufacturers, designers, and service providers in an environment where business relationships flourish, and new opportunities emerge.

This year's edition is particularly exciting. Set against the bright backdrop of Montréal in August, attendees get to experience the city's unmistakable charm—from its lively streets and renowned gastronomy to its European elegance and warm hospitality. The exceptional Grand Quay venue, premium amenities, and deliberately curated programming create the perfect setting for meaningful business conversations, while the cocktail reception offers an outstanding opportunity for exhibitors and attendees to reconnect, celebrate, and build new relationships in a relaxed and sophisticated atmosphere. Thank you to every exhibitor, attendee, sponsor, volunteer, and partner for being part of this year's Expo Prestige.

After Expo Prestige, our attention turns to one of the most anticipated events of the year: the **Canadian Jewellery Association Industry Summit**, taking place on **October 26, 2026**, at the iconic **Fairmont Royal York** in Toronto.

Few venues reflect the prestige and history of our industry quite like the Fairmont Royal York. From its enduring grace and exceptional hospitality to its top-tier amenities, it provides the ideal setting for a day dedicated to learning, collaboration, and vocational growth. Throughout the summit, attendees will hear from a notable lineup of speakers who will share important insights into the trends, challenges, and opportunities guiding the future of Canadian jewellery. Whether you are looking to strengthen your business, discover new ideas, or expand your professional network, this day is meant to inspire, inform, and connect our entire community.

The evening will conclude with one of the Canadian Jewellers Association's most meaningful traditions: the annual CJA Awards Gala. Each year, we pay tribute to the outstanding individuals and businesses whose devotion, leadership, craftsmanship, innovation, and steadfastness continue to raise our profession. These awards are more than a celebration of achievement—they honour the people who have helped shape our industry's heritage of excellence and motivate the next generation to carry it forward.

Supporting the next generation remains one of the association's proudest commitments. Through the Canadian Jewellers Association Scholarship Program, we continue to invest in the future of Canadian jewellery education by supporting talented students pursuing careers in our profession. We are proud to award scholarships to students at George Brown College, Georgian College, and, for the very first time this year, the École de joaillerie de Montréal. By encouraging the development of talent and assisting students in achieving their educational goals, we are strengthening the future of our industry and ensuring that excellence endures and continues to prosper for generations to come.

As your businesses prepare for the busy retail season, there is another investment that deserves your attention: compliance. Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorist Financing (AML/ATF) requirements are not optional—they are essential to protecting your business and sustaining the integrity of our industry. The Canadian Jewellers Association's AML/ATF Compliance Toolkit remains one of the most affordable investments you can make, costing only a fraction of the financial penalties, regulatory fines, or banking challenges that can result from non-compliance. Investing in compliance today is far less costly than dealing with the consequences tomorrow, giving you peace of mind as you head into the industry's busiest selling season.

The conversations that begin at the Industry Summit, the achievements celebrated during the awards gala, and the students we support through our scholarship program all contribute to the same goal: building a stronger, more innovative, and more resilient Canadian jewellery industry. Every connection made, every idea exchanged, every award presented, and every student encouraged helps ensure that our industry continues to thrive—not only through another successful holiday season but for generations to come. 🌟

Sara Belyazid

Communication Co-ordinator
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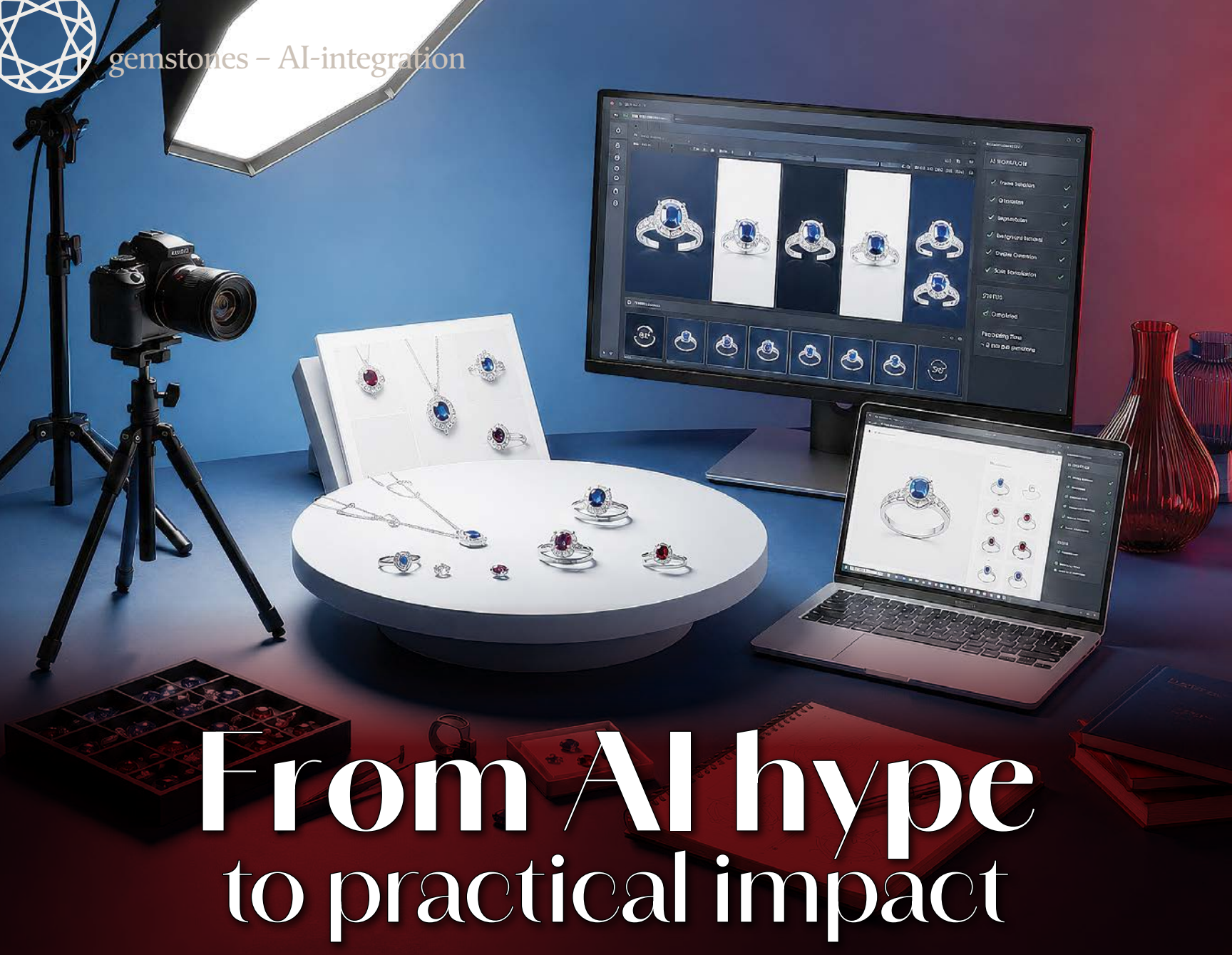


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From AI hype to practical impact

How jewellery retailers are rethinking production workflows

By Eliran Dahan and Tal Kenig

Artificial Intelligence (AI) dominates retail conversations, yet much of the discussion remains disconnected from the daily realities of jewellery businesses. Retailers hear plenty about consumer-facing tools such as image generators or chatbots, but far less about how technology can meaningfully relieve long-standing operational bottlenecks in content production, customization, and visual consistency.

A quieter shift is already underway. Instead of attempting to replace craftsmanship or creative judgment, jewellery retailers are applying automation and AI to the most repetitive, structured parts of their workflows: preparing visual assets, adapting designs, managing

variations, and standardizing output. The value of these systems lies not in novelty, but in reliability. They help teams work faster, maintain consistency, and scale operations without compromising quality.

This shift is less about adopting AI for its own sake and more about rethinking workflows that were never designed for today's volume of digital content or the growing demand for customizable jewellery.

Where traditional jewellery workflows break down

Modern jewellery retail demands an enormous volume of visual content. High-quality still images, spinners, videos, and lifestyle visuals are required across websites, marketplaces, and social platforms. At the same time,

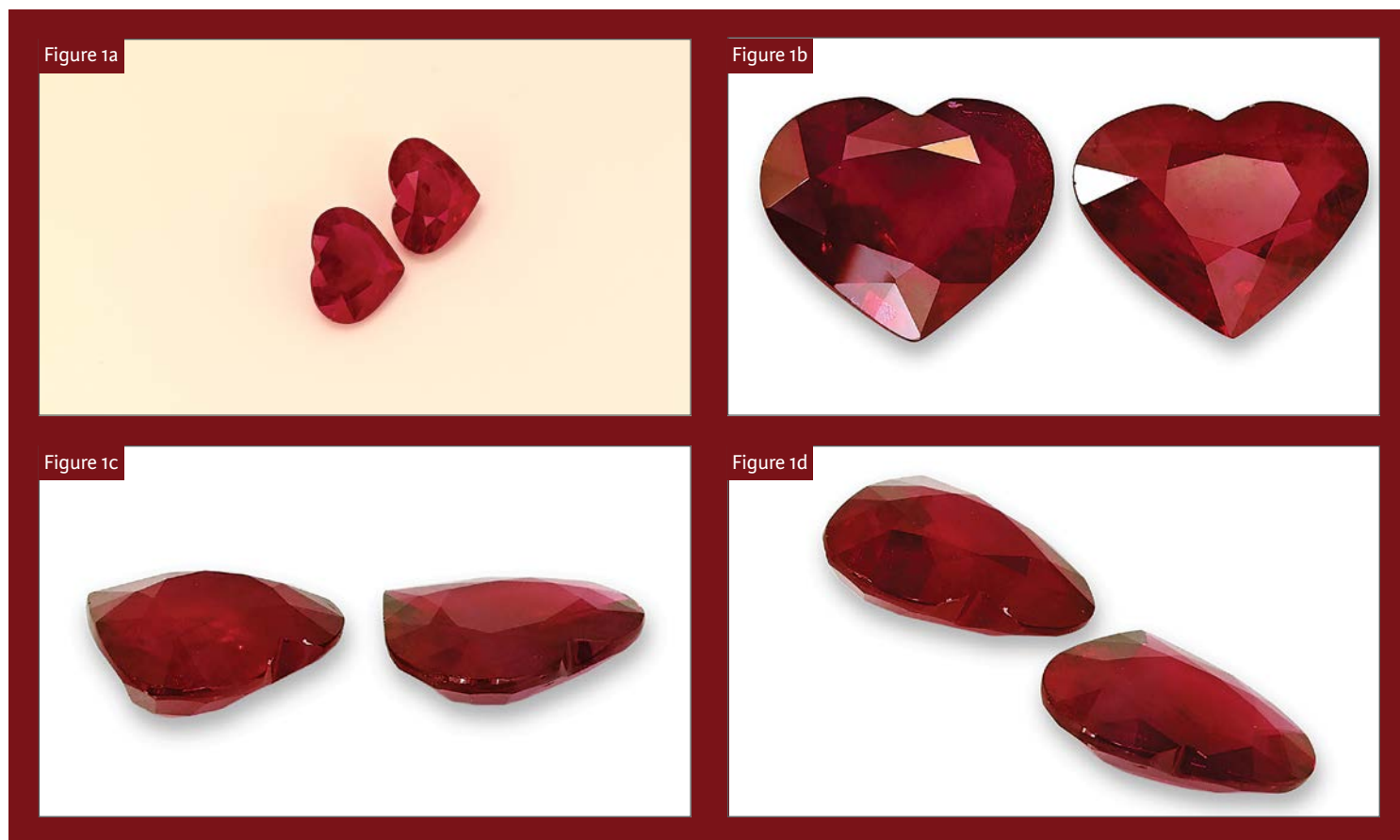


Figure 1: (a) Raw video frame. (b) to (d) Automatically selected and processed keyframes with background removal, automatic re-orientation, scale normalization, and consistent compositing with synthetic shadows.

PHOTOS COURTESY 3D FOUNDRY LABS.

customers increasingly expect to explore different gemstone options, metal variations, and configurations before committing to a purchase.

In luxury and jewellery e-commerce, this challenge is compounded by relatively low baseline conversion rates. Industry benchmarks suggest that conversion rates for jewellery and accessories often sit below 1.5 per cent, making every source of friction more consequential. According to data published by OpenSend,¹ converting browsers into buyers in this category is inherently difficult, increasing the importance of clarity, trust, and presentation.

Behind the scenes, many of the workflows supporting this content remain fragmented and labour-intensive. Much of the work is repetitive: selecting frames, removing backgrounds, correcting orientation, maintaining consistent scale, and preparing assets for publishing. Even when creativity is not the limiting factor, the sheer volume of technical effort creates bottlenecks that slow launches and constrain how many variations can realistically be shown.

Legacy content introduces another layer of complexity. Large image libraries built over many years often no longer meet current presentation standards. Gemstones may appear too small in frame, the resolution may be insufficient, and the source footage may no longer be available. Re-shooting entire inventories is rarely practical.

What AI looks like in real operations

Three case studies

The AI systems gaining traction in jewellery retail today are largely invisible to shoppers. They operate behind the scenes, automating tasks that are rule-based, repeatable, and time-consuming, while leaving perceptual and creative decisions to humans.

Automating gemstone content production from turntable videos

One example is gemstone content production. In one large-scale operation, each gemstone turntable video editing process previously required manual cine-loop selection, keyframe extraction, orientation correction, background removal, shadow creation, and compositing. These steps followed consistent rules, yet demanded significant hands-on effort from skilled staff.

Automation restructured this workflow. Cine-loops and keyframes were selected automatically, frontal views were oriented consistently, gemstones were accurately segmented, backgrounds removed, and realistic shadows generated. Advances in AI-based segmentation have made gemstone isolation in controlled product imagery reliable enough for production use, eliminating the need for manual masking.

Figure 2a



Before

Figure 2b



After



Before



After



Before



After

Figure 2: Legacy gemstone images before (a) and after (b) automated reframing and resolution enhancement to achieve consistent scale and presentation without compromising image quality.

Scale normalization ensured that selected keyframes maintained consistent stone size across images, preventing visual “jumping” between views. What remained deliberately human-controlled was colour correction. Accurate gemstone colour cannot be determined algorithmically alone; trained operators compare on-screen results with the physical stone under specific illumination conditions. Rather than attempting to automate this judgment, the system generated intelligently varied galleries of colour-corrected options, allowing humans to quickly and consistently select the closest perceptual match.

Taken together, these changes reduced processing time per gemstone from roughly 30 to 40 minutes to about two minutes, without compromising quality and while improving consistency across outputs. Exemplary results are available in Figure 1.

Upgrading legacy imagery without re-shooting inventory

Automation also addresses a less visible but widespread problem: legacy gemstone imagery that no longer meets modern e-commerce standards.

As AI becomes less novel and more operational, the question for jewellery retailers is no longer whether these tools belong in production workflows, but how deliberately they are adopted.”

Many legacy images require significant enlargement to meet current layout and resolution requirements. Traditional upscaling methods often introduce blur and loss of detail. In this context, AI-based super-resolution can be applied conservatively to increase resolution while preserving edge detail, rather than inventing or stylizing content.

Accurate AI-based gemstone segmentation enables automated reframing, allowing stones to occupy a defined portion of the image and producing consistent composition across different SKUs. Once configured, the process runs in batch mode and requires no significant manual labour beyond output verification.

The practical outcome is straightforward but impactful: hundreds of gemstones can be upgraded to current presentation standards without re-shooting inventory, bringing older assets in line with newer content and restoring visual consistency across the catalogue. Examples of legacy imagery versus AI-enabled reframed results are available in Figure 2.

Making customization operationally viable

Customization presents a different challenge. For made-to-order jewellery, each product configuration represents a unique combination of setting and gemstone. Visual content for these configurations has long

been produced using a 3D-first workflow: modelling the item and rendering images or spinners. Visual quality was not the issue; the lack of scalability was.

By automating gemstone fitting into settings and standardizing and deploying the rendering pipeline to cost-effective cloud resources, the same 3D workflow could be executed repeatedly and reliably across many configurations, without manual intervention for each variation. This made it feasible to visualize a broader range of configurations consistently, supporting customization as a scalable offering rather than a labour-intensive exception, and reducing the required manual work from 45 to 90 minutes per item (complexity-dependent) to mere minutes spent on quality assurance. See Figure 3 (page 36) for details.

How roles are changing for skilled staff

Automation often raises concerns about the impact on designers, technical artists, and production teams. In practice, the changes observed in jewellery workflows are more nuanced.

Automation targets repetitive, procedural tasks: selecting frames, applying consistent transformations, cleaning backgrounds, or preparing assets. When these steps are handled automatically, the benefit is not only an increase in scale, but skilled staff move from manual execution to supervision, validation, and creative decision-making. Their expertise



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Figure 3

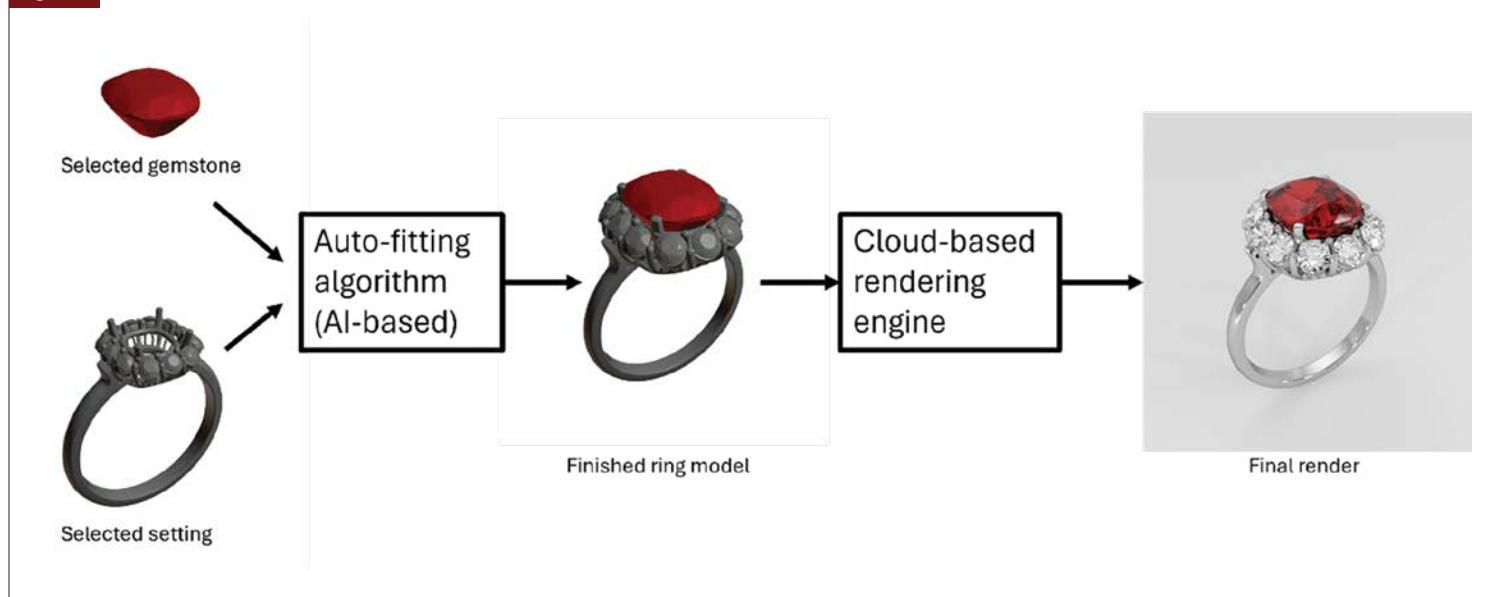


Figure 3: Automated fitting of a selected gemstone into a selected ring setting, producing a finished ring model followed by a photorealistic rendering. The entire process is automated end-to-end.



Accurate AI-based gemstone segmentation enables automated reframing, allowing stones to occupy a defined portion of the image and producing consistent composition across different SKUs.

remains essential, particularly where perceptual judgment is required, such as gemstone colour accuracy.

Industry surveys reinforce the scale of this challenge. Research published by PhotoRoom² indicates that nearly half of jewellery brands refresh product imagery at least quarterly, with many editing hundreds of images per month, often with limited dedicated resources.

Customer-facing benefits retailers actually feel

Although these systems operate behind the scenes, their effects are visible to customers. Faster content production shortens the time between product availability and launch. Consistent visuals strengthen brand credibility and reduce friction in the buying process.

Jewellery-specific e-commerce experts consistently emphasize the role of rich, detailed visuals in bridging the sensory gap of online shopping. According to industry commentary published by Bright River,³ multiple views, close-ups, and high-quality presentations help build confidence and engagement in jewellery e-commerce.

Academic research further supports this view. Studies examining online retail behaviour⁴ have shown that lighting, background, and photographic presentation influence perceived attractiveness and purchase decisions.

Understanding the limits

Automation is not a silver bullet. Systems must be integrated thoughtfully, and quality control remains essential. Some steps,

particularly those involving perception and esthetics, still require human oversight. Successful projects begin with a clear understanding of existing workflows and focus on removing friction rather than layering technology on top.

The most effective solutions mirror how teams already work, replacing only the steps that benefit from consistency and scale.

Why this matters for Canadian jewellery retailers

Canadian jewellery retailers face the same pressures shaping global markets, often with leaner teams and tighter margins. Competing with larger e-commerce players, managing rising costs, and meeting expectations for speed and customization are ongoing challenges.

Automation offers a way to increase operational capacity without proportionally increasing headcount. By streamlining production workflows, retailers can respond more quickly to demand, expand assortments, and maintain consistent presentation across digital channels.

Moving beyond the hype

As AI becomes less novel and more operational, the question for jewellery retailers is no longer whether these tools belong in production workflows, but how deliberately they are adopted. The most successful implementations are rarely the most ambitious, but the most pragmatic: those that remove friction, respect human expertise, and scale what already works. For retailers navigating rising expectations and increasing complexity, the challenge is not keeping up with technology, but deciding which parts of their workflows are finally ready to let go of manual constraints. 🌀

Notes

¹ Read OpenSend's "7 Case Studies of Successful Jewelry & Accessories Online eCommerce Stores" here: <https://www.opensend.com/post/successful-jewelry-accessories-online-e-commerce-stores>

² See PhotoRoom's "Jewelry Photography Insights From 1,000+ E-commerce Sellers" here: <https://www.photoroom.com/blog/jewelry-photography-e-commerce>

³ See Bright River's "Are Your Product Images Secretly Sabotaging Your Online Jewelry Sales?" here: <https://bright-river.com/boost-jewelry-sales-with-quality-visuals/>

⁴ Read ResearchGate's "Product Photography in Product Attractiveness Perception and E-commerce Customer Purchase Decisions" here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368904227_Product_photography_in_product_attractiveness_perception_and_e-commerce_customer_purchase_decisions



Eliran Dahan is an entrepreneur and technology executive with more than 20 years of experience developing large-scale software and imaging systems used by tens of millions of users worldwide. He has led technology companies from early concept through venture funding and global deployment.

Dahan is a co-inventor on four US patents and holds a B.Sc. in electrical engineering from the Technion—Israel Institute of Technology. He is the CEO and co-founder of 3D Foundry Labs, a company that builds custom AI and 3D solutions for the jewellery industry.



Tal Kenig is a technology leader with more than 20 years of experience in computer vision, machine learning, and imaging systems, both as an engineer and as a CTO. He has led the development of advanced vision and imaging platforms for multinational companies, including GE Healthcare and Samsung Electronics, as well as for technology startups.

Tal serves as a scientific reviewer for multiple IEEE publications, is a co-inventor on nine US patents, and holds a B.Sc. in Biomedical Engineering and an M.Sc. in Electrical Engineering (Summa Cum Laude) from the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. He is the CTO and co-founder of 3D Foundry Labs, a company that builds custom AI and 3D solutions for the jewellery industry.



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JCK 2026

The gem report

This year, JCK Las Vegas delivered its signature mix of scale, material exploration, and design direction, with pieces spanning high jewellery, fashion-forward collections, and retail-focused presentations. In the days following the show—which drew 17,500 attendees—we reached out across the floor to gauge what stood out visually, what drew steady attention, and what buyers and brands kept returning to in conversation.

This roundup captures that snapshot from the show floor. 📸

~ Compiled by Marika Gabriel.



Platinum and 18K yellow gold ring with yellow diamond, halo, and pavé band, LALI Jewels.



Yellow gold pendant with 14.17 ct green tourmaline and 0.62 ct diamonds, Bellarri Classica.

Mixed-metal jewellery group from MALO Bands, MARDINI collection.



Overnight Mounting's lattice jewellery collection in 14K gold and lab diamonds.



27.19 ct type IIa fancy intense pink oval lab-grown diamond, single stone, ALTR.



Platinum bracelet with multi-coloured spinel and diamond mix, Oscar Heyman.





Sterling silver bead necklace collection with engraved message motifs, Santana Now's Unidad launch collection.



Sterling silver and 18K gold Prosecco bar bangle, Phillip Gavriel, from Royal Chain.



Malachite bead bracelet (4 mm) with gold-ion plated stainless steel, Italgem Junior.

Swirled diamonds from Chris Ploof's Modern Electrum collection.



Door-knocker earrings with baguette accents and polished finish, Shy Creation.



STEELX's stainless steel set with mother-of-pearl and gold ion plating, from PAJ Canada.



High-gloss wooden watch winder with velour interior, SP Sales Agency.





Purple freshwater pearl necklace, featuring a clasp with 8.27cts diamonds set in 18K white gold, Yoko London.



18K yellow gold ring with pink tourmaline, blue topaz, and mint tourmaline, Lionheart.



14K yellow gold sapphire pendant, Stuller.



18K yellow gold earrings, Haute Couture, Orogami.



Ring with 9.74 ct amethyst and 0.60 ct diamonds, Bellarri Cabaret.



18K yellow and white gold diamond bangle, Uneek Jewelry's Prismal Collection.



Multi-stone bracelet group with square and baguette diamonds and coloured gemstones, PICCHIOTTI's Signature Style Bracelets collection.

Modular charm wall display system with expandable panels, Rembrandt Charms.



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MEN OF STEEL

The materials, meaning, and modern design defining men's jewellery

By Chris Ploof

It's an exciting time to be a maker of unisex, durable jewellery. No longer are men limiting themselves to wedding bands and watches. Self-purchasing of other styles of jewellery is on the rise. It's exciting to see men embracing the luxury jewellery category for themselves and wearing cool pieces that express their personal style. Whether an everyday piece or special occasion wear, these are some trends we are seeing this year.



Bracelets

Bracelets are evolving into statement pieces, with men increasingly favouring designs that balance intricacy with everyday wearability. We have been selling more bracelets than ever, and our stainless steel Damascus cuffs, with and without leather inlays, reflect a growing interest in this type of men's jewellery. Of special interest to me is that men seem to be gravitating towards wider—20 mm—cuffs with a heavy, substantial design. The added weight contributes to the tactile experience of wearing the piece, transferring the feeling of strength and power to the wearer.

Custom-designed link bracelets in Damascus steel, gold, and silver also highlight the appeal of thoughtful engineering in jewellery design. These are inspired by my love of cycling. Assembled with custom stainless steel shoulder screws, the links have fluid, beautiful movement. The clasp is designed for easy one-hand

Musician and songwriter Pharrell Williams walking the Chanel runway at the Métiers d'Art show in Paris.

GETTY IMAGES/COURTESY OF I SEE IDEAS



Bi-metal link chain bracelets, inspired by bicycle chains, are increasingly popular with men today.

PHOTOS COURTESY CHRIS PLOOF DESIGNS



Hand-forged Damascus steel cuff bracelets appeal to men who appreciate the historical allure and charm of Damascus steel, dating back to the Viking era.

fastening and removal, while remaining secure during wear. Details like these demonstrate how functional design and precision craftsmanship can be just as important as esthetics. Men who love gadgets and well-made objects have enjoyed these bracelets as well.

Unusual materials

Innovative materials and historic metal alloys are expanding the range of options available in men's jewellery. Men have embraced this use of unusual materials recently. For example, we've noticed a growing appreciation for carbon fibre paired with precious metals in rings and pendants.

Carbon fibre is light and strong. It has a silky black look which men love, plus the cachet of it being used in aerospace and Formula 1 race cars adds an element of engineering heritage that appeals to many wearers.

The most recent metal addition in our ring line has been exploding. Modern Electrum (ME) is a contemporary interpretation of ancient electrum, a metal prized by the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and other



Simu Liu at the Golden Globe Awards 2024.

GETTY IMAGES/COURTESY OF I SEE IDEAS

Hand-forged Damascus steel cuff bracelets.



ancient cultures for use in jewellery and coins, plus topping their sculptural icons like obelisks and pyramids. Today's ME is a proprietary blend of silver, gold, and palladium. It is more than 95 per cent precious metal, and it does not rust, tarnish, or corrode, making it very attractive to men with active lifestyles. Stronger than silver and far less expensive than gold, it is a modern metal with an ancient story that adds to its appeal.





Hand-forged Damascus steel cuff bracelet with a Stingray leather inlay.



Hand-forged Damascus steel cuff bracelet with Crocodile leather inlay.



Coleman Domingo at the Oscars 2025.

GETTY IMAGES/COURTESY OF I SEE IDEAS

Bling for him

Diamonds are also on the rise, with more men than ever before asking about adding little (and big!) pops of sparkle to their rings, particularly in the bridal category. We have seen strong interest in the highly fluorescent Gacho Kue diamonds from Diamonds de Canada that are in the ME rings, doubling the cool factor. Men enjoy showing off the natural fluorescence of their bling and telling the history and science that made the metal possible.

Expressive pendants and necklaces

Personal expression is driving increased interest in pendants and necklaces among male jewellery buyers. This growing interest in men's self-purchase of pendants, such as chains, cords, and collar necklaces, shows that these styles are no longer solely for women. Styles ranging from religious symbols to pendants with personal meaning continue to resonate with wearers seeking jewellery that reflects their interests, values, or experiences.

Japanese Yanone pendant necklaces, for example, draw inspiration from the history of the Samurai swordsmen, with each design intended to embody that warrior spirit. Distinctive dog tags are also gaining popularity, often featuring Damascus stainless steel with gold or leather inlays.

Driven in part by sports celebrities and other public figures, the growing acceptance of necklaces and pendants as part of men's everyday style presents an opportunity for the fine jewellery industry. As men's jewellery continues to evolve beyond traditional categories, retailers may benefit from introducing pendant necklaces as part of conversations about personal style and self-expression with male clients.

Men are loving new and unusual materials like this Modern Electrum ring with Diamonds de Canada's naturally fluorescent diamonds.



Precious Damascus rings featuring hand-forged Damascus steel with 14K red gold, 18K yellow gold, or palladium, with and without diamonds.

PHOTOS COURTESY CHRIS PLOOF DESIGNS



Adrian Brody at the 2025 Met Gala.

GETTY IMAGES/COURTESY OF I SEE IDEAS

Brooches, pins, and cufflinks

Cufflinks have always been a strong category for gifts. Still, more recently, well-dressed men have increasingly been self-purchasing multiple pairs, particularly designs that are more playful or unconventional, such as space-age shapes or glow-in-the-dark smiley faces. Another notable trend—and one of my favourites—is the growing popularity of pins and brooches among men. Red carpets this spring featured numerous examples of men incorporating brooches into formal attire, reflecting a broader shift in men's fashion.

That trend has also influenced my own design approach, inspiring bigger pieces with more negative space and using materials such as diamonds and carbon fibre to create brooches that are both lightweight and comfortable to wear.

Younger generations of men are flocking to jewellery, with fewer preconceived ideas about which styles or materials are associated with, or assigned to, a particular gender. As Gen-Z and Millennial consumers

Palladium Tree of Life pendant with diamonds.



Modern Electrum reliquary pendant.



Yanone pendant in hand-forged Damascus steel, 18K gold, and diamonds.

PHOTOS COURTESY
CHRIS PLOOF DESIGNS



continue to shape fashion trends, their approach to self-expression is influencing broader attitudes toward men's jewellery. Personally, I have always designed for all wearers of jewellery, regardless of gender, and it has been encouraging—and exciting!—to see men exploring styles, beyond the traditional wedding band. Long may it continue. ☺



Chris Ploof, an award-winning jewellery designer and metalsmith, founded Chris Ploof Designs in 2004. A specialist in modern metals, Ploof is a renowned expert in Damascus steel and mokume gane. His hand-forged metal jewellery designs are crafted in his solar-powered studio in Massachusetts. Ploof's work has led to consulting projects all over the world, as well as multiple awards from the Santa Fe Symposium for his research and discoveries. In addition, Ploof has received numerous mentions in global trade publications.

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Like sunlight after a summer rain, this limited-edition Rainbow Sapphire Briolette Tied Necklace by Canadian designer Anne Sportun reveals its beauty a glimmer at a time. Hand-tied rainbow sapphire briolettes trace an 18K yellow gold strand, each facet catching the light in a quiet celebration of colour. The 406.4-mm (16-in.) silhouette rests at the neckline with vivid gemstones. Delicate in form yet rich in thoughtful design, the piece reflects the understated elegance that has become a hallmark of Canadian fine jewellery—a reminder that captivating pieces often whisper, not shout. 🌈

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