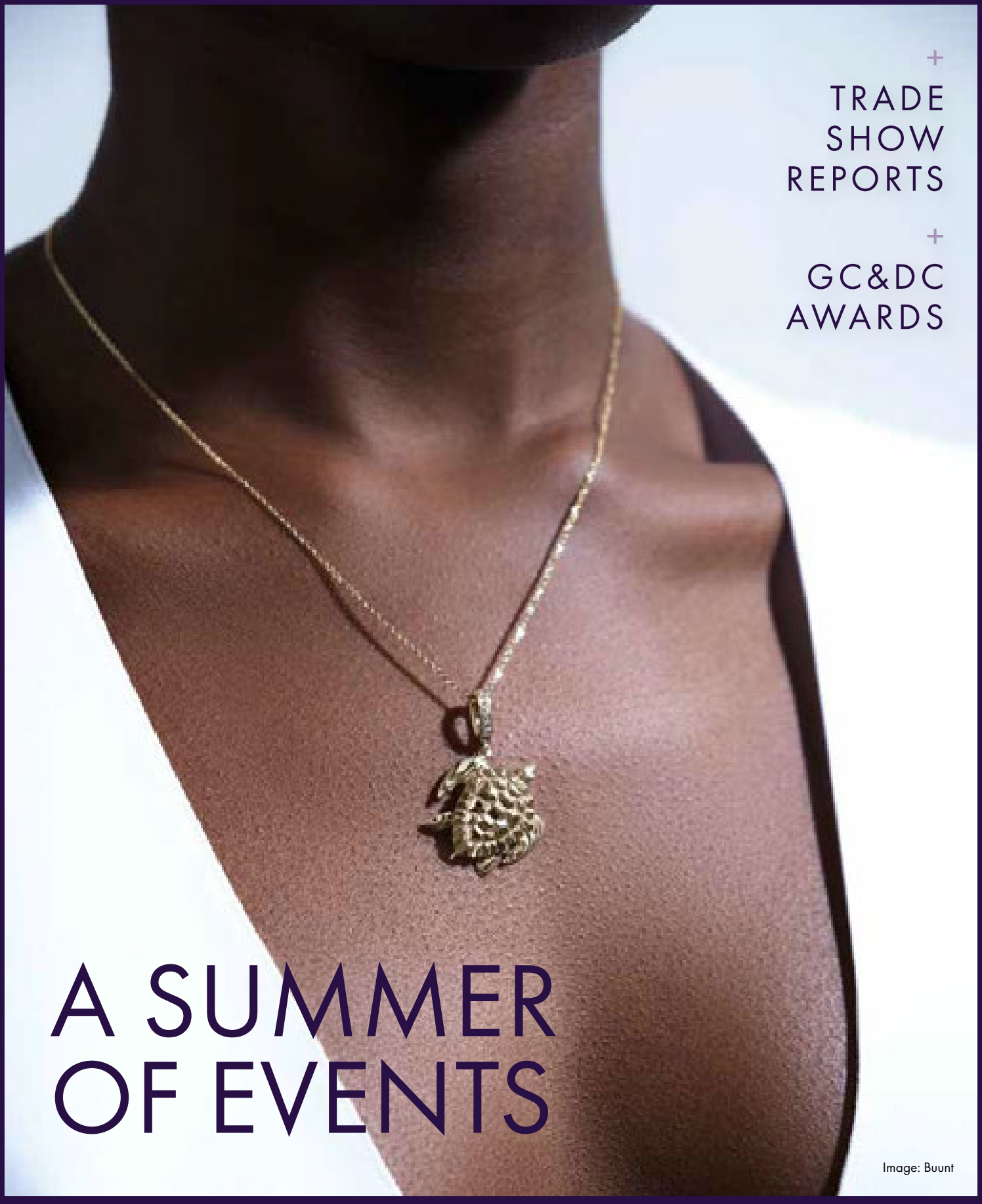
THE Jeweller

The National Association of Jewellers

TRADE JOURNAL

Summer 25 Issue / £7.50



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A SUMMER OF EVENTS

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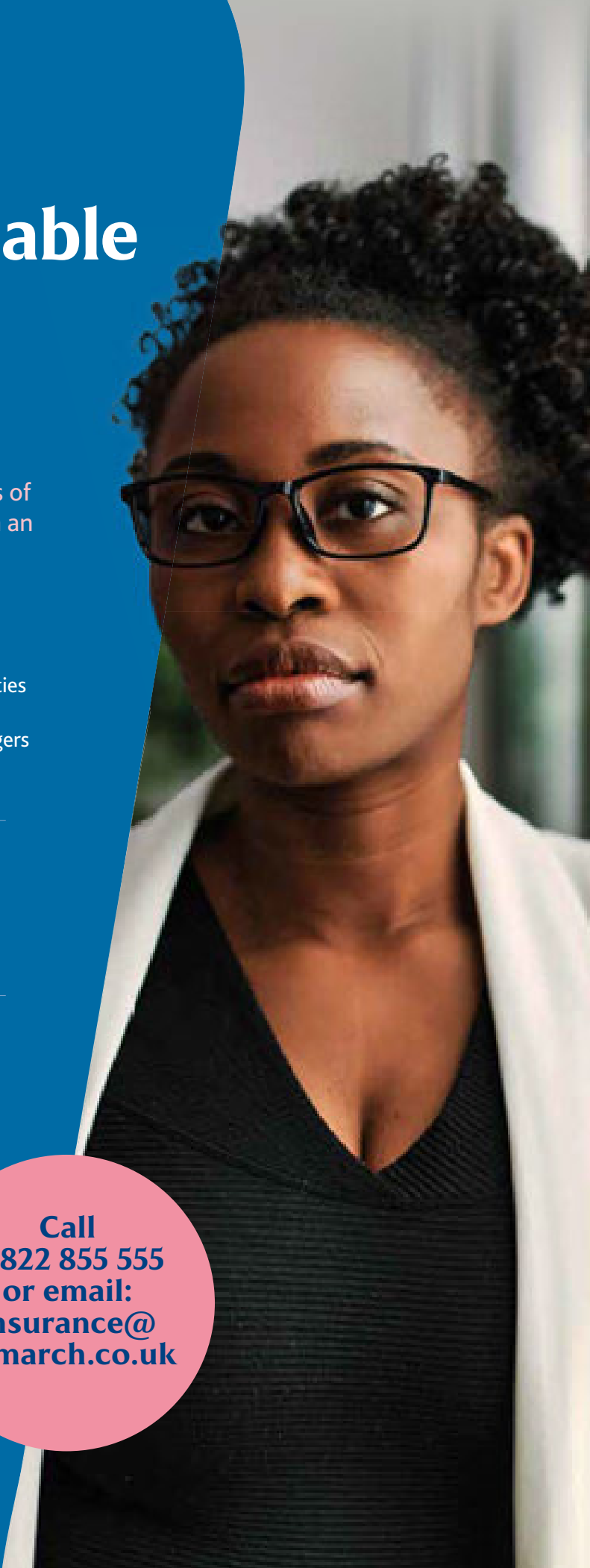
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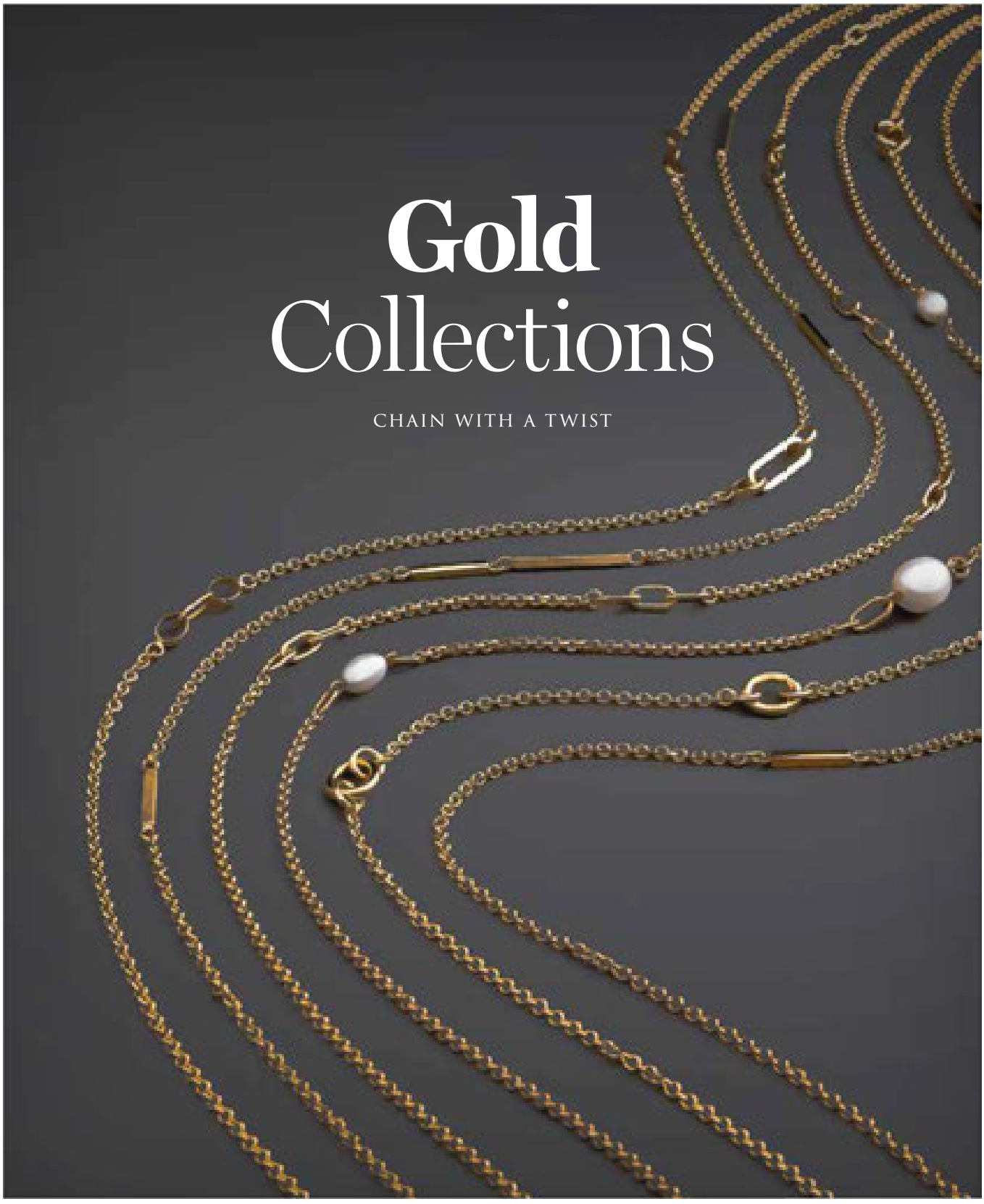




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Chair's Foreword



As I write this in early April, the sun's out for the first consecutive days of 2025 – a welcome reminder of brighter days ahead, quite literally and metaphorically. It's a natural moment for reflection and an opportunity to look forward.

One of the NAJ's key responsibilities is to watch what's coming down the line. That means staying alert to potential threats and also being ready to seize opportunities. Over the past few months, that's exactly what we've been doing.

DEVELOPING OUR KEY STRATEGY CHOICES

By the time you read this, your National Committee and NAJ management team will have completed our first strategy day in five years. These sessions are essential. They give us the time and space to step back, take stock and ensure we're steering the Association – and, by extension, the wider industry – in the right direction. Many of you took the time to respond via social media and our newsletter with your views.

Over the last couple of years, we've worked hard to develop our purpose of supporting our members to be profitable and responsible, continuing to align NAJ operations to key pillars of representation, professional standards, education and training and membership engagement. I hope you agree we've made good inroads.

Our review wasn't just a box-ticking exercise. It was about aligning priorities, checking our direction of travel and making sure our decisions – now and in the future – will help you, our members, be more profitable and responsible.

As ever, your voice matters. In the coming weeks, we'll consult members to ensure our medium- and longer-term strategy reflects your needs. When that moment comes, I hope you'll share your thoughts. We're listening.

In tandem with this forward look, we also recognise and understand the key choices we need to make to help members overcome the incoming challenges and make the most of such opportunities – some are already here. Your National Committee is aware of the need to balance what support is needed now and in the future.

REPRESENTATION

At the latest UK Jewellery, Silverware and Allied Crafts roundtable, which the NAJ proudly facilitates, we held another constructive and energising meeting. I'm pleased to say the collective energy in the room continues to grow. This isn't just talk for talk's sake. We agreed on two clear next steps: to develop a unified industry manifesto of clear strategic asks and, secondly, to map the industry and its financial and socio-economic value, as well as identify the organisations, networks and people we need to influence.

Especially encouraging is the growing appetite for collaboration. More businesses and institutions are getting involved, all driven by a shared desire to move the industry forward. We know that to make real progress, we must first have a clear view of where we are and where we're heading – and that's what this work is all about. A shared sense of purpose is around the table, which bodes well for the road ahead.

A SUMMER OF EVENTS

June is a busy month in the NAJ calendar, with the Retail Congress and the Valuers' Conference firmly in the diary. These are flagship events – key opportunities for learning, connection and collaboration. There are full details in this issue.

Alongside these gatherings, we also have the small matter of our AGM, where Gary Wroe will step down as president. Gary's selfless commitment to supporting the NAJ is a testament to his character and desire to give back to the trade. While he may be stepping down, happily Gary isn't stepping away – he'll remain an active part of the NAJ. Thank you, Gary!

That said, unless someone's working on a way to clone Gary, we'll need more to get involved. The AGM is the perfect opportunity to do just that. Come along, meet the NAJ team and Committee members and find out how you can play a part – however big or small – in shaping the future of your Association. There are many ways to contribute, and every voice adds value.

WELCOMING NEW FACES

The NAJ team has grown recently, with three new roles added to strengthen our operational capacity. Lily Henderson has joined us from the BAJ as education programme manager, taking the lead on our JET courses and ensuring they remain the go-to courses in industry training.

Sarah Morgans came on board in January to help deliver events. With years of experience under her belt, she's excited to bring new energy to the Retail Congress and Valuers' Conference – both now established as standalone events.

Last but not least, Jodie-Lee Perks has joined the membership team as a membership development officer to engage with members old and new and ensure your NAJ experience is as valuable as it is welcoming.

If you haven't met them yet, I hope you will soon. They each bring a fresh perspective and passion for supporting you.

THE JET BUSINESS NETWORK

Speaking of networking, the upcoming Retail Congress on 3rd June is a JET Business Network (JBN) calendar highlight. It's always a pleasure to connect with peers from across the country, learn from one another and hear from expert speakers.

Speaking of networking, the upcoming Retail Congress on 3rd June is a JET Business Network (JBN) calendar highlight. It's always a pleasure to connect with peers from across the country, learn from one another and hear from expert speakers.

This year's event will be especially poignant, marking Michael Donaldson's final Congress as JBN facilitator. Michael has been a mentor, a guide and a steadfast supporter of countless JBN members – a real advocate for independent retail. His contribution has been immense, and while we'll miss his regular presence, we wish him an enjoyable and well-earned retirement. Thank you, Michael!

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Before I sign off, I want to offer huge congratulations to Belinda and the entire team behind *The Jeweller*. Their recent win at the Trade Association Forum Awards – taking home the Magazine of the Year title – was richly deserved.

We know how much time, care and creativity goes into producing each issue, and this award is a well-deserved recognition of that hard work. *The Jeweller* continues to be an essential part of the NAJ, and it's wonderful to see it recognised externally.

Here's to a summer of progress, partnership and purpose.

Until next time,



Adam Jacobs, NAJ Chair

FROM

The Editor





How long after receiving some sort of recognition for your hard work (let's say as an award, for sake of argument), is it OK to feel pretty pleased with yourself? Chuffed-bordering-on-smug? I only ask because it's been roughly one month, two weeks and five days since *The Jeweller* was declared Magazine of the Year at the Trade Association Forum Awards 2025, and the team and I are still exuding a self-satisfied glow of superiority. It'll pass. But in the meantime, it's lovely to have a first-hand insight into how businesses and individuals must feel when they win a coveted jewellery industry award.

Which is a totally intentional segue into this note for your diary: the NAJ Awards 2025, sponsored by Curteis, are on Thursday, 23rd October, at the ICC in Birmingham. And importantly, entries for the 15 categories open in May, so turn to page 38 for all the relevant details and start thinking about your submission now. Imagine that warm, fuzzy feeling. And ponder on this: if you snooze, you lose.

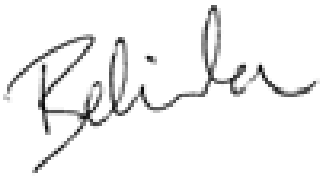
Prize winners at the Goldsmiths' Craft & Design Council Awards know all about that moment of jubilation as their name is called out. The prestigious annual competition is a wonderful evening of celebration, acknowledging the diverse talent that exists across the breadth of our industry. On page 22, we highlight just a few of this year's winners. The same splendid venue – Goldsmiths' Hall – is also the backdrop for the JET Graduation Awards – cue more applause, back-slapping and collective pride as the achievements of JET students is celebrated (p46).

We enjoyed yet more cheer and excitement as the finalists of the upcoming UK Jewellery Awards 2025 were announced during the two-day Retail Jeweller Festival in March. Turn to page 28 for my report on the buoyant and well-attended show. It's been a busy few weeks, trade fair-wise – the NAJ team has also attended Jewellery & Watch at Spring Fair, Inhorgenta Munich and, most recently, the CMJ's Spring Trade Event. Catch my reviews of all these on pages 16, 10 and 32.

With just over a month to go, anticipation is now building for two other key annual NAJ events: The JET Business Network's Retail Congress on 3rd June, and the 2025 Valuers' Conference on 7th to 8th June. Both promise to be perfect opportunities for learning, knowledge sharing, networking and a little light letting down of hair. For all you need to know about both events, turn to pages 8 and 14. My message here is along the lines of my NAJ Awards one: avoid FOMO – register now.

There's been a great deal to write about in this issue of *The Jeweller*, but we will always make space to showcase NAJ members – new and established. (I love this aspect of my job.) On page 20, read about Holts Gems in Hatton Garden; there's an early look at Walsh at George Farrer in Tunbridge Wells (p48) and we introduce a new member, PeaceGold, in County Durham, (and the man behind it, Greg Valerio) on page 36.

Enjoy summer everyone. I'm just off to polish my (sorry, our) trophy. Ahem, did I mention we won this a...? Oh, OK.



Belinda Morris, Editor

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CMJ Trade Event



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Congress Calling

The JET Business Network's Annual Retail Congress will take place in June, ushering in a new venue, some recognisable speakers and the end of an era for facilitator Michael Donaldson. Sarah Jordan reports.

Now in its 16th year, the JET Business Network's (JBN) Retail Congress has evolved into a must-attend event of new perspectives, fresh ideas and useful insights to support retail business owners and their senior leadership teams. This year, it is at a new venue – Drayton Manor Resort in Tamworth – on Tuesday, 3rd June, providing some unusual, thrilling perks for business leaders who appreciate a rollercoaster ride alongside networking.

As in previous years, the 2025 Retail Congress will be a single action-packed day, incorporating guest speakers from both in and outside of JBN membership. However, it will also be a bittersweet occasion. After 11 years at the helm as JBN facilitator, Michael Donaldson has announced his plans to retire and step away from the Retail Congress, making this his last event. Those in the JBN know how much passion and dedication Michael has poured into the community, and his steadfast commitment to growing businesses, building confident leaders and navigating industry challenges will be sorely missed.

NAJ chief executive Ben Massey says: "The JBN has grown immeasurably under Michael's guidance, and I have no doubt many members will be sad to see him go. Although 3rd June will mark Michael's last Retail Congress, it will be the first for the new JBN facilitator, who will be in attendance. I am confident this new chapter in the JET Business Network story will continue with the same energy as the preceding decade."

When deciding how to structure his final Retail Congress, Michael opted to add to the guest speaker list a cohort of JBN members to share their award-winning jewellery journeys. As in previous years, Michael has honed his attention on curating "actionable value for everyone in the room," including practical advice and guaranteed takeaways that retailers can implement the next day. The theme for the day will be Lessons from the Best in Class, which highlights the importance of learning from those with real-world experience. The more informal focus of the event will encourage retailers to embrace change and thrive in their own unique ways, despite social and economic challenges.

"We want JBN members to thrive over the coming years across all areas of business, including sales, marketing, leadership, differentiation and destination," Michael explains. "Each speaker will provide an experienced perspective on how this success and stability can be achieved."

Included among the six speakers attending Drayton Manor Resort is JBN member **Jaysal Pattni** of **Minar Jewellers** in Wandsworth. His 30-minute session will dive into What it Takes to Be Voted the Best in Town, drawing upon Minar's wins in Best Business, Best Customer Service and Jeweller of the Year categories in recent years. His fellow JBN member, **Harriet France**, managing director of **Jeremy France Jewellers** in Winchester, will focus on Inspiring Your People and explain how she manages and motivates a team of 24 people. Harriet is known for her honest, no-nonsense approach to business, having had to make some tough decisions in her director role. However, these have paid off, with her colleagues earning the NAJ Salesperson of the Year Award in both 2023 and 2024.

Peter Wong of **Wongs Jewellers** in Liverpool will also step forward from the JBN membership to deliver a talk on Winning Marketing Campaigns. Having secured the UK Jewellery Award for Marketing/Social Media Campaign of the Year in 2024, Wongs Jewellers is uniquely placed to provide insights into adventurous and effective brand-building strategies.

Elsewhere, the Retail Congress will welcome speakers from beyond its community, putting the spotlight on topical and relevant key issues for retailers in 2025. **Virada Training** managing director **Debbie Barrow** will consider how top sales performers are created and nurtured in the contemporary retail environment. Her insights have transformed into award-winning programmes for 153 jewellers, 435 retailers and brands in 10 countries.

Charlie Betts of **The Betts Group** will be on hand to discuss Differentiating Your Business with ESG Engagement. His session will explore changing consumer expectations and provide examples of how doing the right thing from a social and environmental perspective is increasingly aligned with climbing profits.

RETAIL CONGRESS



Sales expert and best-selling author **Sonja Leason** will provide an inspiring session on battling through adversity and shifting mindsets. In this session, Sonja will be talking about how to overcome challenges to grow and scale. She will talk about turning victim into victor, regardless of the circumstances. She talks about fear, 'doing it scared' and that no matter what, everything can be figured out.

Finally, the Retail Congress will consider whether uncertainty can be a competitive advantage, guided by the expert assessment of psychologist and author **Sarah Gregg**. Her session will dissect the role uncertainty plays in modern business and offer practical, evidence-based strategies to help business owners "unlock its hidden potential."

To further enhance this year's Congress experience, attendees are invited to Drayton Manor Resort Hotel on the afternoon of Monday, 2nd June, to participate in a pre-Congress networking meal. As the resort is in the grounds of Drayton Manor theme park, this is also an opportunity to capitalise on complimentary afternoon tickets, for all attendees in need of an adrenaline boost. A special delegate rate is available for overnight accommodation.

The Retail Congress may be a calendar highlight, but it is just one small part of the JBN's year-round mission to deliver value through shared knowledge and experience. Whether you are targeting growth and expansion, building resilience and defending your market position, or exploring exit strategies and succession planning, the JBN community can provide you with the tools to succeed.

RETAIL CONGRESS 2025

When: Tuesday, 3rd June 2025

Where: Drayton Manor Resort, Tamworth

Tickets: Retail Congress tickets cost £245 + VAT for NAJ Members and £295 + VAT for non-members. A 20 per cent discount on additional tickets will be provided when purchasing for multiple staff members.

To find out more visit: **naj.co.uk/Retail-Congress**

End of an Era

After 11 years at the helm, Michael Donaldson is saying goodbye to his role as JBN facilitator to enjoy a richly deserved retirement. Here, he reminisces on his experiences with some of the nation's biggest jewellery retailers and considers the JBN's future under new leadership.

"I've said it before, and I'll say it again: the JBN is a remarkable community of independent retail jewellers who share so much more than their knowledge, experience and expertise with one another, irrespective of their size, positioning and location.

"It's a unique jewellery community - where else can you get advice and opinions that are supported by financial facts and hard sales data that help other jewellers reduce their risks and maximise their opportunities?

"After 30 years in international corporate companies, the role of JBN facilitator over the last decade has been quite a different experience for me. I've met and worked with 76 individual JBN members from the Channel to the Tay, the Mersey to the Wash, from businesses that have been established for 178 years to a more recent four years. It's challenged, enthused and engaged me in many ways! It has been a shared experience and a shared learning and one I am most thankful for; they have not only been a pleasure to work with but a pleasure to know.

"Thank you, JBNers, for allowing me into your community, and I look forward to handing over the reins to your new facilitator in July.

"For retail jewellers who have yet to encounter or are considering the JBN, our annual Congress is the perfect opportunity to see what we do and how we do it."



Festina



Munich's international show... with 900 exhibitors from 38 countries, was this year more international than ever. After a three-day visit to the vast Messe-München, Belinda Morris offers her overview.

INHORGENTA 2025



Yoko London



Gellner



Hans D Krieger

For global press members and content creators, the show opened with exhibition director Stefanie Mändlein's briefing – she introduced key German industry figures, with their fingers on the pulse of the country's jewellery and watch trade. Messe-München's CEO Stefan Rummel emphasised the importance of "expanding the show's international reach through targeted investments in growth markets like India." More than half of Inhorgenta exhibitors came from abroad, the largest numbers from Italy, India, Switzerland and France.

The challenges facing the industry, like record-breaking gold prices, inflation and a dwindling (but demanding) clientele, is why "it's all the more important to invest in one's business, so the customer's shopping experience matches the product," – the advice from two trade association bosses.

The **British Allied Trades Federation** stand showcased the work of five designers – developed by BATF with Department for Business and Trade and funded through Birmingham City Council (BCC). "The funding helps export ready designers and manufacturers from within BCC boundaries to gain a simplified route to export markets," explains Matthew Hamilton, NAJ commercial manager. "This is the first of a proposed annual programme of international events. The same five businesses, plus three more, exhibited at the Hong Kong TDC Jewellery Show in March. There's incredible interest in UK manufacturing, and we attracted interest from retailers, wholesalers and other designers, plus international trade associations and CIBJO, all interested in the concept. It was also good to see so many UK and Irish visitors."

Among the designer brands was **Harle Paris**. "We were proud to represent Birmingham and the UK, bringing exceptional craftsmanship and design from the heart of England to the global stage," says designer/founder Anson Law. "Exhibiting internationally has been an exciting milestone, allowing us to engage with industry professionals, connect with new audiences and showcase our collections. This international debut marks a significant step as we expand our presence while remaining dedicated to crafting fine jewellery. The positive reception has been greatly appreciated, and we look forward to building new relationships and launching exciting new ventures."

British brand **Gecko** also had "an excellent show, seeing lots of people and winning new customers," says Evie Taylor. "It was our first show in Germany since taking over the Diamonfire global licence; the new collection launches shortly. As well as our Elements Gold, Beginnings and D4Diamond brands, we showed our Laura Ashley costume jewellery collection – launched last year – and the new Laura Ashley Silver. The collection features 32 new lines in a mix of silver and gold plate."

In the fine jewellery hall (B1), **Yoko London** was attracting attention for its beautiful pistachio green and chocolate brown Tahitian pearls – coloured using a special Japanese process – for a variety of styles, including chokers, which are growing in popularity, and ombré triple strands. The amazing zipper statement necklace with diamonds highlighted the strong trend elsewhere (whether fine or fashion) for Y-shaped necklaces/lariats.

Pearls of all varieties and qualities were well represented – either as the focus or as details. **Brigitte Adolph's** delicate lace-inspired 18ct gold and silver jewellery featured freshwater baroque pearls, dripping from Y-shaped necklaces and freely moving pearl earrings, in the Chiara Pearl line.



Brigitte Adolph

At the Inhorgenta Awards 2025, the Fine Jewellery of the Year award was given to German pearl house **Gellner** for a new version of its Wave Ring – a stunning 15mm Marutea pearl placed in architectural triangular pavé set prongs: purity meets opulence. A new long 18ct gold necklace has been fashioned to wear at different lengths, the handmade links interspersed with baroque pearls.

Flexibility was a recurring theme at the show and exemplified at **Yana Nesper**, which works in 18ct gold, freshwater, Akoya and South Sea pearls. For example, a long Y-shaped necklace can be worn in a number of ways, while long pearl drop earrings double back on themselves to become hoops. Fun, funky and glamorous – which explains why the house is the official pearl supplier to the Emily in Paris TV series.



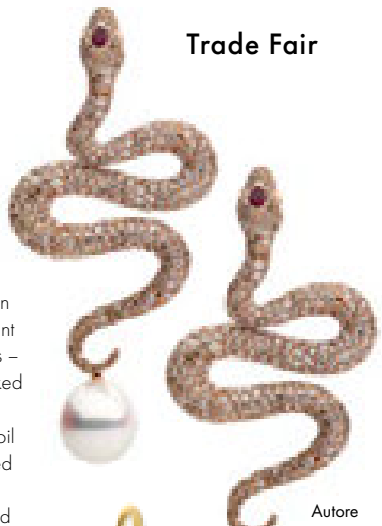
Laura Ashley @ Gecko

Lariat style necklaces were also the statement pieces at Australian pearl house **Autore**, which creates stunning pieces using cultured South Sea pearls from its own farms. Tassels of gemstones add extra glamour, while the new serpent earrings, rings and pendants, sparkling with brown diamonds and rubies for eyes and completed with a large pearl at the head or tail, exemplify sinuous luxe.

Iridescent white mother-of-pearl was introduced as the new Dolcevita shade in **Nanis'** popular Boules and Muse collections, featuring rings, earrings, pendant, necklace and charms. With versatility a by-word here too, one Muse choker features a double-sided design, offering two styling options – one 18ct hand-engraved gold, the other mother-of-pearl – while two bracelets in white and yellow gold can be joined together to create a necklace that can be worn in two ways.

Inspired by the art and tradition of the African tribe, **Marco Bicego's** Masai collection features a bold, clean and elegant style, comprising flat golden coils – reminiscent of the distinctive stacked jewellery worn by the Maasai women. In this brand-exclusive coil technique, a gold wire is wrapped around a woven chain and then pressed, forming a semi-rigid gold ribbon that creates different silhouettes. A splash of diamonds adds extra glamour to yellow gold coil bangles.

Hans D Krieger offered very many stand out pieces, such as beautiful teal coloured lagoon tourmalines, the rub-over settings creating a modern pared-back look. Fancy shapes for diamonds and coloured stones, different shapes together in one piece, glamorous under-bezels and horizontal-set stones on rings and champagne and white diamonds together were just a few of the details that caught my eye.



Autore



Nanis



Yana Nesper



Marco Bicego



Buelling

In 2015, Pforzheim-based **Noën** became the first German jewellery company to achieve Fairtrade certification. Since launching in 2006, its founders Claudia and Malte Schindler have combined traditional goldsmithing with contemporary style and values of fairness and responsibility. Noën exclusively processes certified gold and silver, which supports fair working conditions and drastically reduces the use of harmful chemicals. The collections vary from simple, linear and fluid designs in plain or textured 14 and 18ct gold to luscious stone set pieces inspired by nature.

NI-based importer of German jewellery Jan-Christian Bostelmann's brands (including Noën) enjoyed a successful show – with visitors buying... not just looking. **Helene Apitzsch**, which specialises in platinum chain and jewellery, rekindled archive designs, including a fascinating bracelet whose links twist to reveal all platinum, all gold or a mix of both. Renowned for flexible 18ct gold pieces, **Silhouette** showed a versatile bracelet that twists – plain on one side, diamonds on the other – while a clever square-shape ring with interior springs on all four sides will fit a number of finger sizes. All types and sizes of chain were available at **Buelling**, which works with customers' own stones for Chaos necklaces, while **Quinn** unveiled new rhodium-plated silver, twist-design chunky hoops along with chains and ribbon-style earrings as well as finer stone-set pieces in 14 and 18ct gold.



Quinn

Sif Jakobs introduced its new collection of 14ct yellow or white gold pieces set with laboratory-grown diamonds. Solitaire rings with floral shape settings sat alongside studs, hoops and crosses – the stones cut to give maximum sparkle. Meanwhile gold-plated silver chunky – but lightweight – pieces are a nod to the 1980s. **Thomas Sabo's** expanding charm collection was off-set by ruggedly glam Rebel at Heart men's pieces and classic '80s style jewellery.



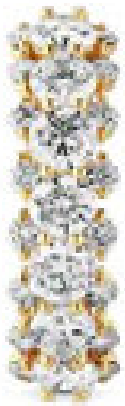


Silhouette





Noën





Sif Jakobs



Helene Apitzsch



Thomas Sabo


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Value Added

The Institute of Registered Valuers' 2025 Valuers' Conference will return to a standalone event this June, putting the spotlight firmly on the art, science and business of jewellery valuations and gemmology. Sarah Jordan reports.

The Institute of Registered Valuers (IRV) is preparing to descend upon Edgbaston Park Hotel in Birmingham on 7th to 8th June for its annual Valuers' Conference – a not-to-be-missed event for experienced and evolving independent valuers, jewellers and gemmologists. This year, the event has returned to its previous standalone format, designed to create a more concentrated environment for like-minded professionals to learn, network and participate in hands-on workshops. In recognition of this new phase in the Conference's development, leading auction house Bonhams will be headline sponsor for the first time. Describing the Valuers' Conference as "indispensable," Bonhams' head of jewellery UK, Kate Flitcroft, says: "The IRV is the leading voice for jewellery valuers in the UK, and its membership criteria is based on Honesty, Integrity and Professionalism – values that align with Bonhams."

This year's event will begin on Saturday, 7th June, with an informative series of keynote talks from internationally renowned experts. **Kate Flitcroft** will draw upon her experiences at Christie's, Lyon & Turnbull and now Bonhams to deliver an engaging session inspired by the auction market and touch upon some of the trending topics that have crossed her desk in recent months.

Geologist and gemmologist **Dr Aaron Palke** will also share insights into the evolving science of geographic origin determination of gemstones. As senior manager of coloured stone research at the Gemological Institute of America, Dr Palke is well-placed to guide Conference attendees through this fascinating area of study, which can sometimes cause consternation in the trade, especially when laboratory reports disagree. His talk will consider the shared properties of gems from different geographic locales and will pinpoint hazardous examples, such as similar inclusions in sapphires from Madagascar and Kashmir.

This year's third speaker, **Dr Çiğdem Lüle**, will explore the Value of Colour Through Millennia. Archaeogemology is a relatively unknown discipline that applies a multidisciplinary approach to investigate the identity and origin of gem artifacts of the ancient world. It combines aspects of gemmology, archaeology and geology to identify ancient gems and determine their mineralogical and geographical origin. In this session, Dr Lüle will share her observations on colour perception and discuss why we haven't agreed on colour of gems for millennia.

Adrian Hailwood, managing director of The Watch Scholar, will also take to the stage on Saturday, 7th June, with the talk Are We Nearly There Yet? Has the Watch Market Bottomed Out and Where Does It Go Next? Adrian will use his 30 years of experience in high-end retail and watch auctions to consider the current state of the watch market, the fall in pre-owned prices over the last three years and the impact this is having on valuations. Following Adrian is second-generation gemstone dealer at GF Williams **Jason Williams**. Jason's knowledge of the gemstone industry is unparalleled. He travels far and wide to purchase the finest quality-coloured gemstones for his clients.

Finally, **Dr Tehmina Goskar** will dive into the world of museum grade specimens, asking what exactly this means and how museums make acquisition decisions. Her insights



Kate Flitcroft


Dr Aaron Palke



Jason Williams



Adrian Hailwood



Dr Tehmina Goskar

hail from a career spent in museum curation, as well as her experiences as a historian and gemmologist training to become an accredited valuer. In her presentation, Dr Goskar will explore some ways in which museum stories are important in informing the desirability and price paid for gems and jewellery on the open market and will give examples of how the provenance of an object can far outweigh its notional financial value.

After this intensive day of learning, Conference attendees can unwind and network with their peers at The Valuers' Conference Gala Dinner. It is the perfect opportunity to enjoy a three-course meal, make new acquaintances and discuss the day's events in more detail. This evening event, returning by popular demand, is also the ideal platform to announce the 2025 David Wilkins Award recipient. This trophy is granted by the National Committee of the National Association of Jewellers to a valuer who has demonstrated outstanding skill, dedication and service in their professional life, making this a covetable honour among members of the IRV.



Dr Çiğdem Lüle

The next day, Sunday, 8th June, attendees can participate in smaller, more specialised workshops and masterclasses to gain practical and hands-on experience. Topics are broad, covering history, social media, synthetic diamonds and silverware, among other specialisms. Among the confirmed masterclass leaders is **Harriet Kelsall** of Harriet Kelsall Bespoke Jewellery. She will share the elusive history of Medici pearls, now known as the Hanover Pearls, based on research by historian Jane Kelsall.

As one of our returning workshop leaders, **Sammantha Maclachlan** will host a session dedicated to the art of photomicrography and how it can support valuations. She will provide practical advice, including how to set up your microscope, camera equipment and lighting to give you the best possible chance of capturing the perfect shot.

Elsewhere, **Dimitri Zlatev** will lead one-on-one practical workshops dedicated to social media best practices and provide attendees with cheat sheets, planning tools and personal insights to help them grow digitally. Dimitri has built an enviable reputation on Instagram, boasting more than 32,000 followers on his @GemmologyObsession account. He will conduct research into participants' Instagram accounts ahead of time, to tailor time spent during the Valuers' Conference to each individual or business.

Further sessions will cover synthetic diamonds, led by **Julia Griffiths**, pricing items for auction guided by **Kate Flitcroft** and insights into jet by **Sarah Caldwell Steele**. An insurance question and answer session with **TH March** may help to alleviate some business concerns, while sessions led by **Dr Çiğdem Lüle**, **Kerry Gregory**, and **Mehdi Saadian** will round out your Valuers' Conference experience. As with all the Valuers' Conference masterclasses and workshops, you have to be quick! It is important to secure your place and register your interest as soon as possible to avoid missing out on limited spaces in key sessions.

With just a handful of weeks to go until the 2025 Valuers' Conference opens its doors, it's time to plan your visit. Edgbaston Park Hotel is easy to get to by train, car and bus, avoiding Birmingham's clean air zone. Preferential rates are also available for those who wish to stay on site.

Valuers' Conference

To discover more about the Valuers' Conference and view the latest Event Guide with up-to-date information on speakers and workshops, visit **www.naj.co.uk/valuers-conference**

Jewellery & Watch @ Spring Fair


HERBERT MARX

While the days of two whole halls for our sector – with fine jewellery well represented – might be a fond, distant memory, Jewellery & Watch at the NEC in February delivered an upbeat show for visitors.

A strong gathering of demi-fine and fashion jewellery made the assessing of trends relatively straightforward – it's clear chain-based styles, the layering of delicate pieces and freshwater pearls as accents are as strong as ever. Added to this 18ct yellow gold plating is finding favour with designers, brands and retailers – it's the look customers want but without the ever-increasing hefty price tag of an all-gold piece. Conversely, some fine jewellery suppliers had introduced more silver lines for the same cost-based reason, such as **Herbert Marx**, who were showing a variety of silver bangles and chains alongside their coloured gemstone pieces.

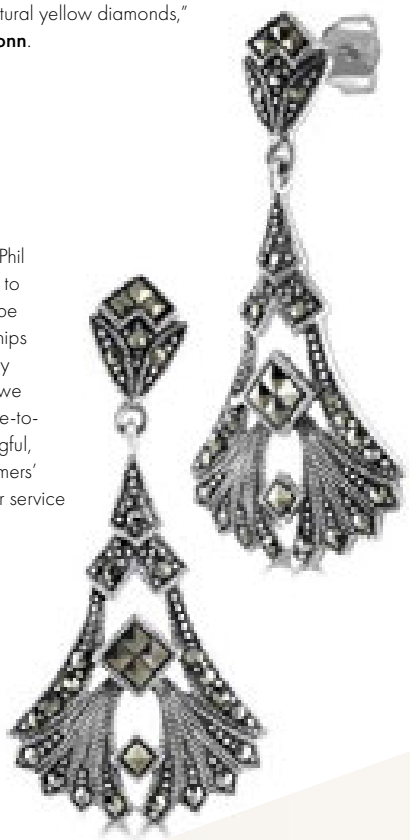
We spoke to a number of exhibitors to hear about their Jewellery & Watch experience and discover their key new and popular pieces.



DONNS <

"We found the show encouraging, meeting with existing customers and opening new accounts. Our new collection for 2025 was well received, and we did particularly well with yellow gold jewellery and our latest designs with natural yellow diamonds," says **Jeremy Donn**.





DANIELS SILVER & MARCASITE >

"We have not exhibited since 2019," says Phil Daniels. "We met quite a few people new to our business, which was great, and we hope these will lead to lasting business relationships and new growth opportunities. It was lovely to see some of our current customers who we haven't seen in person for many years. Face-to-face interactions always feel more meaningful, allowing us to better understand our customers' needs and how our products and customer service can improve and fulfil them better."

D&X <

"Our new 18ct gold-plated sterling silver Vibes collection received fantastic feedback and performed very well. As a brand, we recognise the need to keep innovating and introducing something fresh each season to navigate the challenging market ahead," says director **Dong Chen**.





LIDO PEARLS

"The buyers of fine jewellery I saw at the show were loving the gold plated, finer contemporary pieces that we're majoring on, as well as the premium large Edison strands," says **Lorraine Thomas**. Different lengths for layering, Y-shape fine necklaces and delicate sets combining CZ stones and pearls were quite a departure for Lido, while dramatic baroque pearl pieces and dramatic ropes featuring different colour pearls added a point of difference.

PING PING

"We had a fairly busy show, selling a lot of loose pearls to creators and small volume designers, as has become a trend over the past few years. Our new silver collections were well received, while we took orders from several new customers, as well as existing friends and even some jewellers we hadn't heard from since before Covid," says director **Simon Reeve**. In particular, grade A natural and dyed jadeite pieces looked strong, as did gold plated silver chain necklaces featuring enhancer charms.



SEA GEMS

Designed in Cornwall, Silver Origins jewellery featured contemporary sterling silver inspired by Cornwall's iconic landscape, nature and coastal lifestyle. The collection includes organic designs, intricate beachcomber shells, botanical and wildlife forms as well as whimsical motifs that celebrate moments of love and life. Delicate textures and polished surfaces together with gold vermeil or gemstones are added highlights.



XUXA SHOP

"The Spring Fair was a fantastic opportunity to connect with buyers who really resonated with Xuxa's bold, playful aesthetic," says founder **Jodie Cavendish**. "Our natural stone necklaces and vibrant beaded styles were the standout favourites, especially the rainbow designs for summer. We also saw strong interest in our smaller pick-up pieces, starting from just £23 – perfect for customers looking for gifts or to add more colour to their everyday jewellery."



LBJ JEWELLERY

"LBJ had a positive show, seeing many existing and new customers among the enquiries," says **Annabelle Davis**. "There was a strong response to the many new lines of CZ silver, and also Nicole Barr was, as always, a popular, eye-catching collection. A large pearl display also drew attention, particularly the organic-shaped baroque and Keshi pearls. Overall, happy that LBJ customers buy across all the ranges, happy LBJ showcases enough diversity for them to have the same in their shop. The artisan designer range Saphirim Rahav also proved popular with a mix of silver and 9ct gold in rings and pendants."

DAINTY LONDON

"Spring Fair 2025 exceeded our expectations, confirming the industry's shift towards sustainable luxury," says **Jade Sammour**, founder. "Our selective approach to partnerships and commitment to UK-made jewellery resonated strongly with quality retailers seeking distinctive sustainable collections." There was strong interest in the expanding fine jewellery collections featuring diamonds, platinum and solid gold pieces, sustainable luxury pieces and the brand's mid-season stock swap programme, offering retailers flexibility.





CHRIS LEWIS SILVER >

As the child of naturalist parents, ex-sculptor **Chris Lewis** grew up "loving things that are ordinary in the wilderness, where the ordinary become extraordinary." This inspiration informs his fluid pieces that offer a twist on expected forms – chains, in particular. A shark's tooth shape takes a tear drop feel when turned on its side; soldered infinity symbols have an interlinked look for bracelets and necklaces.



CME < "The warm welcome and enthusiastic reviews from customers – thrilled to see us back exhibiting – gave us a fantastic boost," says general manager **Debbie Hunt**. "We met many new customers and reconnected with past clients, making the show an overall success. There was a strong interest in plain silver drop earrings – perhaps a novelty for a new hoop-wearing generation – as well as our bold Italian collection of polished metal earrings and pendants and new Tiny Sentiments charm range. The moissanite jewellery introduced last November remains strong – particularly the tennis necklace and bracelet. A rewarding aspect of attending trade shows is gathering inspiration – we left with plenty of ideas from customers on how to expand our collections."



SCREAM PRETTY WINS SPRING FAIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY AWARD

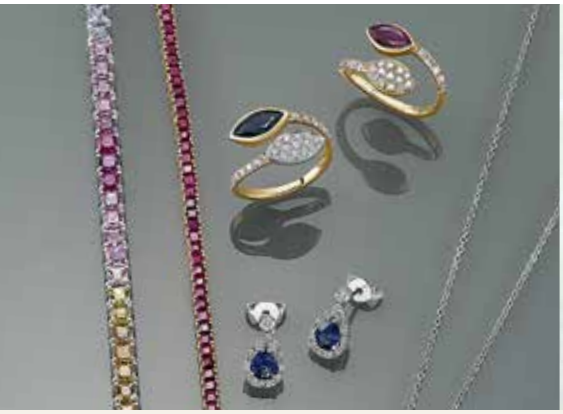
"To win the Jewellery & Watch Best New Product award was fantastic – the **Bold Edit collection** of five chunky statement earrings – with the signature Disco Ball studs – and the introduction of recycled brass is something we've taken the time to perfect. To have that recognised by the Spring Fair team and *The Jeweller* is amazing!" says **Lucy Lee**, Scream Pretty.

"We saw a wide range of buyers at the show, from small independent retail shops to well-known gift shops, department stores and piercing studios – a real mix, which is great. We met fresh faces and took new orders, and that's why we go to the show, to drive new business but also to reconnect with existing customers. A huge plus is the network offered, we love feedback about our product and what customers want."

CAVENDISH FRENCH >

With a collection comprising rhodium plated silver and 18ct gold plated silver with CZs, Cavendish French found that the demand for gold was high, with new T-bar necklaces, chunky gold hoops and colourful CZs with gold selling well. Due to their popularity, the cocktail ring range featuring large stones has been expanded.





DEIL SAMUEL ^

With a new name (previously Deil Joseph), the Italian fine jewellery house is continuing to offer natural diamond jewellery, but has made a move to showcase more coloured stone pieces – ruby, sapphire and emerald in particular. However, it was the rainbow sapphire line bracelets that were gaining most notice at the show.

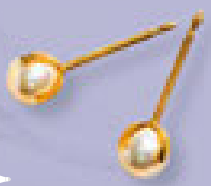
NOYRE BERLIN ^

Exhibiting for the first time at Jewellery & Watch, this German brand has a collection of jewellery in recycled brass or gold-plated silver that attracted attention with the use of largely natural coloured stones – the exceptions being large laboratory grown iolites and green tourmalines. Hand-carved stones are a speciality, as well as calibrated stones to ensure consistency... particularly for drop earrings.

VURCHOO ^

The children's charity-based fashion brand, with pieces inspired by the drawings of children from around the world, enjoyed a very successful show, seeing a lot of new faces. The vibrant display caught the attention of passers-by, with the new fashion hoops sold in every order taken. The jewellery is brass based, plated in sterling silver or 18ct gold.









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Holts Gems

Managing director Alicja Wooles tells Belinda Morris the story of Hatton Garden's glittering beacon.



Above: Holts sapphire engagement rings.
Left: Managing Director, Alicja Wooles. Right: Jason Holt

Please give us the story of Holts Gems.
Holts Gems was founded in 1948 by Robert Holt, a refugee who fled Nazi persecution in Vienna and found safety in Britain. He began his jewellery industry journey as an apprentice diamond polisher in Clerkenwell. His passion and dedication led him to establish his own business, R Holt & Co, at 35 Greville Street, Hatton Garden.

His love for gemstones made him ambitious to expand his trade. One of his early successes involved a consignment of coloured gems from Brazil, including amethysts, citrines and aquamarines, which became the heartbeat of Holts Gems and set the foundation for the company's future.

In the 1970s, he ventured into stone cutting and even travelled to China as an advisor to the government. His fascination with Chinese minerals and carvings led him to be one of the first Westerners to import from China just after the Cultural Revolution.

Over the years, Holts Gems has remained in Hatton Garden and become a trusted name in the industry. Its services have expanded to include bespoke jewellery design, gemstone sourcing and stone cutting. Robert Holt's legacy continues through his son, Jason Holt, who joined the business in 1999 after a successful career in law. He has focused on promoting jewellery industry apprenticeships to ensure the continuation of craftsmanship and expertise.

How has the business developed over the years?
Holts has expanded its premises to accommodate growing operations and services, including becoming the largest apprenticeship school in the UK. Over time, when customer enquiries included shapes and sizes not in stock, Holts developed its own lapidary capabilities – developing machinery from machines that cut glass for optics. For 50 years, it had the only lapidary apprenticeship in the UK. This evolved into Holts Academy, teaching 500 apprentices a year – 90 per cent of whom got jobs in the sector.

In the meantime, Holts Gems continued to expand its product range to include diamonds, bespoke engagement rings and custom jewellery designs. The company also offers gemstone sourcing, stone cutting and restringing services.

Originally catering primarily to the trade, Holts Gems has shifted its focus to include consumers, allowing the business to build a loyal customer base, offering personalised services and bespoke jewellery creations. The customer profile now includes individuals seeking unique engagement rings, custom jewellery and high-quality gemstones.

Under Jason Holt's leadership [in partnership with Alicja], the company has evolved significantly, placing a strong emphasis on technology solutions for seamless and personal customer experience. In Holts' DNA is a huge importance on the very best standards of craftsmanship. Our artisans became the teachers at our academy, sharing their expertise.

Alicja, please tell me about your jewellery journey.
My passion for jewellery started early. I loved collecting small crystals and attending local rock and gem shows. When I moved to the UK in the early 2000s, I found a position at a small, family-run jeweller in Wimbledon with its own workshop. They specialised in diamond jewellery and carried lesser-known gemstones, like tsavorites and spinels. My fascination with gemmology and design was ignited, leading me to study both at the Birmingham School of Jewellery where I simultaneously completed my FGA and DGA qualifications.

Back in London, I worked for a Hatton Garden jeweller, where I learnt from talented mounters, valuers and setters. However, the role was primarily sales focused, and I wanted to apply my creativity.

I joined Holts in 2008 as a gemmologist and jewellery designer. With our inhouse lapidary and manufacturing workshop, I was privileged to work on incredible objets d'art and bespoke pieces, each day bringing something new. Over the years, I progressed to senior gemmologist/jewellery designer, and in 2019, I became client relationship manager, working closely with our trade clients. In 2020, amid Covid's challenges, I became managing director.

What changes have you made, and what developments are on the horizon?
One of my proudest achievements has been building an exceptional team of jewellery designers, gemmologists and marketeers. We share a deep passion for jewellery – living and breathing it every day. Assembling the right team has been fundamental to our success.

With my design background, my focus has always been on craftsmanship and quality. We've refined our bespoke production processes to ensure the highest standards, helping us cultivate a loyal client base drawn to unique gemstones and custom designs. Our expertise in lapidary work allows us to offer a truly bespoke experience. A key change was streamlining operations and digitising our systems and procedures to enhance efficiency and client experience.

What is the company's main USP?
We've always been open to both trade and retail clients, offering gemstone certifications, stringing services and valuations for both sectors.

Our USP lies in our deep knowledge and love of gemstones and jewellery manufacturing. Our inventory includes everything from natural sapphires to more unusual stones, like diopsides and andesines. With decades of expertise, we guide clients in selecting the best gemstones and advise on the most suitable settings to enhance their beauty.

Above all, we're committed to providing a highly personalised experience. Jewellery is inherently sentimental, and we consider it a privilege to be part of our clients' most meaningful moments.



WORKSHOP PRICE LIST

Setting single stones – £8
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English Artworks Bursary sponsored by Cartier – Persephone's Jewel.

GC&DC Awards 2025



JANET BARBER
Lapidary & Carving Award, Goldsmiths' Company Award – Moth Orchid Brooch

The Annual Goldsmiths Craftsmanship & Design Awards were held at the sumptuous Goldsmiths' Hall in London on 3rd March, with more than 300 guests, to commend this year's award winners.

The ceremony was opened by the Goldsmiths' Craft & Design Council's chair, John Ball, and hosted by Council vice chair Judith Lockwood and trustee Maeve Gillies, who together announced this year's award winners.

John Ball said: "Tonight is about the brightest stars, the most promising new talents, the most innovative designs that challenge us all to improve and evolve. This is what the Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Council Awards is all about."

2025 Awards Highlights

The Awards comprised 33 categories in 2D design and 3D craft and design categories. More than 567 people entered – almost 20 per cent more than last year – and 36 Gold awards were given. This years' competition was generously supported by more than 60 patrons and sponsors.

Among the **Major and Premier** awards presented, leading accolades included:

THE JACQUES CARTIER MEMORIAL AWARD

The prestigious award, given at the discretion of the Council for exceptional and outstanding craftsmanship, went to **Alexandra Raphael** for The Honest Bowl. This award is only presented when, in the Council's judgement, an entry achieves a standard to justify the honour. Alexandra won unanimous votes from the Council for her exquisite plique-à-jour enamelled bowl and received her award from Laurent Feniou, Cartier's managing director UK.

THE GOLDSMITHS' COMPANY AWARD

Given for exceptional and outstanding design, this is only awarded when an entry achieves the highest standard of design and originality. This year's prize went to **Janet Barber** for the Moth Orchid Brooch. This delicate, ethereal brooch is made of carved magnesite, niobium, titanium and peppered with sapphires and diamonds.

THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Sponsored by Thomas Fattorini Ltd, the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to **Gay Penfold**, in recognition of her outstanding contribution and commitment to the craft and industry of silversmithing, jewellery and the allied crafts.

Gay has been a key figure in the support, development and growth of countless designer-makers and SMEs, both regionally and nationally. She has played a vital role in breaking down barriers and building bridges between industry education, innovation and business.

THE COLLEGE TROPHY

Presented by special patrons The Betts Group, this award went to **The Bishopsland Educational Trust**, collected by Angela Cork, Bishopsland principal. This trophy is awarded to the college or university that achieved the highest total points accumulated from any Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards given in the competition.



Gay Penfold receives the Lifetime Achievement award sponsored by Thomas Fattorini Ltd.



Alexandra Raphael receives the Jacques Cartier Memorial Award from Prime Warden Richard Reid and Laurent Feniou, Cartier's managing director UK.



XINYI CHEN
NAJ/BATF Ready-to-Wear Award – **Baccata Earrings**



MARCO PAONESSA
Senior Jeweller's Craft Award sponsored by Brown & Newirth – **Siddhi Necklace**



CAITLIN MURPHY
Mixed Metals & Patina Award, sponsored by Louisa Guinness Gallery – **Imitation Brooch**

THE THEO FENNELL APPRENTICE & MASTER AWARD

This award honours the special partnership between an apprentice and their master, showcasing exceptional craftsmanship while celebrating the guidance and expertise of skilled mentors. Presented by Theo Fennell, the award was given to apprentice **Blythe Jolley-Ellis**, for the Art Deco Lapel Pins & Brooch, and master **Victoria Cornelius-Nori**.



BLYTHE JOLLEY-ELLIS
Diamond Mounters Award, Junior Award and Theo Fennell Apprentice & Master Award – **Art Deco Lapel Pins/Brooch**

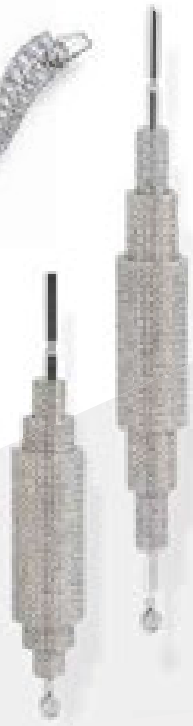


ALEXANDRA RAPHAEL
Enamel & Enamel Painters Award, Wire Innovation Award, Senior Award, Jacques Cartier Memorial Award – **The Honest Bowl**

JUSTIN RICHARDSON
Small Workers & Modelmakers Award – **Watch**

ALEWIJN SLINGERLAND
3D Finished Pieces Design Award – **The Drapers Goblet**

ELINN FANG
Fine Jewellery Award sponsored by Boodles – **Midnight Tide**



ZEEMOU ZENG
Thomas Lyte Award – **Precious Jewellery**

Xinyi Chen wins NAJ prize at GC&DC Awards


Joyful Signs Necklace

Once again, the NAJ and BATF sponsored the Ready-to-Wear Award at the prestigious GC&DC Awards; chair Adam Jacobs presented Xinyi Chen with her winner's certificate. Belinda Morris spoke to her.

Xinyi Chen is a Chinese designer-maker based in England. She works with electronic components as gemstone materials in silver settings – mostly sourced from WEEE Recycling Centres – and turns them into wearable art.

She returned to the bench as a maker after working as a fashion buyer, senior jewellery consultant and photographer. She gained a BA in art design in China, specialising in jewellery and silversmithing, and explored contemporary jewellery. Following her MA at Central Saint Martins, she launched her brand EÈ CHAN, furthering her career and practice.

Her work has been exhibited internationally at prestigious events and, in 2022, she won the Eco-Heroes Award in the Bright Young Gems (now Bright New Gems) programme and exhibited at the Retail Jeweller Festival that year.

Please describe your winning piece.

The Baccata Earrings were created after I received the Emerging Business Bursary at Goldsmiths' Fair last year. I felt it was the right time to introduce e-waste jewellery in small batches to a wider audience, and they became one of the most popular pieces in my work at the fair. Inspired by a unique royal jewellery setting from 1702, they feature a high setting with three-finger claws. By blending craftsmanship with modern technology, the design repurposes found objects, creating a dialogue between the past and future. It reflects a new vision of sustainable living in an age of waste. The earrings offer semi-customisation – customers can choose from up to 15 e-waste colours and 10 round LED colours to mix and match.

What are you working on now?

I'm currently focused on creating collections for stockists and wholesale, and new pieces for MAD About Jewelry 2025 in New York – a pop-up shop for jewellery enthusiasts and collectors. This year, I plan to take part in Goldsmiths' Fair again and continue developing one or two pieces for my New Era of Crown series, working with silver and e-waste. Alongside this, I'm expanding my brand with more wearable pieces, such as pendants, earrings and bracelets, to subtly encourage sustainable awareness in our daily lives.

How often do you create new collections?

I'm in my third year of business and have a decade of dedication to jewellery making. The frequency of creating new collections depends on where I am in my career. I'm constantly developing concepts, techniques and designs. Previously, I preferred to dedicate a year to creative exploration and two years to pursuing new techniques and research – such as experimenting with colour electroplating on silver and establishing connections with WEEE Recycling Center to source materials. Now, I navigate a complex tapestry of tasks, from social media and website management to pricing and collaborations with galleries. So there's no fixed schedule for releasing new collections, but I continue to create new pieces almost every year.

Does your inspiration come directly from the e-waste?

Artificial Intelligems is the visual language of my work, and I'm the only maker using this approach. Building on this, I explore themes such as tradition and technology, the physical and digital worlds, sustainable awareness and the next generation. My recent work involves setting e-waste in silver and using colour electroplating techniques to create a playful, emotive quality. Among these, I took inspiration from my visit to Chatsworth House for my Data Garden Collection, taking the elements of garden mazes and combining them with the unique shape of e-waste to design necklaces.

Where do you sell your jewellery?

Currently, I have around nine stockists worldwide. Here, my pieces are available at several galleries and museum shops, including Mint Gallery in Mayfair, London Museum Docklands shop, New Ashgate Gallery in Farnham and The Goldsmiths' Centre online shop. Throughout May, my earrings will feature in a selling exhibition at Gill Wing Gallery. I'm exploring new opportunities to collaborate with fashion boutique shops.

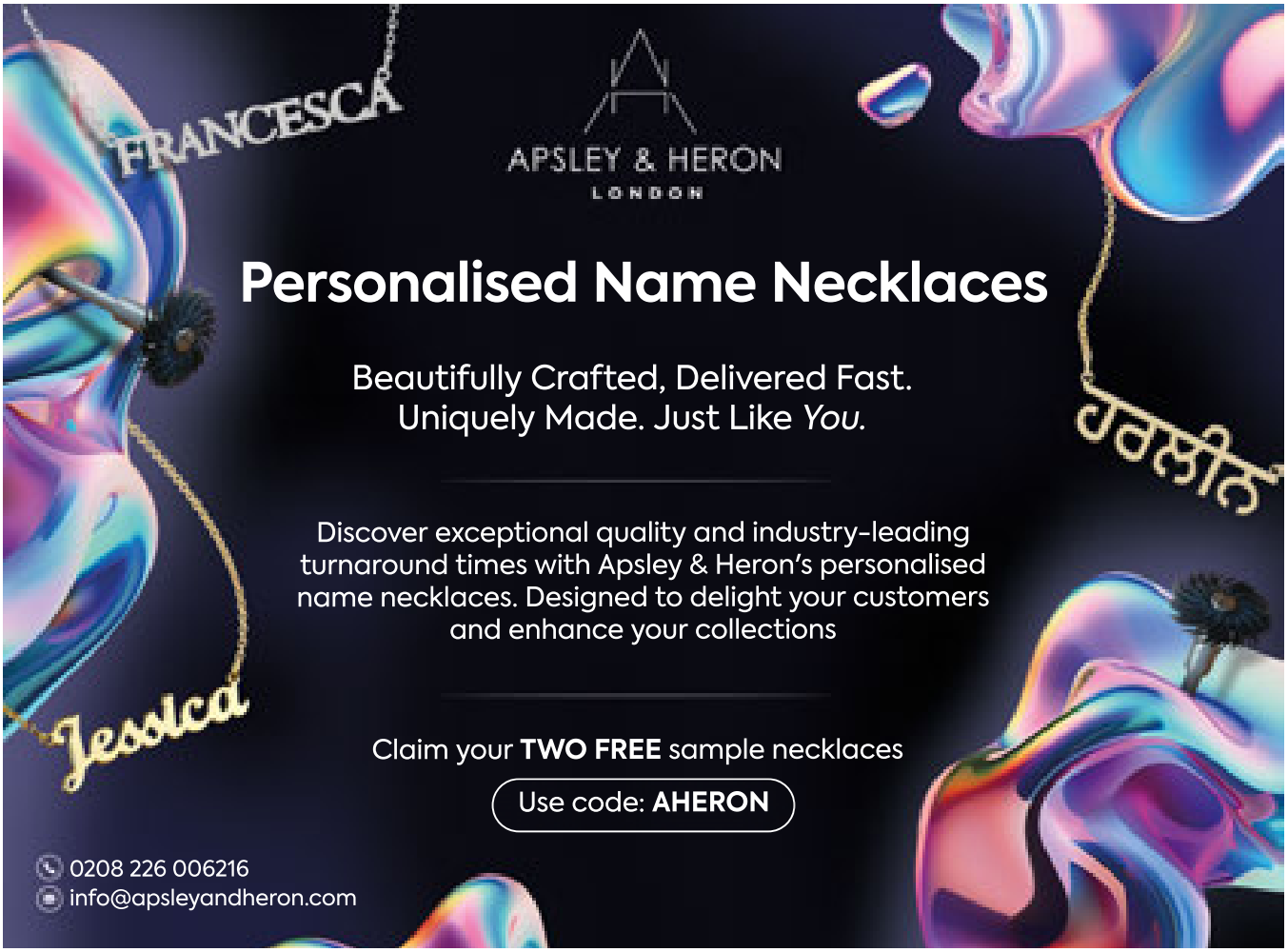
Do you take commissions?

I accept a wide variety of commissions and engage creatively with clients, translating their vision into bespoke pieces based on their budgets. Most have personal colour and design preferences, and I work closely with them to develop proposals based on specifications, refining the piece until it meets their expectations. I'm influenced by my working experience as a fashion buyer and senior jewellery consultant, and I deeply appreciate the trust my clients place in me throughout this process.





Left: The winning Baccata Earrings.
Right: Xinyi Chen receives her certificate from NAJ chair Adam Jacobs


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Bespoke Quarter
something personal

It's been just over three years since Bespoke Quarter was founded. Co-founder Andrew Cowley tells Belinda Morris why now seems a good moment to blow their own trumpet.

In November 2021, the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter saw the establishment of a new jewellery manufacturer. To be exact, it may not have actually seen it as such – Bespoke Quarter was created without fanfare, without huge financial backing, and spent the first two-plus years working from somewhat cramped premises in Northampton Street.

"There were seven benches and a desk in one room," laughs Andrew Cowley, one of the business's three co-founders, "I would describe it as a sweatshop!"

So, Aquinas House on Warstone Lane represented a significant, even deluxe, step up for the business when they moved in on 21st June 2024. Occupying what estate agents would surely describe as an enviably prominent corner position – with views on one side toward the Quarter's iconic clock tower – it has the added distinction of having been built 143 years ago, specifically as the workshops of jewellery manufacturer James Harrison & Sons Ltd. Mosaic tiling in the doorway still declares this fact. It's satisfyingly apt that the building, which was turned into offices when James Harrison ceased trading in the early '90s, is once again home to mounters, setters, polishers and designers. "And it's time to tell people who we are and what we do."

ESTABLISHING THE BUSINESS

Bench-trained Andrew and setters Devan Soni and Carl Humphreys met through their previous workplaces. Combining their skills and experience, they set up the business to be the go-to jewellery manufacturer for the Trade of Birmingham and beyond.

"Traditional manufacturing processes combined with the latest technology and a growing team (11 to date) have created a modern, streamlined and reliable business," explains Andrew, who, with Matilde Fernandes, is Bespoke Quarter's CAD designer.

"We offer a service like everyone else in the Quarter, but we're a new manufacturer and British based, which is a positive – it feels like the slice of the pie for British manufacturing is getting larger." Having signed up to the NAJ's Created in the UK scheme [we strongly approve of the company's Created logo polo shirt uniform!], this is an aspect BQ promotes to its customers. "What we offer is bespoke, so why not get it done here rather than abroad?"

The demand Bespoke Quarter has experienced since launching has been encouraging – and it's come through word of mouth. "We're a small start-up, so we all wear lots of hats," he says. "When someone contacts us, they're speaking to the people who will be making for them. It's very personal. The average age in the building is about 27," he adds, "and when there's an industry skills shortage, it's encouraging so many of us are young."

NEW BLOOD

Bespoke Quarter is planning to take on an apprentice mounter this year and is currently collaborating with Aston University Engineering Academy's Goldsmiths' Institute (which is supported by its founding partner, The Goldsmiths' Foundation) to offer work placements to three jewellery (T level) students. Andrew's enthusiastic support of the programme is greatly appreciated by the Institute – the exposure to how businesses operate and the different skills involved is invaluable to students.

The full range of Bespoke Quarter's services, and the skills employed, is in its latest catalogue, Made to Fit. While totally bespoke jewellery is a speciality, so too is the design and production of popular ring patterns in any metal, all easily adjusted to size at no extra cost.

As Andrew explains, stock mounts traditionally come in set sizes, and no two stones are ever the same. "As the catalogue says: 'Even a fraction of a millimetre between the two can mean an awkward, less-than-perfect fit.' The team produces every mount bespoke to the exact size of a customer's stone: a snug fit and a beautiful finish, every time."

Interestingly, this speciality has become increasingly evident thanks to laboratory-grown diamonds. "As consumers can afford larger stones, retailers are finding it harder to source stock mounts to accommodate even two carat stones, never mind five, six and even seven carats," Andrew says. "It's forcing more and more people into bespoke and is increasing our sales. With one particular client – whose USP is speed and efficiency – we're designing and sampling every pattern on their website. No job is too large or small, difficult or complicated (or easy); we never say 'no'! We can grow with growing companies."



Left: The Bespoke Quarter team in their new premises, Aquinas House.

HONOURING HERITAGE

Meanwhile, as CAD and benchwork carries on, there's also the business of completing the interior tweaks and decoration of Bespoke Quarter's historic premises. Grade ll Star listing has called for some concessions: every window, coving and staircase must be preserved. "We're totally invested in the spaces; before we moved in, we had nine months of planning permission, rewiring, upgrading fuse boxes, levelling, repairing and renewing floors, creating partition walls, enhanced security," he says.

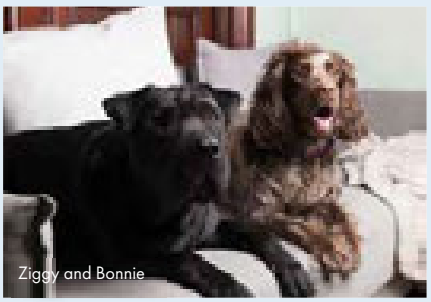
"Everything we've done and are doing is consistent with the age of the building – we've kept and are adding to the character." A handsome cast iron spiral staircase leading to the second floor is due to have a lick of black and gold paint, the original being somewhat faded and flaky. Gorgeous leaded light interior windows cast dances of colour across the rooms when the sun shines. The original etched glass windows onto Warstone Lane are definitely staying; the one unetched window will also be untouched – the original was blown out by a World War ll bomb. That's history, that is. The building has presented one or two challenges... but it's worth it. "We chose to be here; we're part of this community."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Email: **sales@bespokequarter.co.uk**
63 Warstone Lane, Birmingham, B18 6NG


Aquinas House


Matilde Fernandes


Ziggy and Bonnie


Andrew Cowley



Carl Humphreys

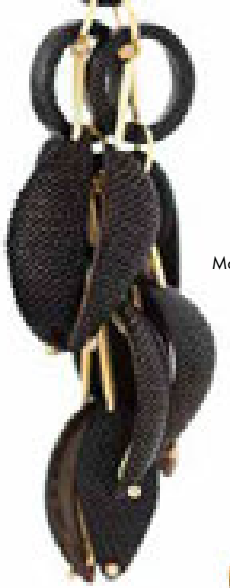

Devan Soni





Estelle Burton





Makila Nsika

Retail Jeweller Festival 2025



LNB

As regular attendees have come to expect, the annual Retail Jeweller Festival offers a varied and interesting curation of fine and demi-fine jewellery suppliers and service providers. The two-day March event, held in central London, was no exception.

Connecting with suppliers that regularly exhibit at the Retail Jeweller Festival is a given, but each edition of the show brings with it a clutch of newcomers – new to the event, to the industry or to the UK market.

FIRST TIMERS

The **Bright New Gems** is one such regular first-timer group – the six winning MA and BA graduate winners of the mentoring platform show their work at Retail Jewellers Festival. The 2024 cohort gained plenty of attention at the show, making useful contacts among buyers as well as exhibitors. One of the judges, The Rock Hound's Susi Smither commented: "This year's graduates really raised the bar with impressive skills and an eye for unique detail, making it a tough round of judging."

Estelle Barton – with her fascination for glass – combines a textural iron alloy with industrial optical glass waste and tiny diamonds and gemstones for uniquely beautiful, new forms of jewellery. London-based **Makila Nsika** (M. Kala Jewellery) repurposes palm nut kernels (a food waste in her home country, the Republic of Congo), employing local artisans to create the fine, textural carving on each shell. The value of the simple (and statement) necklaces, earrings and bracelets is enhanced by precious metal wire. **Kiah Bibby** has a love of pop culture and bold aesthetics – the sets and characters from US TV series *Ugly Betty* inspired her acrylic rings, with monochrome chequerboard pieces given a blast of CZ colour.



Kiah Bibby

Having debuted at New York Fashion Week, Dubai-based and -manufactured **LNB** is a relatively new luxury brand, offering handmade jewellery created with coloured gemstones and 24ct gold-filled or rhodium plated metal. Colour is a key element of the strong statement pieces. Colour was also a key focal point at **Juraster**, in particular the new Fairmined 9ct gold and silver Lodestone Stacking Rings, creating a rich feel with lapis lazuli, Persian blue turquoise and green chrysoprase stones, while white chalcedony and silver has an ethereal quality.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, New Zealand brand **Stolen Girlfriends Club** offers affordable luxury with a "softened, edgy, tough-but-beautiful" vibe. In sterling silver (with 2.5 microns gold plated silver also available), the various pieces feature natural gemstones such as rose quartz, black onyx and blue lace agate. The collections are delivered from the UK through Future Forward Agency.

New to the Festival and established in the 1970s in Mexico's silver capital of Taxco, **Andea** jewellery is known for its high quality, assay-stamped 925 handmade silver jewellery. The fluid- and nature-inspired pieces with forms like plants, shells and circles have an abstract feel.



Juraster



Stolen Girlfriends Club



Andea

Business entrepreneur and consultant, with 22 years in the luxury jewellery industry, introduced brands and buyers to **NouvelleBox**, an online jewellery wholesale marketplace. Founded in 2021, the jewellery showroom platform helps brands connect to stores and stores to discover new brands. High levels of craft, design and design integrity are key criteria, and brands are supported by downloadable line sheets and marketing as well as intimate physical shows... with zero commission to pay.

FESTIVAL VETERANS

As well as discussing **Dialog's** subscription service platform for diamond retailers to merchandise their loose diamond inventory, the new core collection of diamond jewellery showcased; huggies, flexible tennis bracelets and three-stone rings were key pieces, along with hoops featuring diamonds inside as well as outside... for added luxe.

While huggies and hoops with a cushiony, '80s feel were centre stage at **Curteis**, the team's main push was the company's service side, with plating being a popular new offer. Two dispatch departments have been created for this, with drop-shipping especially interesting to online retailers. At **Hockley Mint**, the key focus was on a sample box of new engagement rings and just-launched box of gents' and ladies' signet ring styles. Going from strength to strength is the **Zedd™** range of UK-made and -hallmarked stylish black zirconium gents' rings, with a new line that combines silver-grey natural and black zirconium bands for an interesting tonal/textural look.



Curteis



Zedd™



Tivon



Dialog



Ntinga



Toolally

At **Hayes & Lake**, the strong story centred on a new collection of keenly priced 9ct gold laboratory-grown diamond jewellery, ideal for the gift market. Trend-led earrings, such as stones hanging from chains, bubble studs, cross motifs and new H&L Seeds of Life motif pieces sat alongside the popular toi et moi rings, available in all colour combinations as well as new coloured laboratory-grown diamond jewellery. **Toolally** introduced gold-plate-set laboratory-grown diamonds for the first time, in pieces echoing the brand's original Art Deco style designs. Also new: cute pom-pom earrings, inspired by craspedia flower heads.

While diamonds sit at the core of **Continental's** offer, the jewellery collection has a strong focus on coloured gemstones – going beyond the big four to alternatives such as London Blue Topaz and tsavorite and two-tone pieces. There are now more items with more focus on design, with a stylish line necklace featuring horizontally set stones and a Y-shape necklace to catch the eye.

Colour is always a key attraction at **Ntinga**, and the team reported strong interest in multi-gem pieces, including necklaces. Created specifically for the Festival were rings inspired by Pantone's Mocca Mousse, featuring smoky quartz and brown zircon, which enjoyed great uptake during the busy first day. Emeralds and bi-coloured tourmalines remain popular.

At **Raw Pearls**, big baroque earrings sold well at the show, available in 9ct yellow/white and silver, with extra-large nucleated baroque cultured freshwater pearls. Also popular was a statement necklace, available with a range of clasps, featuring the same nucleated baroque cultured freshwater pearls.



Hayes & Lake



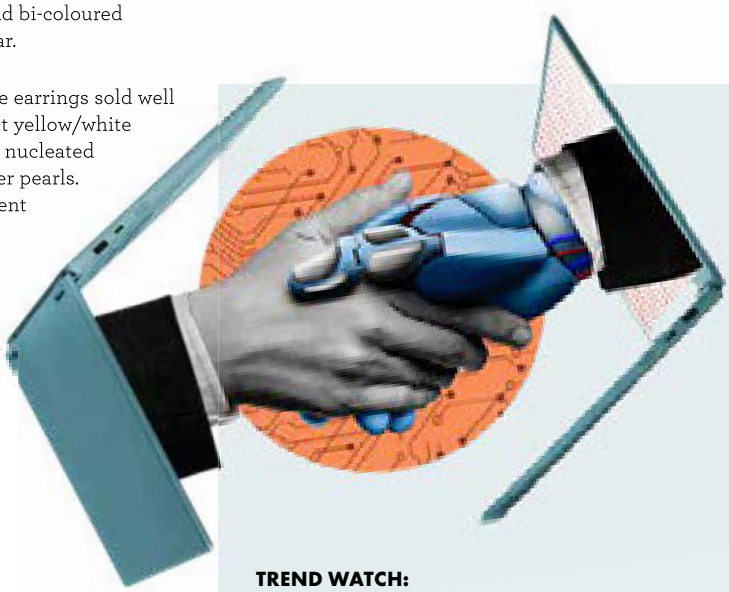
Continental



Raw Pearls

THE SHOW'S PROGRAMME

As well as offering visitors all the collections, the Retail Jeweller Festival invited attendees to reflect and learn through its live content sessions, curated by the *Retail Jeweller* team. Subjects included retail challenges, investing in retail, sustainability, promoting natural diamonds and challenges surrounding funding. All sessions were standing room only.



TREND WATCH: JEWELLERY IN THE AGE OF AI

In her interesting gentle introduction, trends and luxury specialist **Kathryn Bishop** explored the emerging use cases for artificial intelligence (AI) in the jewellery sector. Through examples of AI platforms and tools, as well as case studies, she explained how AI need not be just seen as a job-taking creative threat with copyright issues, but something to be excited about. De Beers' Tracr platform provides provenance, safety and trust, for example, and, in manufacturing, Valia by Lectra uses AI to automate and streamline production.



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Company of Master Jewellers Spring Trade Event 2025



Blush

Following last September's vibrant and record-breaking CMJ Trade Event, the March edition, with 20 per cent more exhibiting suppliers and promising retail attendance, felt equally up-beat. Belinda Morris was there.



Shree

During his briefings to member suppliers and member retailers, managing director Emmet Cummins looked back at recent past ups and downs of CMJ Trade Events. What was clear, he said, is that location matters, timing matters, ease of registration matters and retailers attending and a diverse range of suppliers matters. A well-attended, productive event leads to elevated trade; a successful event cements the community.

NEW AND GUEST SUPPLIERS

With the tone set for two days, retailers caught up with their existing suppliers and discovered a host of new ones. The likes of **Clarity Jewellery**, **Scream Pretty**, **Stuller**, **Freeform Fabrication** and **Thomas Sabo** were among the latter, and there was an even longer roll call of guest suppliers – a suck-it-and-see opportunity for both them and the CMJ.

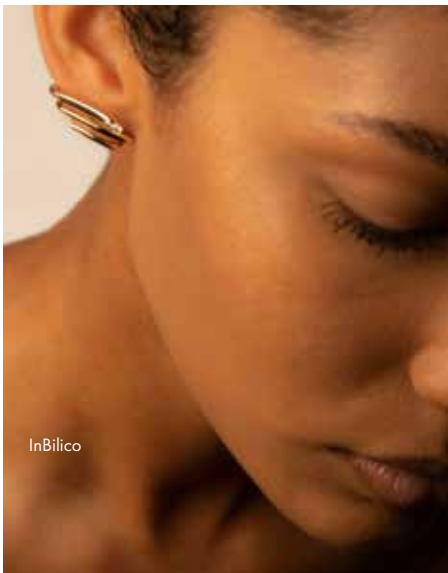
Here are a few guests that caught my attention:

Belgium-based large natural diamonds leader **DCNV** covers every segment of the jewellery and diamond trade. In 2024, DCNV UK in London was established, offering a diverse range of natural and laboratory-grown diamonds and classic and contemporary jewellery.

LoveLab features jewellery using high-quality Italian cord in durable nylon and polyester silk, with new materials developing regularly. Setting LoveLab apart are rare shades of laboratory-grown brown diamonds, religious shapes cut from a single piece and its customisable, flexible, brandable concept.



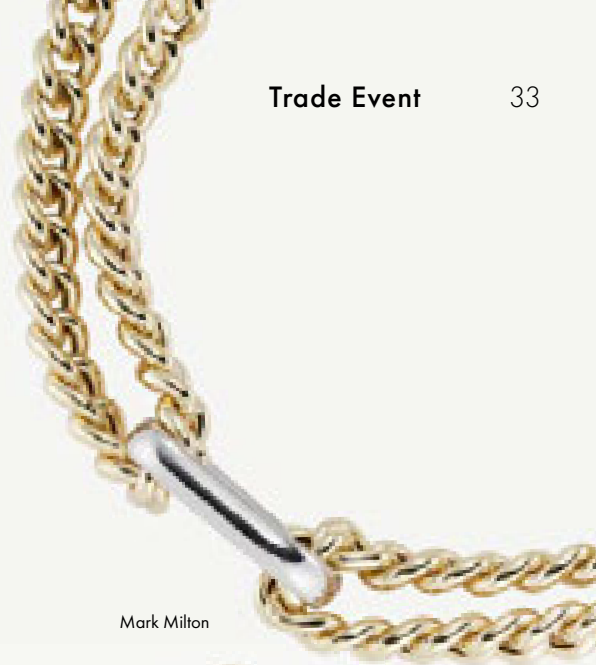
TI SENTO



InBilico



Facet Barcelona



Mark Milton



The LoveLab Bags collection can be personalised – encompassing cities, countries, fashion houses, football clubs and tailored designs for special events.

Forty years ago, **Facet Barcelona** launched, specialising in cut diamonds, and in 2005, it established its own high-quality gold and diamond jewellery factory in Mumbai, joined later by another in Cordoba, Spain. From the outset, the company made strong commitments to responsibility, sustainability, transparency and supply chain integrity – it is registered with the RJC as well as being a member of Tracemark, ensuring traceability of all materials, processes and human rights. A wide range of stretch line bracelets is a speciality.

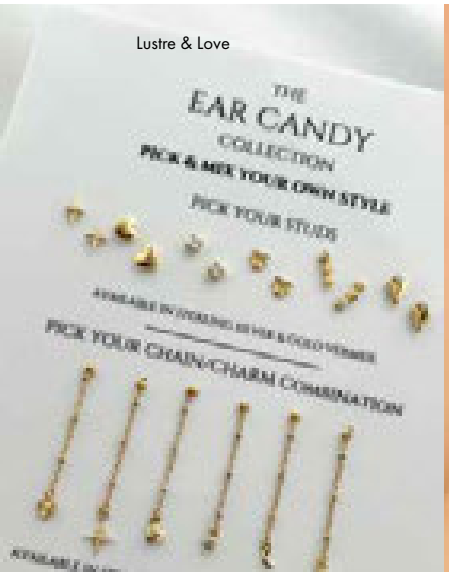
Manufactured in France and based in County Wicklow, Ireland, **Burren** delivers elegant fashion forward, well-crafted jewellery in brass-based 18ct gold (lead-, nickel- and cadmium-free). The plating is three microns thick, minimum, and five microns for rings with stones. To optimise the colour of gold over time, the plating has a finishing coat of 23ct gold to prevent oxidation. Super light '80s style statement earrings, tennis bracelets and a variety of chains are strong looks this year.

Italian high-end ear stylist **InBilico** presents innovative ways to wear earrings, with collections in 10ct gold with laboratory-grown diamonds and, more recently, 18ct gold with natural diamonds. Either way, the look is playful, dramatic, flamboyant and always stylish. Wearers can curate their collection by buying earrings, studs and piercings as pairs or singly.

Offering affordable quality, female-led **Lustre & Love** creates empowering jewellery in recycled sterling silver plated with 14ct gold. Popular collections – such as North Star and Ear Candy – have been extended to include new styles, such as threader earrings, stud and drop earrings, which can be worn at the front and back of the lobe, and stackable chain necklaces and bracelets.

Since launching with gemstone beaded bracelets several years ago, **Shree Jewellery** has evolved to include 18ct gold jewellery pieces set with coloured stones and diamonds. Also showing: a collection of birthstone lockets, rings, studs and drop earrings, each locket features the natural stone inside and out, edged with CZ stones, available in silver and gold plated metal.

Launched in Amsterdam 15 years ago, **Blush** offers timeless jewellery in plain 14ct gold or set with laboratory-grown diamonds, natural gemstones, such as malachite, or CZ stones. The aggressively priced bridge brand focuses on rings and hoops, with on-trend details such as clover-shape forms and old school cameos.



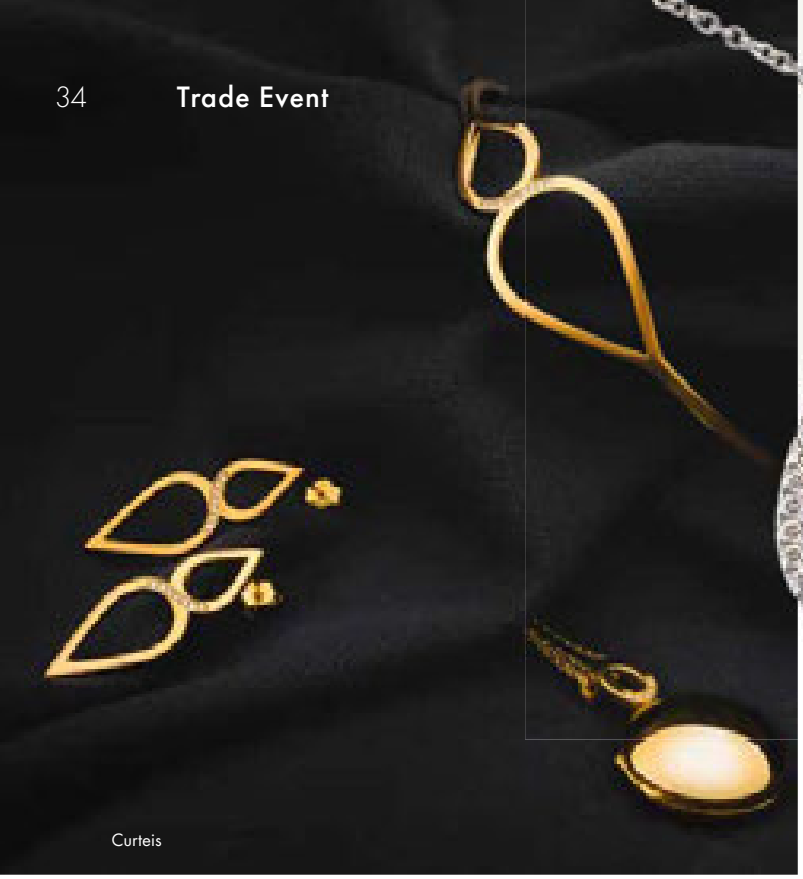
Lustre & Love



Burren



LoveLab



Curteis



GeminAu



Chimento



Continental



PJ Watson





Gemex

CMJ REGULARS

A significant milestone for **Curteis:** 2025 marks its 50th year. To commemorate this occasion, it has unveiled a special 18ct gold collection that embodies the best of Curteis craftsmanship. This unique collection is a tribute to the Curteis legacy, and an opportunity to give back. And one lucky person will win the entire collection, with proceeds from the campaign donated to a local children's charity, Hope House.

Also celebrating 50 years, **Continental** revealed an anniversary collection of 18ct gold statement pieces featuring pavé natural diamonds. The fluid bangle, ring, earrings and pendant offer a dramatic yet very feminine look.

"We had one of our best CMJ shows ever, continuously writing orders over the two days," says **Gemex** MD, Lee Ruben. "We opened several new accounts, and the reps booked to see at least a dozen member retailers in their shops. We promoted our new range of eternity rings, which promises to be the most competitive in the market without compromising on quality (also available in laboratory-grown diamonds), plus a range of solitaire engagement rings with 3 to 7ct head sizes."

Underscoring the recent rise in popularity of opals, **Burne McCawley's GeminAu** collection of 18ct white and rose gold, diamonds and Australian opal-set pendants and rings feature doublet opals (backed with iron stone), black opal and Boulder opal. Many of the mounts are handmade. Also showcasing was the **Chimento** collection of 18ct gold coin-style pieces – the wavy shapes creating interesting reflections – some set with mother-of-pearl or malachite.

Mother-of-pearl clover designs and opals (mixed with coloured diamonds) also featured at **PJ Watson**, and popularity is rising for vivid pink sapphires as well as unusual coloured diamonds, emeralds and teal-coloured sapphires and tourmalines. At **Amore**, while silver jewellery was enjoying a moment, a dip into the archive has resulted in 18ct gold opal rings, earrings and pendants edged with pink sapphires and white diamonds.



Ungar & Ungar



Unique & Co Men's

Unique & Co

A mix of stones was also a strong theme at **Ungar & Ungar**, an art deco-inspired ring with a sumptuous rare blue zircon paired with tsavorites was a stand-out piece. Meanwhile, at **Matt Aminoff**, statement pearls were frequently topped with diamonds for super luxury appeal. Elsewhere in the extensive collection, multi-wear lariats, versatile ear jackets with detachable pearl drops, chains with pearls (including black Tahitian pearls) featured.

Organic themes inspired by nature have shaped **Giovanni Raspini's** legacy and are perfectly represented in one of the key themes in the latest collection – Animalier. The heads and bodies of crocodile, leopard, lion, chameleon and elephant become burnished silver rings, bracelets, necklaces, stud and hoop earrings meticulously crafted using the lost-wax carving technique.
At **Uno de 50**, David Bowie's chameleon nature provided the inspiration for the new Ser Camaleonica collection of silver hand-set faceted teal green crystal pieces, including a variety of rings and pendants.

Unique & Co found the high gold price was giving its customers pause for thought, reconsidering the importance of silver. Having started small, the brand now offers 200 sets of silver jewellery adorned with coloured gemstones, including micro-set or a combination of colour stones. Growing year on year, the men's collection includes gem-set chains, chains of different finishes and thicknesses, an increasing number of rings and a popular line of small cross pendants.



Giovanni Raspini

Matt Aminoff

Everyday glamour is a key trend message at **TI SENTO**, thanks to a wealth of sparkle and a hint of drama. CZ pave, faux pearls (with lustrous coating and crystal core for weight), strong colour stones (blue and khaki green, in particular), mother-of-pearl doublets, oval links, softened squares and mixed-cut CZs on a single necklace are among the stand-out details in the new collection.



Amore

"We had one of our best CMJ shows ever, continuously writing orders over the two days."

Gemex MD Lee Ruben



Uno De 50





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PeaceGold – luxury meets conscience

Jeweller, social campaigner, activist, human rights campaigner, Greg Valerio MBE talks to Belinda Morris about PeaceGold – so very much more than just a beautiful jewellery boutique.

On 1st November last year, a new store opened in the historic Fore Bondgate, Bishop Auckland, County Durham. PeaceGold Ethical Jewellery House – to give it its full title – is the warm and cosy, homely chic front to a much wider enterprise, which has a purpose that goes above and beyond selling desirable ethical jewellery. It's where "beauty is synonymous with responsibility."

Those who have worked in the jewellery trade for a couple of decades will doubtlessly have heard of Greg Valerio; many will have worked with him and been inspired by him. With his commitment to human rights, ecological responsibility, fair trade and ecologically just practices in marginalised and forgotten communities, he has been variously described (according to Valerio Jewellery's website) as "maverick, radical, passionate, emotional, unmanageable, direct, breath of fresh air, rebel, visionary, non-conformist and heretic." While no less passionate, he's possibly a little mellower these days.

He's certainly excited about this new venture. Having moved north from his previous base in Sussex, Greg was in Bishop Auckland looking for an affordable space to rent for a PeaceGold office – a place from where he could set about raising funds "to build out a social model." The handsome double-fronted site he found was clearly crying out to be more than just an office; it would make an ideal shop window to showcase the work of ethical jewellers, while simultaneously spreading the PeaceGold message. "It made sense."

> "I love the jewellery world, but I come at it from a social enterprise angle."
>
> **Greg Valerio MBE**

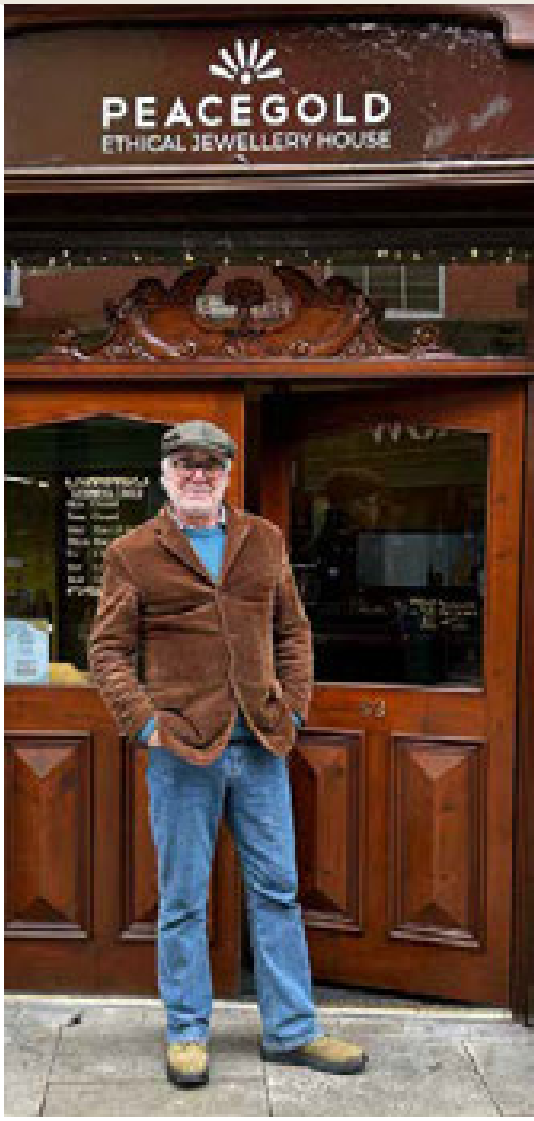
In short: "PeaceGold's model disrupts illicit gold trade by fostering transparent ethical value chains, building thriving communities, minimising environmental impact and fostering dialogue to transform the artisanal small gold mining (ASGM) sector from a source of conflict and instability into a driver of sustainable development and a force for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)."

The full story is a little longer. "I love the jewellery world, but I come at it from a social enterprise angle," explains Greg, who put his public facing work on ethics to one side while, from 2013, he spent 12 years travelling to and from Ituri in Congo, at the request of the PeaceGold initiative. "The ex-militia groups agreed to go into the formal process and integrate into the ASM community, but with demobilisation, the problem was that while there was a structured process for the children and women, there was nothing for the men." With grant funding, a programme called PeaceGold launched.

"The work I did with Fairtrade Gold [launched in 2011] gave us a template to work from and today I am working with 11 gold mining cooperatives – there were two when I started – who have signed the PeaceGold charter. That's 20,000 people."

The collaboration between Centre Résolution Conflits (CRC), a DRC-based non-governmental organisation, and Peace Direct has enabled CRC to accompany artisanal and small-scale mines in Ituri and improve working standards. Through the work to date, the mines have been able to achieve the necessary labour and human-rights protections to access international standards for legal gold production and sales, while supporting local community development and wellbeing.

The PeaceGold shop is clearly the perfect platform for gold produced by the artisanal miners but also jewellers and brands working ethically.



"I needed eight names, and I approached eight of my contacts," Greg explains. "All eight came back to me." Now on board are Anna Loucah, Considered by Victoria Waugh, local goldsmith Kate Seow, Hayley Kruger, Juraster, Valerio Jewellery and two anchor brands Gecko and Hot Diamonds – both of whom "have travelled a long way on the ethical journey." The miners themselves, he adds, "have ownership of the platform; they need to own a slice of the value chain all the way through, and everyone in the supply chain is involved. It's a circular economy, and I want to reconnect the jewellery narrative with the artisan worker, while building the business as strongly as we can."

Alongside the jewellery collections, the PeaceGold shop offers remodelling work (with Kate Seow at the bench) and jewellery-making courses... also with Kate. "The aim is to run a small bespoke jewellery school and provide a pathway into the trade for young people," Greg explains. "And since opening, it's been fantastic to get back into talking to people about jewellery and the memories and stories that can come with it. It's not just a discretionary purchase, but a powerful vehicle."

A Night to Remember

After a sell-out ceremony last year and record levels of engagement, the NAJ Awards are back, promising to be bigger and more inclusive than ever.

Last year's NAJ Awards, its first as a standalone event, was the Association's most successful to date, with a 129 per cent increase in submissions and a 40 per cent increase in attendees. Above all, with its fantastic atmosphere, the 2024 NAJ Awards marked a community-driven celebration of our trade.

With such a successful event comes the responsibility to do things even better next time around, and the NAJ team is excited about the challenge and the opportunity for 2025.

SPONSOR SUPPORT

We are delighted to announce Curteis has returned as the headline sponsor of the NAJ Awards for the third year running. Curteis is the perfect partner for a community-focused ceremony, and we are thrilled it is supporting the Awards in this, its 50th anniversary year (learn more about Curteis and its managing director, Henry Curteis, on page 66).

Like last year, the Award's three thematic pillars of Great Ideas, Great People and Great Businesses is supported by three of the trade's major charities: The Benevolent Society, NAJ Educational Trust and the Silversmiths & Jewellers Charity. Last year, attendees raised £3,000 on the night, and we hope to raise even more this time to support such vital causes.

Finally, even more businesses have joined as category sponsors (see the list below), many having supported the Awards on multiple occasions.

A NEW VENUE AND A NEW CATEGORY

The 2025 NAJ Awards will be on **Thursday, 23rd October**, at the new venue of the ICC in Birmingham. The move to the larger, purpose-built International Convention Centre allows the NAJ team to put on an even bigger and more inclusive event. Despite the move to a larger venue, we are keen to keep the price of attendance as accessible as ever – the NAJ is a broad church, and we are proud our Awards reflect this.

The ICC, like last year's venue, is convenient for attendees from both the south and north of the UK. Whether you are driving or taking the train, the venue is easily accessible, making it suitable for those staying overnight as well as those who need to return home the same day.

With such a successful ceremony last year, we have avoided tinkering too much with the event's format. Instead, there is only one change to the categories, with Digital Engagement of the Year added. This category encourages members to showcase their digital initiatives, ranging from innovative social media strategies to new websites and online community engagement.

THE CATEGORIES

The jewellery trade is a vibrant blend of creativity, craftsmanship and community spirit. It is an industry powered by passionate individuals, innovative businesses and remarkable achievements that deserve recognition. To celebrate excellence, the NAJ Award categories honour the collective accomplishments of companies and the dedication and creativity of individuals who drive these businesses forward.



GREAT IDEAS
supported by Silversmiths & Jewellers Charity

- **Community Engagement of the Year**
- **CSR Initiative of the Year**
  sponsored by Positive Luxury
- **Digital Engagement of the Year**
- **Collection of the Year**
  sponsored by eBay
- **Store Design of the Year**

GREAT PEOPLE
supported by NAJ Educational Trust

- **Salesperson of the Year**
- **Workshop Professional of the Year**
  sponsored by At The Bench
- **Rising Star of the Year**
- **Designer of the Year**
  sponsored by RWK Goodman
- **Unsung Hero of the Year**

GREAT BUSINESSES
supported by Benevolent Society

- **Jewellery Retailer of the Year**
  sponsored by Vulcan Jewellery
- **Bespoke Retailer of the Year**
  sponsored by Bespoke Quarter
- **Product Supplier of the Year**
  sponsored by The Jewellery Show
- **Service Supplier of the Year**
  sponsored by eBay
- **Team of the Year**
  sponsored by TH March

NOMINATIONS OPENING SOON

Submissions for the 2025 NAJ Awards, supported by Curteis, open in May. As always, the awards are free to enter for NAJ members. More information to follow soon.

THE NAJ AWARDS 2025

When: Thursday, October 23rd, 2025

Where: The ICC, Birmingham

To keep up to date with the latest NAJ news, subscribe to our weekly newsletter at **www.naj.co.uk/mailing-list**

To learn more about sponsorship and commercial opportunities, email **matthew.hamilton@naj.co.uk**

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In an industry where trust and efficiency are paramount, sourcing high-quality diamonds and gemstones shouldn't be difficult. Nivoda, the B2B marketplace, is transforming how jewellers buy stones. Whether you're a boutique owner or manage a chain of stores, Nivoda's platform is designed to streamline your operations, offering access to a global inventory of diamonds with just a few clicks.

Here's why Nivoda has become the go-to solution for jewellers around the world.

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Nivoda connects you to a global network of trusted suppliers, giving you access to an unparalleled selection of diamonds, gemstones, and melee. With Nivoda, you're not limited to local options–you can explore inventory from across the globe without leaving your store.

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From there, your gemstones are delivered directly to your store, quickly and efficiently–so you can focus on serving your customers, knowing all the administration is handled.

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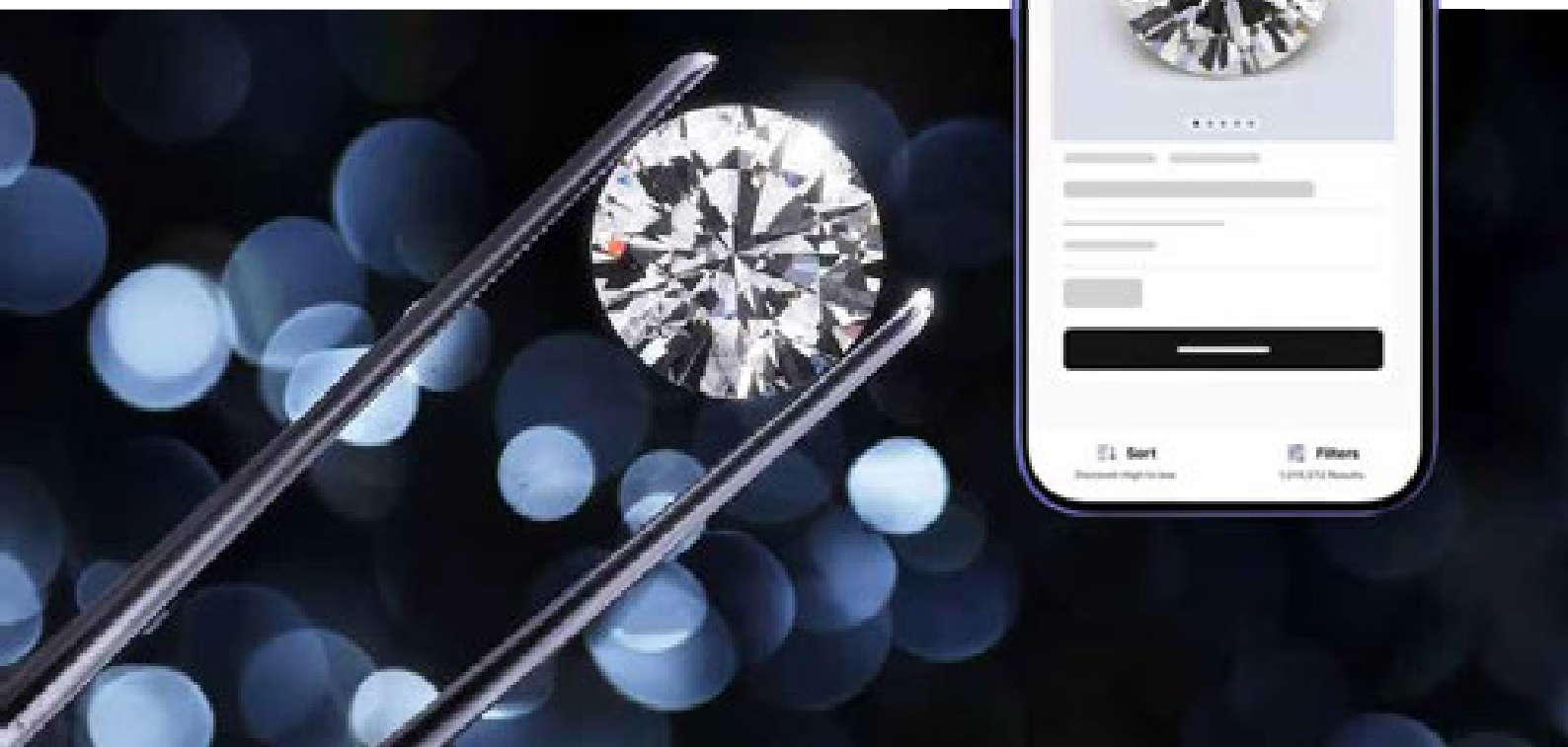
In an industry which values relationships, we believe in the importance of personalised service. With your Nivoda Co-Pilot at your side every step of the way, from account setup to placing your first order, you're never on your own. Our focus is on building lasting relationships with our customers, and our support is a key part of that.

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Plug Nivoda Feeds into your website to sell online, or deploy Nivoda Showroom, a virtual showroom giving you access to over two million diamonds right in your physical store without having to keep a huge inventory.

The future of the jewellery industry is digital, and Nivoda is leading the way. Join us.









"Connecting you directly to a vast network of vetted suppliers from around the world."

NIVODA

For further information visit:
www.nivoda.com



AVI-8

AVI-8's latest launch, the Bell X-1 Machbuster Chronograph, brings history and modern craftsmanship together in a piece inspired by one of aviation's greatest feats. Designed to honour the legendary Bell X-1, the first aircraft to break the sound barrier, the Machbuster Chronograph is a nod to power, innovation and precision. With an advanced meca-quartz chronograph movement and bold aviation elements, this chronograph offers a rugged aesthetic with a choice of four dial colours.



RADO

Swiss watch brand Rado has partnered with award-winning designer Tej Chauhan to create a reinterpretation of the DiaStar Original, a Rado legend that created a sensation when it launched in April 1962. Featuring a striking yellow-gold Ceramos™ bezel, a matte black dial and a day-date window in Tej's custom font, this watch exudes modern elegance. The strap is crafted from grey pillow-shaped rubber and secured by a polished dark grey PVD coated stainless steel extendable folding clasp.

TIMEX

The Q Timex 1982 Ana Digi is a modern day reissue of an '80s classic that delivers quartz accuracy with a dual analogue and digital display on a clean black or champagne dial. It has been upgraded with a sleek 33mm stainless steel case, featuring dual time zone tracking, a chronograph, alarm and date function. It is finished with a brushed silver-tone or gold-tone bracelet and the distinctive Q Timex logo, similar to the original.

GREAT TIMING

Colour emphasis, material mixes, decorative dials, scaling down, archival designs... some of the horological trends to watch this year.



JUNGHANS

Junghans has introduced three limited edition sports watches – the 1972 Chronoscope Sports Edition 2025, with each variation limited to 200 pieces. The dials are in blue, white and dark grey with matte finish and double stripes design elements. The blue dial variation has central light grey stripes, while the white version has vertical double stripes in luminous orange. The watch model with dark grey dial and gold stripes is upscale in feel.

MÜHLE-GLASHÜTTE

The new Sportivo Power Chronograph first edition watch (200 pieces) combines a bold black and red design with the new, enhanced MU9424-GR modular movement with a power reserve display. The robustness of the movement is protected by the high-quality stainless steel case with IP coating. The watch also has a 2.2mm-thick double anti-glare sapphire crystal and scratch-resistant ceramic inlay for the bidirectional bezel.



TUDOR

With a new Flamingo Blue dial, TUDOR's newest chronograph delivers the classic South Beach vibe. With a column wheel and vertical clutch chronograph calibre, plus a five-link bracelet with T-Fit clasp, it complements its pink-dialled cousin. The 41mm watch features a satin-brushed and polished case in stainless steel, with a fixed bezel and insert in black anodised aluminium with tachymetric scale.

TUDOR's newest chronograph delivers the classic **South Beach vibe**.



HERBELIN

Herbelin's new Cap Camarat Square offers a contemporary spin on a retro style with its 30x30mm square stainless steel case with screw detailing and rounded edges. The horizontally engraved dial comes in white, pale blue, gold and bronze – and with its sapphire crystal. The bevelled indexes and hands are coated with luminescent material for optimal readability. The watch has a Swiss quartz movement and is water resistant to 100m.



CERTINA

Two new versions of Certina's DS Action family – 34.5 and 40mm diameter – offer colours inspired by coral reefs. Each dial shade – light and dark blue, black, green and apricot, as well as gold PVD elements or mother-of-pearl – complements the rotating bezel. The metal bracelets can be switched easily, thanks to a quick-change system. Thanks to Certina's tried-and-tested Double Security concept, the models are water resistant up to a pressure of 300 metres.



CITIZEN

For the first time, Citizen's TSUYOSA series introduces a compact 37mm case size, offering a sleek, sporty aesthetic in three vibrant dial colours: Ice Blue, Pastel Pink and Dark Green. Inspired by the Japanese word for strength, tsuyosa, these automatic timepieces combine durability with refined styling, featuring sapphire glass, 50m water resistance and a stainless steel bracelet.

ALPINA

The compact Alpina Extreme Quartz features four vibrant colours and a high-precision quartz movement. With its cushion-shaped stainless steel case, it comes with a choice of dials in beige, pink, glacier blue or leaf green. The first three are paired with a stainless steel bracelet; the green version has a rubber strap matching the dial. The case surfaces alternate between polished and satin-brushed finishes. The bezel is vertically brushed, and each screw engraved with a triangle, reflecting Alpina's logo.





PANERAI

Panerai's new Luminor Tre Giorni PAM01628 plays homage to its historical functional design roots, while embracing modern technology. A substantial size with a manual movement, its every element, from case size to vintage calf leather strap, reflects distinctive archival features. A hallmark of the robust 47mm case is inspired by the watches worn by Italian commandos during their underwater missions, where the larger diameter enhances readability, a crucial feature for a tool watch.

FESTINA

With a nod to its early 20th century origins, Festina introduces an Art Deco inspired collection: On the Square. The chronograph and time-only square and rectangular models are based on classic designs, given a contemporary flair. With a 38 x 37mm case, the men's chronographs are in stainless steel, with many sphere colours, featuring a butterfly clasp strap or a white backstitched leather strap. All feature mineral crystals, up to 5 ATM water resistance and JS20-H1 Miyota quartz movement.



ORIENT

The four new Bambino models feature dial colours of green, navy blue and Bordeaux, for a more casual look, with a sunburst finish, and the beige Orient Bambino is a first. There are two anniversary models – a limited-edition one of 9,500 pieces and a 5,500 pieces model, both with clear case backs, retro-look calf leather straps and 1950s style logo to mark Orient's 75th anniversary. Also new are three Bambino models with sun and moon design day and night displays.



ROLEX

Rolex presents a new version of the Perpetual 1908, which was launched in 2023. Today, the watch is in 950 platinum and features an ice blue, guilloché rice-grain motif dial. This 3D rosette-like design is a repeating geometric pattern that extends across the surface of the dial, starting from the seconds counter at 6 o'clock. The minute track is surrounded by a filet sauté with a crimped pattern, which is also guilloché.



SEIKO

The latest addition to the Presage Craftsmanship Series honours Seiko's history of precision timekeeping and celebrates the iconic railroad watches that has supported transportation in Japan since 1929. The Timekeeper, introduced in 1895, was one of Seiko's first entries into the world of precision timekeeping. This new watch recreates its enamel dial, with roman numerals and a rail track marking its perimeter. It's powered by Seiko's in-house 6R5H automatic calibre and has a black calf leather strap.



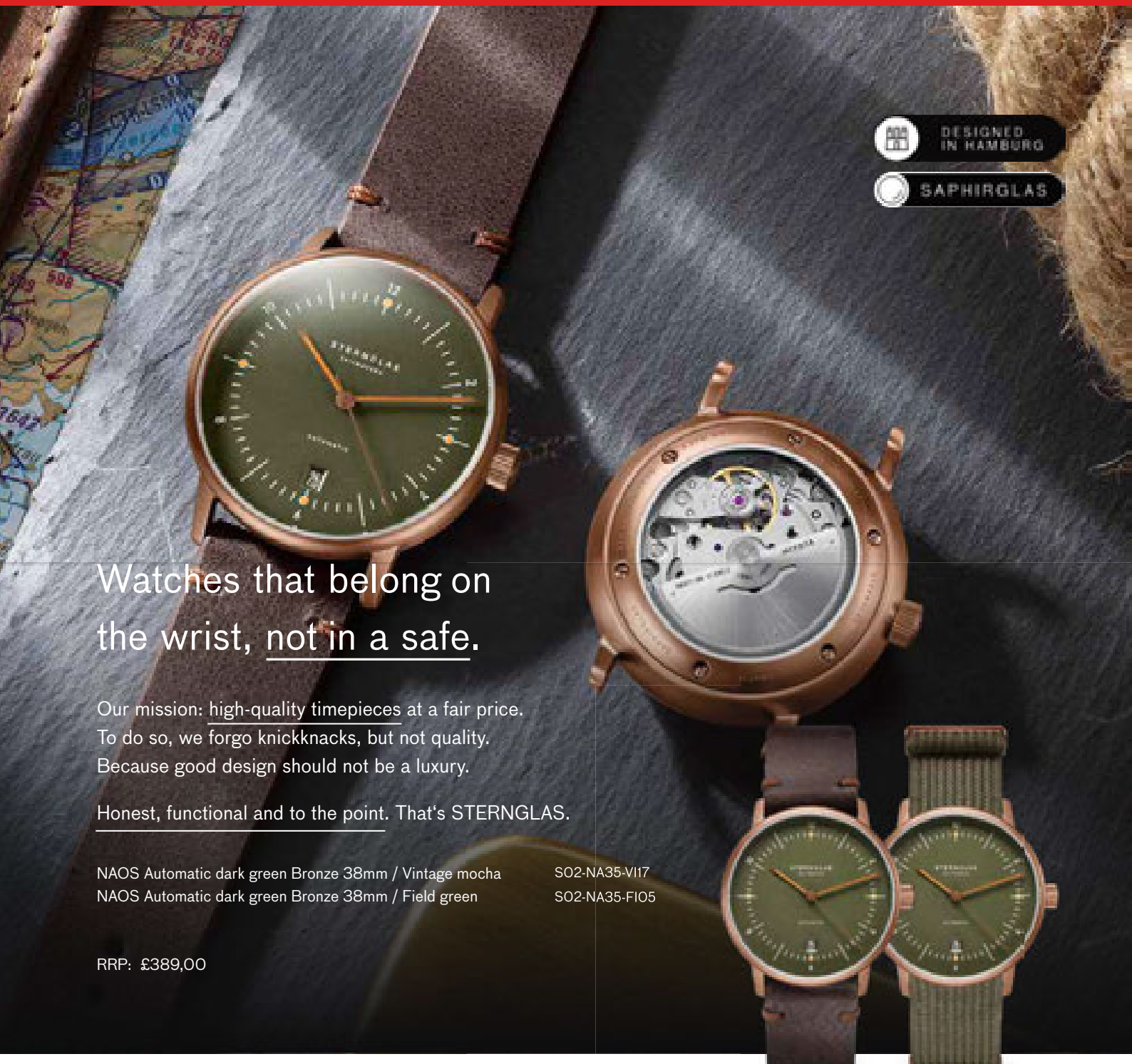
STERNGLAS

The Tachymeter 2.0 is the next evolution of the Sternglas Tachymeter 1.0, now with a more authentic chronograph function – a tribute to the racing style of the 1970s, as is the rally-inspired engraved back design. For this upgrade, every detail has been fine-tuned, based on customer feedback. Its 44mm polished and brushed stainless steel, hexagonal case makes it the largest model in the brand's collection. The watch is powered by the Seiko Mecha-Quartz VK63 movement.

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Left: Ian Cookson from PA Jewellery. Above: All the JET graduates on the Golsmiths' Hall staircase. Below: Gary Wroe presents Anne Kings with her leaving gift.

The JET Graduation Awards 2025

In March, we welcomed JET graduates, their friends, family and colleagues to the splendour of Goldsmiths' Hall in London to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements – the highlight of the year for many of us.

The ceremony was opened by **NAJ chair Adam Jacobs**, who offered a brief history of the magnificent Goldsmiths' Hall and the amazing setting for our awards evening. He reminded us that The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, one of the 12 Great Livery Companies of the City of London, has been on this site for nearly 700 years, hallmarking here in its assay office for over five centuries.

After **NAJ CEO Ben Massey** took to the podium for the presentation of certificates and awards, guest speaker **Ian Cookson** FGA DGA, managing director of PA Jewellery, spoke about his fascinating and inspiring jewellery journey. A passion for gemmology led to Gem-A's diploma course at the age of 16 (at 18, he was the youngest ever to have passed) and from there to jobs in jewellery, more learning and the MD role at PA Jewellery, which, in 2018, became the first retail jewellers in the UK to be owned by an employee ownership trust.

Following his talk, much-loved retiring JET tutor Anne Kings was presented with a leaving present of a vase and a vote of thanks was given by NAJ president, Gary Wroe.



The Greenough Trophy ›

This trophy is awarded annually to the student who achieves the highest aggregate marks, having completed the most outstanding project in the Professional Jewellers' Diploma programme. It's a mark of recognition for the student's skill, dedication and hard work – the ultimate badge of credibility for anyone seriously committed to learning their trade.

This year saw the magnificent silver trophy handed to **Laura Alexander** from **Beaverbrooks**. "It's such an honour to receive this award – having a job that is people and customer focused, I never felt coursework was my strength," she says. "I completed JET1 around 10 years ago, then with the encouragement and support of Beaverbrooks, I decided to complete JET2 last year.

"One aspect of it that I loved was the law module – it's so relevant to what we do every day in store, and it reiterated the importance of making sure everything is adhered to. The history of jewellery was also fascinating, particularly being able to see how fashion, styles and techniques have evolved throughout history.

The course has helped me in a multitude of areas; it's strengthened my confidence in product knowledge when communicating this to the team and customers. For example, if a customer asks about laboratory-grown versus natural diamonds, I now have the confidence to explain the difference between the two. JET2 also highlighted the significance of Beaverbrooks' work with companies in the Kimberley Process or that have policies to be environmentally friendly and support communities – and communicating this information to our customers."



Laura Alexander receives the Greenough Trophy presented by NAJ Chair Adam Jacobs

The Roy Huddlestone Award ›

In December 2023, our industry lost one of its leading long-standing members. Until he retired in 2017 at the age of 87, after 73 years in the trade, Roy Huddlestone was a director of Hatton Garden-based Huddlestone Gemmological Consultants and UK agent for EGL. A kind and very generous man throughout his career, he gave the NAJ an exact copy of the David Wilkins Award he'd won, to be given in his honour to future high-achieving students completing the JET Foundations of Appraisal Practice (FoAP) qualification.

This year, the award goes to **Louise Berry** of **At The Bench** and Andrew Berry Jewellers, who spoke to us:

"All the assignments were really thought provoking and challenging! I enjoyed them more and more as the course progressed. The most challenging part for me was managing my time, which I overcame by setting aside a day and time each week to work on the material and assignments. For me, small and regular progress was important as it allowed me time to fully digest the material.

I'm truly honoured to be awarded the Roy Huddlestone trophy – there's so much dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm in our industry, and I'm so proud to win this award that represents these values. This will be a lasting reminder for me to take future opportunities, as you might be surprised by what you can achieve. Also, this has enriched my work through motivation, which will continue throughout my career.

My journey with valuations began when, in 2021, I started dealing in pre-owned and vintage jewellery. I spent a day learning about the processes and legalities of this at Gemmology Rocks with Kerry Gregory, an inspirational and motivating educator. Straight away, I knew this was an area I wanted to develop my skills in.

My role has developed immeasurably since taking the course! I can advise my clients and talk confidently and tactfully about value, an area which can occasionally be difficult for clients to understand if you don't ask them the right questions, or provide the right information. I have a wide perspective of my place in the industry as a whole – I'm part of something much, much bigger than I initially thought. I'm currently working towards applying for NAJ IRV status.

Another unexpected outcome is after starting to research jewellery manufacture as part of the course, I've started designing and making my own jewellery, which I sell through our South Wales shop and a local gallery."



Louise Berry receives the Roy Huddlestone Award presented by NAJ chair Adam Jacobs

Introducing Walsh Bros at George Farrer

There's a new – yet familiar – face on Tunbridge Wells' High Street with the long history of one renowned jewellery business honoured by another.

Walsh Bros in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, is a county jeweller, owned and managed successfully and happily by Richard Burrow since 2003. With its stylish Art Deco fascia and decor, it occupies a prominent position in the popular historic town and enjoys a loyal clientele for its antique and second-hand jewellery as well as modern classic fine jewellery and watches.

Mr Burrow didn't feel he needed any new business challenges... until his store manager Alexia Taylor discovered a renowned jewellery store two minutes up the road was for sale. In its glorious Grade ll listed building, George Farrer – long upheld as the town's premier jewellery store – had been on Richard's radar since forever. He liked it so much, inevitably he bought it.

"It's the most beautiful jewellery shop in the area," he says. "We've taken on 150 years of history and heritage, and we're championing the traditional county jeweller, offering the key services."

THE GEORGE FARRER LEGACY

Heritage is apparent the moment you step through the door – even before you cross the threshold – of 19 High Street. Honouring the legacy of George Farrer, which was established in 1876, Walsh Bros has reinstated his name in its trading identity and carefully preserved the building's ornate frontage and period interiors. The mosaic tiled floor in the doorway retains the original George Farrer signature and colour scheme, the original handsome E Pollard & Co cabinets line the walls of the spacious shop and, at the rear, the etched glass panels screening the office and storerooms are pure Victoriana.

Walsh Bros' exciting venture builds on Richard's vision. A Tonbridge native, he began his jewellery career in 1986, at 16, with F Hinds, before gaining experience in various independent jewellers.

"At a very early age, I became an assistant manager and worked for a guy who owned shops and did antique fairs – I learned about jewellery and jewellery making on the job with him," he explains. "He had an office above Walsh Bros on Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells, then took on the lease for the shop, which I ran from 1995 to 2003. In 2003, he persuaded me to buy the business, so I got the money together and winged it! I worked hard. I built up the quality of the stock and the business."

Today, Walsh Bros is renowned for its exceptional customer service, offering antique and modern jewellery, high-quality repairs and remodelling and bespoke, handmade jewellery.

INTRODUCING ALEXIA

Heading up this merger of Walsh's service and expertise and George Farrer's legacy and heritage is Alexia Taylor, a long-standing member of the Walsh Bros team, with over 12 years of dedication to the craft. Alexia's credentials are impressive: she is a Fellow of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain (FGA), a Diamond Diploma holder (DGA) and a Gemological Institute of America (GIA) Applied Jewellery Professional. Earlier this year, Alexia also took the role of chair of the NAJ's Professional and Technical Standards Group.

Walsh at George Farrer introduces an indispensable offering: an exclusive in-house jewellery valuation service, led by Alexia, who is also a Member of the Institute of Registered Valuers (MIRV). The service enhances the store's reputation as a destination for those seeking expert guidance as well as the expected craftsmanship of fine jewellery – vintage and modern jewellery and pre-owned watches, up to the value of £70,000.

The purchases from private customers as well as the trade attest to Richard being "inspired by beautiful things" – as do the store windows, arranged with collections of rubies, sapphires and emeralds.



Walsh at George Farrer interior

> "We've taken on 150 years of history and heritage... we're championing the traditional county jeweller."
>
> **Richard Burrow, owner, Walsh Bros**



Above: Walsh at George Farrer. Right: Alexia Taylor and Richard Burrow



Walsh Bros store front



Alexia brings out a fabulous late-Victorian ring in a rub over setting, featuring a Colombian emerald (with three-phase inclusions) and diamonds. "It's the very best emerald... the best colour."

The magnificent María Luisa Pellew, Art Deco tiara in the window comes with its own story of its owner, who married the 9th Viscount Exmouth. Created as a bracelet and brooch as well as a tiara, the typically geometric design in platinum centres around a 2ct old mine cut diamond.

"We'll buy anything – we even have treasure!" adds Richard.

In 1740, a Dutch bullion ship on its way to the Indies sank off the Kent coast. The hundreds of silver ingots it carried were eventually brought to the surface in 2004, and those not returned to the Dutch government were auctioned. Richard bought a number of them three years ago.

Otherwise, the cabinets (at the time of writing, awaiting their new Walsh Bros branded colours of sage green and brick red, inspired by the doorway's tiles) display pearl, diamond and coloured gemstone jewellery.

Complementing the classic and pre-owned pieces, just two brands feature in the store: Picchiotti Fine Jewellery from Italy and Brown & Newirth. The latter has its own Boutique® area to showcase the breadth of its bridal jewellery.

"Brown & Newirth are incredibly proud to partner with Walsh at George Farrer on this exciting project to create a dedicated in-store bridal jewellery buying experience," says Gareth Thomas, sales and marketing director. "We adapted materials and finishes to be sympathetic to the defining, permanent Victorian fittings. It was fundamental we honour the legacy of a business with a rich heritage, on a site drenched in historical significance."

The next chapter in the Walsh Bros evolution has begun.

SaferGems in Action



We look at the highlights of SaferGems last year as it continued to safeguard businesses, staff and the public from targeted crime.

Launched in 2009, SaferGems is a collaborative initiative dedicated to tackling crime in the jewellery, pawnbroking, antiques and fine art sectors. Hosted by the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) and founded and continually supported by TH March Insurance Brokers and the NAJ, SaferGems works closely with UK police forces. Its purpose is to gather intelligence, circulate alerts, support investigations and, ultimately, help protect the industry from harm.

A YEAR OF IMPACT

For SaferGems, 2024 was a standout year. It issued **186 alerts and bulletins**, provided **218 analytical reports** to law enforcement and directly assisted in over **100 identifications**, arrests and convictions. The initiative is also credited with helping prevent **73 crimes** and recover **61 watches** registered with the Art Loss Register.

With a membership base of more than 4,000 businesses, SaferGems remains a vital line of defence for the trade – supporting prevention, investigation and recovery efforts across the UK and internationally.

THE COST OF CRIME

Criminal activity targeting the industry in 2024 had serious financial consequences:

- **46 robberies** (19 armed), resulting in losses of £4 million
- **179 theft reports**, with **143 confirmed cases**, totalling **£3.9 million** in stolen goods
- **62 burglaries**, with confirmed losses of **£2.4 million**
- **70 fraud cases**, of which **18 were confirmed**, involving **£266,000** in stolen value

These figures reflect the threat's scale and the importance of SaferGems' fast and coordinated responses.

TACKLING ORGANISED CRIME

Organised gangs remained a major threat throughout 2024. South American crime groups were active across England and Scotland, using anti-surveillance tactics, including changing disguises and distraction methods, to rob travelling sales representatives and traders.

In response, SaferGems and the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad hosted a crime prevention webinar. Eight suspects were arrested and sentenced following a major investigation, with their crimes linked to more than £1 million in stolen jewellery and cash and attempted thefts totalling up to £5 million.

FRAUD, FAKES AND SCAMS

Fraud continues to evolve. Last year, cases ranged from counterfeit cash and bogus clients to interest-free credit scams and super fake prestige watches. In February, SaferGems helped identify a man responsible for selling counterfeit Rolex watches in the UK and Austria. In another case, a London dealer lost £195,000 on a fake Patek Philippe – SaferGems linked the suspects to a Europe-wide scam stretching back years.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND NOTABLE CASES

SaferGems' efforts spanned the entire year and all corners of the UK. In early 2024, the team linked five Romanian nationals to distraction thefts in Bury St Edmunds and Oswestry, leading to convictions with sentences of up to three years. Other regional highlights included:

- **Northumbria and Croydon:** High-value watch thefts solved with SaferGems' help
- **Lichfield, Poole, Cardiff:** Offenders identified in multiple sleight-of-hand thefts
- **Basingstoke and Witham:** Counterfeit and gold-switch thefts disrupted
- **Brighton, Solihull, Plymouth:** Repeat offenders tracked and stopped
- **Edinburgh and Shropshire:** Father–son team caught in the act
- **Newbury and Kilburn:** High-value heists investigated and suspects arrested

SaferGems' daily involvement in such cases highlights the organisation's unmatched reach and capability.

A GLOBAL ROLE

SaferGems extended its support across borders, assisting US law enforcement in identifying suspects behind distraction thefts and frauds in Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Florida and California. This international collaboration underscores the growing global nature of jewellery-related crime and the value of cross-border intelligence sharing.

INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

The dedication of the SaferGems team was praised across the trade. Simon Dawe of TH March noted its work led to a "record number of arrests" and greater industry safety. Ben Massey of the NAJ emphasised its vital role in informing the trade and supporting police.

In 2024, the Company of Master Jewellers (CMJ) became the initiative's first affiliated sponsor. Representing over 150 retailers across the UK and Ireland, the CMJ's backing is a testament to SaferGems' growing influence. As CMJ's Emmet Cummins said, *"The impact would have been considerably greater if it wasn't for the incredible work by SaferGems."*

DID YOU KNOW?

SaferGems is one of only a handful of intelligence initiatives approved by the Home Office and endorsed by the National Police Chiefs Council. Through this endorsement, SaferGems can work closely with UK Policing, enabling the SaferGems team to support police investigations.

SaferGems actively participates in the NPCC's Commercial Robbery Group, addressing national and regional issues impacting law enforcement and the industry through strong collaboration.

LOOKING AHEAD

As 2025 begins, the message is clear: SaferGems continues to play a crucial role in protecting the trade, preventing crime and ensuring those who target it are brought to justice.

Discover more at www.naj.co.uk/safergems

Authenticity is dead: long live honesty

Jewellery consultant Sally Leonard explores the challenges and rewards of honesty in business.



Authenticity is a concept I've been working on with clients for several years to help designers talk more clearly about their product, inspiration and creativity, so they can better connect with their audience. These days, I hear one phrase everywhere: authenticity has become the It Girl of branding. Everyone has jumped on the glossy, 'authentic' bandwagon, leading to near-greenwashing levels of activity – with brands falling over themselves to prove how real they are. And they've missed the point.

So now – some may say inevitably – authenticity has lost all meaning.

In the pursuit of Glossy Authenticity, brands often say what they think people want to hear, rather than speaking their truth. This leads to a diluted message, an imitation of what they really love, tempered by what they believe a potential customer wants to hear. The result? A lack of engagement with their core audience. Inspired by a cool texture on a door? Say that! Don't turn it into a story about decay or the history of doors – unless that's genuinely what inspires you. People like texture. And doors. It's fine for it just to be that.

We don't need a glossy, sanitised presentation of authenticity; we just need simple honesty.

Overthinking what your customer wants from you – and altering your content to fit this idea – creates an indefinable sense of something being just... off. Not real. Fake. We don't like fake people; we don't trust their motivations, and we won't engage with a brand that feels like its owner is just going through the motions.

We want to feel like we know something about the people we give our money to, as consumers. Covid made us aware of the power of our spending ability and prompted a large proportion of the population to think more deeply about what they are buying... and from whom.

SO HOW CAN YOU BE HONEST WITHOUT FALLING INTO THE NOT-QUITE-RIGHT TRAP?

These days, when I work with a client, the first step is to help them uncover what truly inspires them: where their desire to create comes from and how to convey that enthusiasm to their audience. Finding the thing that makes them super happy, the reason they want to make things, the random things that inspire them – whether it's detailing on a Georgian building, an interesting texture on a drain cover or a really beautiful pebble: this is what people want to know about. Your core customer is continuously fascinated and engaged with your creative process, with how you see the world and capture those thoughts, feelings and images in pieces of jewellery they can connect with, often on an emotional level.

I'm always amazed by the completely unique viewpoint of each designer. It's this – and not a lot else – that really matters. What drives your desire to create? It's up to us to honestly share this part of ourselves, where our true power of creativity resides.

WHY IS HONESTY IMPORTANT?

Honesty builds trust. It helps consumers understand who you are... not who you think they want you to be. We can tell when something feels off. Trying too hard to fit a square honest peg into an authentically round hole only leads to your messaging not aligning with your products, your direction or your creativity. This also leads to a risk of inconsistency. Your potential customers can connect with your brand in many ways. If we try too hard to be as Insta-authentic as possible, we risk altering our messaging too much for each platform, so when someone moves from one platform to another and finds a completely different tone, the message is confused and the sale is lost. Because we were simply trying too hard.

SHOULD YOU BE POLITICAL?

Well, this depends on how political you are in real life. For my own brands, I'm more open about my political beliefs as they form a core part of who I am. I'm a politically engaged person and hold beliefs I stand by, whether they gain or lose me customers. This is a choice an increasing number of brands are making. In the same way customers are aware of the power of their money, creators are aware of the power of their brand; more of us are coming to the conclusion that we don't want our work connected to people who don't share our values.

But this isn't a choice for everyone. It's a particularly divisive time, and it may not make sense commercially to put your head above the political parapet.

In the end, it comes down to clarity. When you understand who you are, what you value and why you create, everything else begins to align. Honesty isn't about oversharing or curating the perfect story – it's about grounding your work in truth. And when your brand reflects that truth, your audience feels it. That's when connection happens. That's when trust grows. And that's when your brand truly stands out.

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

Why It's Important to Get Your Claims Right



Sustainability consultant Victoria Waugh explains how to avoid greenwashing when making environmental and sustainability claims.

Today's jewellery customers are profoundly aware of the social and environmental impact of their purchases. In response, brands are increasingly keen to showcase their values, from highlighting a product's recycled credentials or carbon footprint to promoting eco-friendly packaging and charitable initiatives. However, with these claims comes the responsibility to ensure accuracy.

Misleading statements, commonly referred to as greenwashing, not only wear away customer trust but they may also breach industry consumer protection regulations. This article gives advice on making truthful and credible claims.

ENSURING ACCURATE CLAIMS

To preserve credibility, all communication made by your brand must accurately reflect the impact of your products and be backed up by robust evidence.

It is important to be specific about what the claim refers to: is it a material, a specific jewellery piece, a complete collection or your business as a whole? Avoid the temptation to overclaim or exaggerate your impact.

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR CREDIBLE CLAIMS

The NAJ's Guidance Note on Environmental Claims outlines six principles to help govern your environmental and social claims. These are:

1. Be truthful and accurate
2. Be clear and unambiguous
3. Be fair and meaningful
4. Consider the full life cycle of the product or service
5. Back up with evidence
6. Do not omit or hide important relevant information

Be transparent about what you know while acknowledging the areas you're still working to improve. For example, if you can prove your gold is responsibly sourced (such as Fairtrade or Fairmined certification), but you are still verifying the origin of your silver, share this information with your customer. This level of transparency is more honest than making a vague claim about using responsibly sourced materials and will help build trust with your clients.

COMMON PITFALLS

Recycled Materials

If you state your jewellery uses recycled materials, you must be able to provide evidence to substantiate your claim. Precious metals described as recycled may only be recently mined industry scrap – not necessarily the post-consumer recycled material your customer expects.

Similarly, without proof of provenance, claims about the environmental benefits of recycled metal could be misleading. For example, it is inaccurate to suggest using recycled gold has a lower carbon footprint or reduces the need for mining.

Laboratory-Grown Stones

While laboratory-grown stones are often marketed as environmentally friendly, their production can be energy intensive. You need quantifiable evidence to support claims the stones you use are a more sustainable choice.

Ambiguous Language

Buzzwords like 'green,' 'ethical,' and 'sustainable' can easily confuse customers if not clearly defined. If you use these words in your communication, always define what they mean in your business. This could be part of your website or included in policy documents, such as a code of conduct.

Packaging

If you plan to label packaging as environmentally friendly, be specific about which elements meet sustainability standards. Input materials could come from recycled sources or be FSC certified; however, many jewellery boxes include foam inners, magnets or ribbons that are not recyclable. Consider whether your brand's packaging can really be considered environmentally friendly if the customer is going to discard it on receipt.

Carbon Footprint

If discussing your brand's greenhouse gas emissions, be clear whether you are addressing Scope 1 and 2 emissions (primarily your gas and electricity use) or Scope 3 (which includes your supply chain and product lifecycle). The majority of a jewellery business's carbon footprint is generated during the mining, refining and production process, so it is misleading if these emissions are not included in a claim about reducing your carbon footprint.

Charitable Donations

Be precise about your charitable contributions. Avoid vague statements like "We support charity X". Instead, clarify when the donation was made and whether it was a one-off event or an ongoing commitment, such as giving a formally agreed percentage of annual profits.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Ensure your claims are clear, truthful and supported with evidence
- Be honest about your strengths and plans to improve
- Monitor and track your impact over time before making public statements
- Use certifications or third-party tools to substantiate your claims
- Provide additional information through online policies or annual reports

Communicating transparently isn't just a moral imperative – it's a business advantage. Customers are more likely to remain loyal to brands that communicate with integrity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

NAJ's Guidance Note on Environmental Claims, **www.naj.co.uk/codes-of-practice**

The Competition and Markets Authority's Green Claims Code

Victoria Waugh is a freelance sustainability consultant helping jewellery businesses to improve their social and environmental impact and meet certification requirements, such as B Corporation, RJC and Positive Luxury. She is also co-founder of Considered Jewellery, a consultancy supporting brands to design and manufacture jewellery through responsible supply chains.
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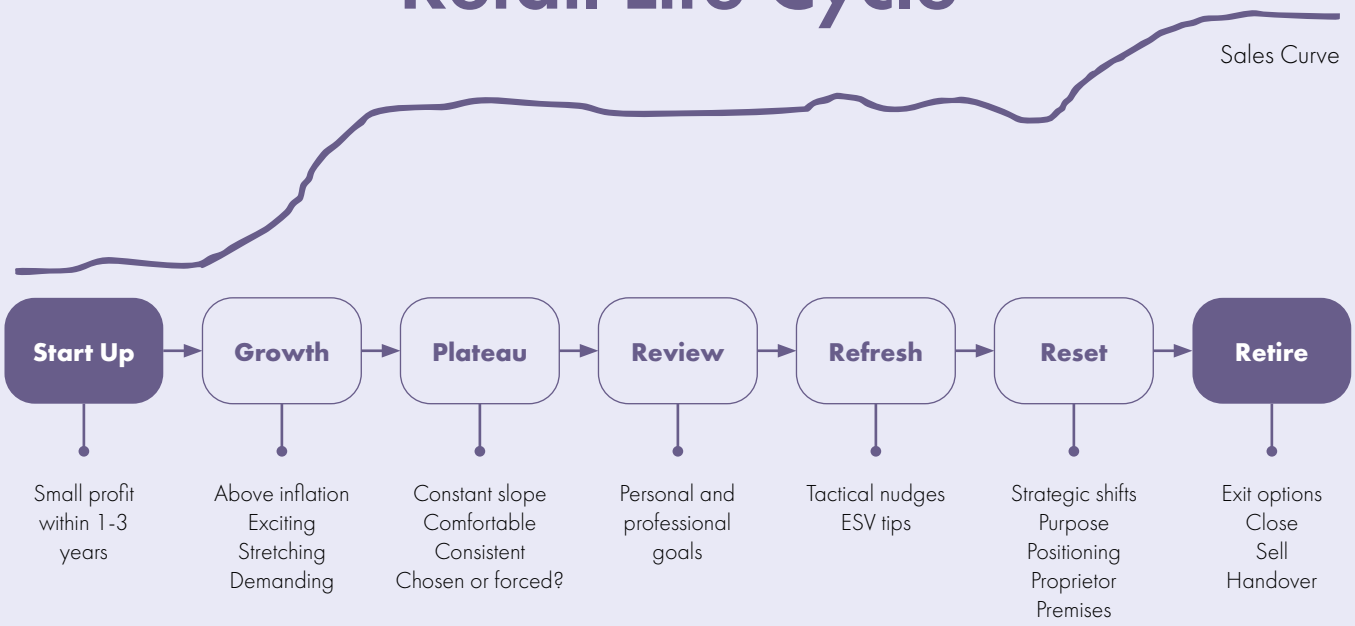
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The Seven Stage Retail Life Cycle



JBN facilitator Michael Donaldson shares members' thoughts on their retail futures.

As the JBN community came out of lockdown in 2021, bleary eyed, wondering how to reset and what a reset would look like, we took the opportunity at our autumn meetings that year to review our situation and discuss how each of us saw our retail futures.

We captured the output from that and subsequent meetings over the following 12 months to create the JBN Seven Stage Retail Life Cycle (see above).

We recognised the process wasn't completely linear as shown above on the sales curve but cyclical throughout the life cycle, with some members expected to complete more cycles than others between GROWTH and RESET depending on their situation... either chosen or forced.

We individually identified where we were when we joined the JBN, where we were post-Covid and what needed to happen to get us to where we wanted to be in the next three to five years.

The cycle enabled us to share the challenges faced in each stage and share experience from those who had previously transitioned through that stage – as some might say, a 'challenge shared is a challenged halved.'

For example, in the five central stages of GROWTH to RESET, we identified fear in three of the stages, and staff in four of the stages under the guise of staff recruitment, staff appetite, staff fatigue, staff happiness and staff buy-in.

We gave more agenda time to the two key cultural and operational challenges of **Staff Motivation and Maintaining Standards**, with everyone taking away tips and advice that had worked for others in the same life cycle stage, which could be applied to their businesses with reduced risk and increased probability of success.

If your perception of the JBN is of a social talking shop, think again; it's so much more, with every member committed to sharing their knowledge, experience and expertise for the benefit of others, aka *'take selfishly, give selflessly.'*

And what about the tangible results generated from our retail life cycle discussions... well, you have to be in it to hear it, but I'm sure those who have successfully achieved their retirement objectives won't mind me sharing the headlines.

Stage Seven Retirement – a topic often kicked into the long grass or ignored ... after all, it is probably the most difficult life stage in the retail cycle: that of letting go of your lifetime's work. It is a stage that tends to get the least amount of time, attention and planning, with emotions blurring both financial and wellbeing realities.

When we defined the cycle in 2021, there were four members who planned to retire in the next three to five years. Two members have successfully sold their businesses. For one, it was relatively quick but not as lucrative as they hoped. For the other, it was a painful 18 months, but a win in the end for both parties.

The other two members (since joined by a third) have children in the business, and their succession plans are at a stage where they now have an advisory brief that allows them to enjoy more hours away from the shop doing other things.

Possibly my favourite memory from our stage seven retirement discussions is the following reply from one of the original JBNers to the question **When are you going to exit the business?**

"I've nothing really to exit as I'm only in the shop one day a week now, and I'm already enjoying the things retirement brings, so I'll keep doing what I'm doing for as long as I want."

Now, that sounds like a plan perfectly executed.

JBN JET BUSINESS NETWORK

If you are looking for a retail community or just a little more help and direction in your business irrespective of where you are in the retail life cycle, contact Michael Donaldson to hear more about the value of JBN membership on **07817 305 122** or at **michael@thevalueinnovator.co.uk**

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What Jewellers Need to Know: HR Guidance for Induction and Probation Practices

Quest Business Services shares the lowdown on the dos and don'ts for new staff members.



Managing the induction and probation of new employees effectively is crucial for jewellers building a competent and compliant workforce. Below, we address key considerations – from structuring your induction processes to understanding probation periods and data protection – to help you successfully integrate new staff.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EFFECTIVE INDUCTION PROCESS FOR JEWELLERS?

An effective induction process introduces new staff to your business's culture, HR policies and operational procedures. It should cover all essential areas – health and safety protocols, customer service standards and any role-specific training related to jewellery handling, security measures and ethical sourcing.

Providing a comprehensive employee handbook during the induction process ensures staff are informed about company policies and expectations. Timely and thorough induction training reduces the risk of data breaches and non-compliance with regulations.

WHAT ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF A LEGALLY COMPLIANT EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT?

In the UK, employment contracts must include the following areas:

- employer and employee names
- job title and description
- start date and any prior relevant employment
- salary details and payment frequency
- working hours and location
- holiday entitlement, sick pay and pension information
- notice periods for terminations
- any applicable collective agreement

Ensuring these elements are clearly outlined helps prevent misunderstandings and legal disputes.

HOW CAN AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK BENEFIT SMALL BUSINESSES?

An employee handbook consolidates your company's policies and procedures, serving as a clear reference for staff on topics like conduct, attendance and grievance procedures. While it's not legally required, having a handbook promotes consistency and transparency, aiding dispute resolution and ensuring compliance with employment laws. For jewellers, the handbook can also outline essential polices related to security, ethical practices and handling valuable stock.

WHAT SHOULD JEWELLERS UNDERSTAND ABOUT PROBATION PERIODS?

Probation periods allow employers to assess a new employee's suitability for a role and typically last between three to six months. It's vital you clearly define the length and terms of the probation period in the employment contract, including extension possibilities and notice periods required during probation. Regular performance reviews throughout this time can help address any issues promptly.

HOW DOES DATA PROTECTION IMPACT INDUCTION AND PROBATION PRACTICES?

Employers must handle their employees' personal data in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This involves collecting only necessary information, securing it appropriately and informing employees about how their data will be used.

During the induction process, provide training on data protection policies to ensure your employees understand their responsibilities in handling personal data – particularly in customer transactions and jewellery valuations.

ARE UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE CHANGES GOING TO IMPACT PROBATION PERIODS?

Yes – the UK government has introduced an Employment Rights Bill, expected to come into effect in 2026, which includes provision for a standardised nine-month probation. This aims to balance employer flexibility with employee protections. Small businesses should stay informed and aware of these changes to ensure they can comply when the legislation is enacted.

WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT FOR MANAGING INDUCTION AND PROBATION PROCESSES?

Navigating induction and probation is often complex, but there is support. As a member of the National Association of Jewellers, you get free and unlimited access to our HR, H&S, legal and tax and VAT advice lines on **0116 243 7627**. You also enjoy unrestricted access to our document library – with over 700 downloadable policy templates and guidance notes.

Additionally, we also offer a complimentary, no-obligation One2One business review with one of our business support managers, providing a personalised gap analysis of your compliance – at no additional cost. Call **01455 852 028** to book a session today.

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Choose Your Own Jewellery Journey



With the NAJ's industry-leading education JET courses, we have a pathway for every jewellery career.

No two career paths are ever the same. From enthusiasts taking their first steps into the trade to seasoned professionals leading a successful team, every journey is as individual as the pieces we sell, make or value. That's why the NAJ has developed a comprehensive range of qualifications – the Jewellery Education and Training pathway – to support every stage of your career.

Whether you're just beginning your adventure or ready to climb the ladder, JET qualifications develop your knowledge, confidence and professionalism, so you can shine.

Each course is intentionally structured to build on the previous one, enabling you to take control of your development and shape your careers.

Let's take a look at the pathway in action.

JET ESSENTIALS: THE IDEAL INTRODUCTION

JET Essentials is the perfect place to start a jewellery career. This online programme is an accessible, value-for-money introduction to core jewellery industry topics. Covering the basics of jewellery, gemstones, design, precious metals and hallmarking, it builds vital foundational knowledge.

Whether you're a hobbyist, new to the industry or refreshing your skills, JET Essentials gives you the confidence to speak with authority and advise customers effectively. Plus, successful completion of JET Essentials counts towards the JET1 qualification, making it a seamless first step in your learning journey.

JET1: THE LAUNCHPAD

Once you've mastered the basics, JET1 is your next milestone. This online, tutor-supported qualification offers a more in-depth look at the world of jewellery, developing strong product knowledge and a broader understanding of the trade.

Ideal for staff working in retail, workshops or operational support, JET1 explores jewellery manufacturing techniques and helps you build a solid industry foundation. The course is engaging and supportive and, importantly, designed to fit around work commitments. JET1 boosts your ability to help clients and colleagues confidently – and opens doors to further professional opportunities.

JET2: NEXT-LEVEL EXPERTISE

When you're ready to further your knowledge, JET2 offers an advanced understanding of the jewellery trade. Building on the knowledge gained from JET1 learning, this qualification delves deeper into gemstones and precious metals and introduces specialist career pathways, such as jewellery valuation and pawnbroking. The course encourages you to consider your future specialisation, acting as a springboard for more advanced or managerial training. Like its predecessor, it's delivered in a supportive online format that accommodates your work schedule.

JET FOUNDATIONS OF APPRAISAL PRACTICE: BECOME A VALUER

If valuation is your calling, then the JET Foundations of Appraisal Practice (FoAP) is the key to unlocking your potential. This level 3 ATHE qualification is the essential first step to becoming a registered valuer.

FoAP offers a thorough introduction to the theories, methodologies and practices in valuing jewellery, silverware and watches, delivered by experts in the field. You gain practical, hands-on experience and guidance on the legal, ethical and commercial aspects of operating a valuation business.

Importantly, this qualification is a requisite for becoming a fully practising member of the NAJ's Institute of Registered Valuers (IRV), the UK's recognised professional body for jewellery valuers. If you aspire to a respected career in appraisal, this is the place to start.

JET MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP: STEP INTO MANAGEMENT

For leadership roles, the NAJ's Management and Leadership qualification provides the insight and skills needed to succeed. This brand-new programme is for new, aspiring or existing assistant managers in the jewellery sector, focusing on key areas, such as people and performance management, emotional intelligence and communication.

An experienced tutor delivers the course and combines practical projects with personal development tools. You will benefit from an emotional intelligence assessment, one-to-one development meetings and the opportunity to undertake real-life business tasks.

Whether leading a small team or stepping into a senior role, this qualification enables you to manage confidently, authentically and strategically. It's a must for leading effectively and driving performance in a retail or manufacturing setting.

YOUR UNIQUE CAREER PATH

The JET qualifications form a flexible and supportive journey through the jewellery industry. Each course builds on the last, guiding you from foundational knowledge all the way to specialist and leadership roles.

Discover more at www.naj.co.uk/Qualifications





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Crime prevention – staying one step ahead of criminals

In economic uncertainty, businesses across all sectors must remain vigilant, but few industries are as high risk as the jewellery trade. As criminals become increasingly sophisticated in their tactics, jewellers must adopt proactive security measures to protect their staff, stock and premises. TH March shares practical advice to help you stay one step ahead.

THE THREAT OF ORGANISED BURGLARIES

The all-too-familiar statistics highlight a persistent trend in hole in the wall burglaries, often carried out by highly organised gangs. These criminals can breach solid walls in minutes, even when substantial security measures are in place.

One of the biggest vulnerabilities is having unoccupied properties adjacent to your premises. These spaces provide the perfect cover for intruders to break through party walls undetected. Regularly inspect your surroundings and ensure neighbouring vacant properties are secure.

Now is also the time to reassess your intruder alarm system. While movement detectors, door contacts and glass-break sensors are essential, vibration detectors on perimeter walls and ceilings can provide early warning signs of an attempted break in.

Security fogging systems designed to rapidly fill a space with dense, disorienting fog provide another highly effective deterrent. When integrated with your intruder alarm system, these can stop criminals in their tracks, both during the day and after hours.

TACKLING SNATCH THEFTS AND ARMED ROBBERIES

Criminals have long relied on the snatch-and-grab method, so train staff to identify suspicious behaviour, such as nervous customers or those making vague or ill-prepared enquiries, and act accordingly.

Luxury watches remain prime targets, so to reduce exposure, display these items as far from the door as possible and only present them to customers whose enquiries appear legitimate.

A controlled door entry system is another strong deterrent. If possible, install a two-door airlock system, ensuring one door remains closed before releasing the other. In single-door setups, enforce a procedure for granting access when high-value items are being shown.

Criminals frequently work in pairs, with one viewing an item while an accomplice holds the door open to enable a quick escape. A simple but effective countermeasure is using a coded phrase among staff when a high-value item is being shown, signalling a colleague to move closer to the entrance.

REMAINING VIGILANT AGAINST ARMED ROBBERIES AND SMASH-AND-GRAB ATTACKS

Staff should be particularly vigilant during opening and closing times when businesses are at their most vulnerable. Ensure those unlocking the premises do not have immediate access to safes and consider providing mobile personal attack alarms to all staff members.

Distribute high-value items across window and internal displays to minimise potential losses in the event of a smash-and-grab attempt.

Security threats in the jewellery trade are evolving, but so too are the solutions. By adopting a proactive and layered approach to security both during and after business hours, you can significantly reduce your risk exposure. As criminals refine their tactics, jewellers must remain one step ahead. With the right precautions in place, you can better protect your business, staff and valuable stock against potential threats.

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Meet our latest NAJ JET Stars

Introducing the two latest students who submitted outstanding projects in the NAJ's JET1 course.



LEAH DAVIS, MALLARD JEWELLERS (December 2024 winner)

"My jewellery career began in a shopping centre jewellers just outside London two years ago. At the start of my probation, I went on a two-day diamond training course and was instantly interested. Selling new jewellery, we learnt about the new brands we stocked. After a year, I wanted to learn more about vintage, cultural and religious jewellery, and so moved to Mallard the jewellers and pawnbrokers in Southend where I started working with second hand pieces. I've been extremely lucky – being surrounded by incredible people who've worked in the jewellery industry for most of their careers.

There's not a specific area I work in – I want to have the correct knowledge and information on all the products and services we provide, so I can help all customers, whether they want to buy, sell, pawn or have an item repaired or just need some information on jewellery.

Since starting my jewellery career, I knew this is what I wanted to do, so I asked colleagues and managers about training and courses available to me. I wanted to do JET to further my knowledge and open up more opportunities in the jewellery industry. Taking JET1, I struggled most with hallmarks – there are so many, going back so many years. Trying to identify the date letter on a small hallmark is difficult.

I most enjoyed learning about different jewellers and their inspirations, particularly when I found common ground with them. I chose to do case studies on Catherine Zoraida Bakewell and Nigel O'Reilly – both incredible jewellery industry role models. Neither had privileged upbringings, and, reading about them, I really admired the inspiration and escape jewellery has given them. I feel connected to them and really appreciate the pieces they design and produce.

Having completed JET1, I'm more confident in my knowledge of jewellery, which I can pass on to our customers, many of whom do not know the history of the jewellery they own. It's a privilege to share further information about their pieces.

After completing JET1, I wanted to learn to make jewellery, so I purchased a silver jewellery making starter kit for university students. I plan to focus on that for a few months, practising and learning new techniques, then hopefully I'll start selling some small pieces. I plan to start JET2 soon and further my knowledge in jewellery and diamonds."



SHANNON ROGERS, BEAVERBROOKS (JANUARY 2025 WINNER)

"I've always worked in customer service – personal, one-to-one and customer-facing jobs are where my passion lies. When I was ready to return to work after having my youngest son, I applied for jobs I knew I'd be passionate about and where I could build a career. In 2023, my path led me to Beaverbrooks.

I'd never worked with jewellery previously, but I've always loved receiving and buying jewellery so knew it's something I'd enjoy. After researching the role and the company, I knew Beaverbrooks would be ideal. Helping others find the perfect pieces through building great customer relations was extremely exciting – and I've not looked back since.

In my current role, I oversee our branded jewellery, which includes Coeur de Lion, Vivienne Westwood and Swarovski. But I also love working with beautiful Beaverbrooks jewellery wedding rings and diamond rings made of different metals and gemstones as well as many fashion and Swiss watch brands.

Beaverbrooks encourages learning and development, so I was delighted for the opportunity to take JET1. After reading about the course, I was excited to discover topics I may not have considered. Throughout the different assignments, I loved researching and broadening my knowledge.

I particularly enjoyed learning more about how diamonds are formed and their history as well as researching more about gemstones. I had some knowledge initially, but I now have a deeper understanding, which has made me appreciate more the specialness of diamonds and gemstones. I found the lost wax process the most challenging to understand, but after reading about it and watching videos, I now admire how much work goes into creating jewellery.

Diamonds are my passion, which has grown throughout my time at Beaverbrooks. From learning about their different shapes and the 4Cs, I now see each individual diamond is beautiful in its own way, with its own fingerprint. They're alluring and have a different emotional effect on each person.

I wrote about Sheila Fleet because her story and love for her homeland inspired me. Her love of art and sketching led, over the years, to where she is today – the sole designer of her jewellery. With each collection I can visualise her inspiration, which is truly remarkable and beautiful. Her use of Scottish gold is extremely interesting, as it was not something I'd heard of before. Visiting one of her stores in Scotland and seeing her jewellery in person is now on my bucket list.

JET increased my confidence in product knowledge, especially in gemstones, to help customers find their perfect piece. JET also helped me to understand how the manufacturing process results in the final jewellery product and has given me a greater appreciation for jewellery."

Want to learn how JET qualifications can help your business?
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For the Love of Diamonds

By Rachael Taylor

(teNeues Publishing, £49.50)



"When you touch a diamond, you touch history," says author and jewellery journalist **Rachael Taylor**, admitting that, for her, gazing at a diamond is "a pure shot of dopamine." When she says, "jewellery is emotion – a token we use to express our dedication to others," it offers the premise for this aptly titled book; it sets the scene.

To begin at the beginning, there's the science, history, meaning, symbolism and folklore of gemstones; for thousands of years, jewels have been signifiers of wealth, status, taste and commitment. Although the first diamond engagement ring was supposedly gifted to Mary of Burgundy in 1477, such tokens of promise didn't enter mainstream until the 1940s (with De Beers' slogan A Diamond is Forever). The chapter finishes with useful notes and images acknowledging the beauty of emerald, ruby, sapphire, opal, amethyst, topaz, garnet, tanzanite, peridot, aquamarine and tourmaline.

A chapter on Iconic Pieces reminds us diamonds are not only revered for their size, beauty and rarity but also for their stories: Elizabeth Taylor's 33.19ct Asscher-cut diamond (previously the Krupp Diamond) bought in 1968 for $305,000 by Richard Burton, the apparently cursed Hope Diamond or the 128.54ct fancy yellow Tiffany Diamond, discovered in 1977, which has never been for sale and just four women (from Audrey Hepburn to Beyoncé) have worn it. All the stories make great reading.

Illustrated with glorious, glossy images and with history, inspiration, craftsmanship and anecdotes, the chapter on Brands selects jewellery names that have risen to iconic status. Included, as you might expect, are Cartier, Chanel, Van Cleef & Arpels, De Beers, Harry Winston (name checked in *Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend*), Bulgari, Chopard, Graff, Boucheron, Tiffany & Co, Mikimoto, Chaumet, Piaget, Shaun Leane and Stephen Webster.

To conclude, A Question of Style looks at what, why and how diamonds are worn. The choice of metal, vintage or contemporary, maximalism or minimalism, personalisation, ear stack curation and red carpet styling are just some of the diamond-wearing variables.

The Wonderful World of Women's Watches: Beauty Beyond Time

By Rhonda Riche

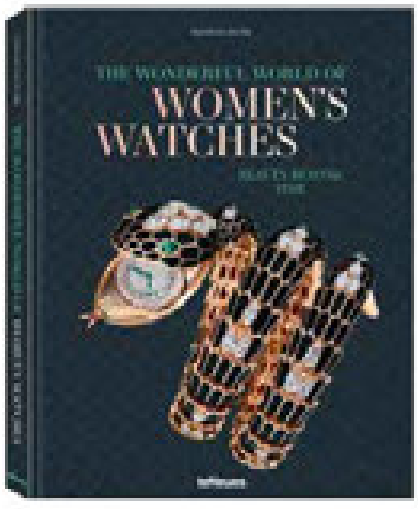
(teNeues Publishing, £69.95)

The introduction to this glossy tome, which showcases the most iconic ladies' watches from top brands like Cartier, Bulgari and Rolex, is an introduction to all watches and clarifies the role women have played in the development of these timepieces. In fact, Breguet created the first wristwatch for the Queen of Naples in 1810. And as women generally ran households back in the day, needing to know the time was crucial.

Until WWI, wristwatches were almost exclusively for women – it was not manly to wear a watch on your wrist. When tin WWI trench watches – more practical than pocket watches – were invented, watchmakers explored the mass market. Initially, women's watches "tracked a different path to that of men's... they were dainty and considered more as jewellery or accessory than serious horology." Manufacturers in the 21st-century, adds author **Rhonda Riche**, have recognised "it's good business to embrace diversity" – "serious female collectors are interested in complication and craftsmanship as well as embellishments."

The chapter on Watchmaking Milestones illustrates that "timeless design, maximum precision and glamour" are the basic requirements for a watch to be deemed iconic. To narrow the choices, the author has selected those models that combine innovation, artistry and instantly recognisable design – "all elicit some kind of emotion." Detailed stories follow of the likes of Cartier's Tank (introduced without fanfare in 1919) and worn by stylish women, think Greta Garbo, Grace Kelly and Jackie Kennedy Onassis. Cartier's 1973 Baignoire (so dubbed for its elliptical bathtub shape) has undergone many transformations over the years and was famously worn by Catherine Deneuve.

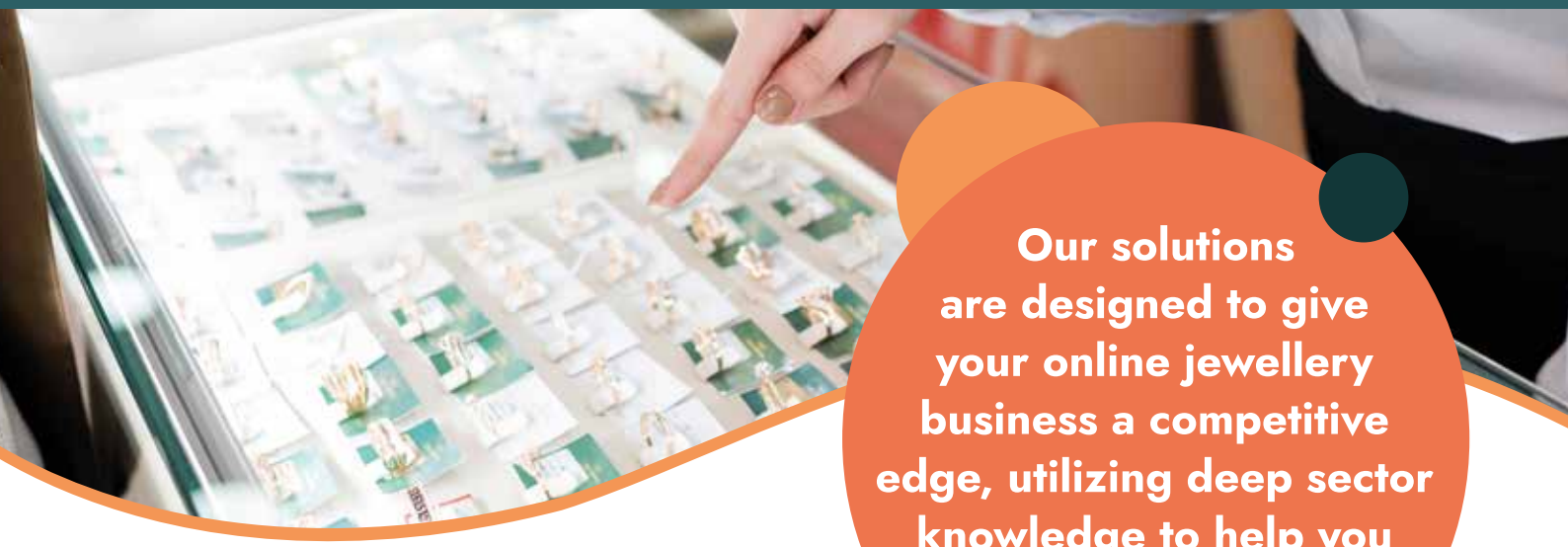
Elizabeth Taylor's watch collection showed her taste for precision mechanisms married to jewellery making expertise... like her Bulgari Serpenti watch, which she wore on the set of *Cleopatra* in 1962. Other such examples: Vacherin Constantin's diamond-studded Lord Kalla and Patek Philippe's diamond-set Nautilus. For the 90th anniversary of Jaeger LeCoultre's Reverso, the reverse of its swivelling watch case (introduced in 1931 for polo-players) featured Grand Feu enamel paintings (like Gustav Klimpt's 'Portrait of a Lady'). High Jewellery Watches highlights Omega's 1969 Andrew Grima fabulous yellow gold wave bracelet watch, Piaget's watch sautoir, Van Cleef & Arpels' poetic complications with moving models and the Alhambra bracelet watch – an instantly recognisable style.



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The last word goes to...

Henry Curteis

As Curteis celebrates its 50th anniversary, managing director Henry Curteis describes his fascinating life – inside and outside the jewellery industry.

When did you join the family business (how long after it was founded)? What were your responsibilities at that time?

There was no business to join. Dad was a dairy farmer with a few pigs. Other family members were professionals: one grandfather an admiral, the other, a judge. Uncle, an ambassador. Business was still a dirty word among the officer class; the idea of selling things to make a living was shameful.

So how did jewellery enter your life?

I started selling jewellery in London after deciding not to become a lawyer, and Dad, being an engineer before he became a farmer, started making things for me to sell. I sold to retailers in 1974 for a short while, then tried again in 1975 while at university and after finishing at Oxford (aged 20). I worked for Procter & Gamble while the chain machinery we ordered arrived. It took a year. I was top sales representative for P&G in London North in 1976 and learned to sell to the trade. I left the job in 1977 and sold chain full-time back at home in Shropshire, starting the 'farmyard ropes' era.

You're also a published author. How did writing come about?

I always loved writing and wrote stories in a book when I was about 12. At 15, I became the satirical editor at Radley's *The Petreian,* writing satirical articles sending up the dons. I also organised the printing, distribution and finance. Later, I edited *The Magnet* magazine in the village where we were making jewellery and regularly contributed to the local newspaper, writing in satirical style.

> Fifty years is a long time, and it's been my good fortune to have witnessed every stage of the development

So why did I end up making jewellery when my main interest was reading, researching and writing? I was offered openings in top London solicitors, where there were very high salaries, but I preferred the independence of setting up our own business, working in the place where I grew up and which I love to this day. It was down to Dad, whose engineering background needed an outlet after he finished farming – I went home to help him. He didn't have a business bone in his body. We got on extremely well, being total opposites.

Career-wise, who has inspired you the most?

I was so traumatised by being sent, aged seven, to a military-style boarding school, that I opted to run my own world ever since, and trust no one. This works especially well in politics. Is that inspiration or the opposite? I see people as a mixture of the angelic and the demonic, which is why I called my 2018 autobiography *Angels & Devils*.

What three words describe you best (in your view and/or according to others)?

Instinctive, articulate, impatient.

You've led a very full life. Please tell us more.

I grew up surrounded by politics. Our Aunt Guinevere Tilney was Mrs Thatcher's personal adviser, organising her hair style, dresses and voice coaching. Her husband, Sir John, was minister of aviation. John Biffen, another cabinet minister under Thatcher, had been a frequent visitor to our house; I lived with him in his flat near Westminster while I sold jewellery.

When I stepped back from full-on business management around 1997 – for a while I did academic writing for Henley Management College on entrepreneurship and managing growth cultures (still on MBA courses globally today) – I wrote to UKIP, saying I wanted to rewrite their leaflets. They agreed. Nigel Farage asked me to write and produce leaflets for the party nationwide, and millions went out using a *Dad's Army theme*.

What challenges face the UK jewellery industry today in your view? What actions should be taken?

In 2004, the campaign to save the hallmark launched. I worked closely with Birmingham Assay Master *Michael Allchin* to produce a punchy leaflet and poster campaign to deal with the threat of losing hallmarking to EU lobbyists and rule changes. We had tremendous success in the UK, with support from everywhere.

The UK industry should update the 2004 campaign and be ready to explain to the public – again – what a threat losing the hallmark would be. Today, a campaign would have to be online, on social media, website and X (Twitter), videos, reels and sound bites.

Describe Curteis as it celebrates its anniversary.

The first 25 years were the entrepreneurial period, building and equipping the factory. The second 25 years saw our medium-size business survive things like my lengthy period of illness (luckily now fully recovered) and the development of the management team. Younger staff have joined, and we offer stamping, electro-plating, finishing services and personalisation products with engraving and enamelling, complementing the original chain and castings.

The next 25 years will be a period of growth as all these kick in and add to the business. Fifty years is a long time, and it's been my good fortune to have witnessed every stage of the development. The family has moved on a generation – my wife, Shane, has a keen eye for quality and fashion, and we hope one of our three children will carry on the Curteis jewellery tradition.



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