

AMERICAN GEM TRADE ASSOCIATION

PRISM

SUMMER 2008

FALL BACK INTO
COLOR

WORLD OF GEMS
CONFERENCE

GEMFAIR
TUCSON™

HEALTH
PROGRAMS

AGTA
ELECTS
NEW
BOARD





AMERICAN GEM TRADE ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

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

Founded in 1981, the AGTA has over 1,100 Members representing leading colored gemstone and cultured pearl wholesalers, retail jewelers, jewelry manufacturers, designers, colored diamond dealers, estate dealers and industry professionals.

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

Membership provides you with many exclusive benefits and services:

Members are eligible to exhibit in some of the most important annual events in the gemstone and jewelry industry, including AGTA GemFair™ Tucson, AGTA GemFair™ Las Vegas and JA New York Summer.

Members earn the privilege of being listed and granted four free listings in the AGTA Source Directory. This is a powerful tool that gives access to a valuable network of fellow gemstone professionals. Over 20,000 copies are distributed!

Members receive preferred pricing for services at the AGTA Gemological Testing Center and on our large variety of marketing materials.

Members stay informed about all the hot topics surrounding our industry and the AGTA with the quarterly *Prism* newsletter and monthly NewsFlashes.

Members have access to leading industry programs. These programs include Bank of America Merchant Services, FedEx Express® Shipping, FedEx Declared Value, FedEx Kinkos, insurance programs through Association Health Programs and the Office Depot: *Taking Care of Business* program.

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

PRISM

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Catch phrases like; “fair trade, supply-chain transparency and green products” appear in all sorts of media today. Upscale consumer magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker* and trade publications; among them, *Modern Jeweler*, *National Jeweler* and *JCK* all feature articles concerning these hot topics about our global enviro/economic future.

As America’s sole colored gemstone trade association, it is incumbent upon AGTA to contribute to the growing international dialog concerning sustainable natural resources, sound environmental mining policies, responsible and humane mining conditions and opportunities for local artisanal miners.

Individual Members often ask me, “How do I guarantee that a gemstone I sell is mined according to proper environmental methods?”; “How can I guarantee who cut it or where it was cut?”; or “How can I guarantee that there are no human rights violations in bringing it to market?”

Only a very few Members who actually witness all phases of production - from the earth, through cutting and sorting, to the end-user market - can actually make authoritative guarantees. Everyone else who deals internationally, particularly in gemstones from third world countries that have little or no oversight of small-scale mining, is subject to the realities of the supply chain from those areas.

So, what shall the rest of us do? And what shall AGTA embrace as Association policy with regard to these important issues?

1) We must ask questions regarding human rights conditions, environmental protections and preservation, worker conditions and opportunity for advancement.

2) We must all make the effort to be informed regarding the supply chain of our products.

3) We must openly discuss violations and exploitation where we find them.

We are not alone in the quest for a better grasp of supply-chain realities. The Council for Responsible Jewellery Practice (CRJP), the Association for Responsible Mining (ARM), The Initiative

for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI), Communities and Small-Scale Mining (CASM), and the Madison Dialogue are all committed to improving conditions in mining and supply-chain through-put.

These non-profits represent just a few of the worldwide industry organizations that are working to set standards, write the criteria and review our industry’s practices from the ground to the final customer.

Since our inception, the AGTA has been the champion of gemstone enhancement and content disclosure in the U.S. Our Member gemstone dealers must adhere to ethical disclosure of all treatments of gemstones and how these treatments affect our products.

It is not enough, for example, to disclose that a topaz is “coated.” The buyer must be informed as to the fragility of the coating.

It is not sufficiently informative to disclose a beryllium treatment as “heated” or “enhanced.” The potential customer must be clearly informed that the color has been artificially created.

Too, it doesn’t satisfy AGTA’s Trade Policy to disclose lead-glass-filled rubies as merely “heated.” Our members must clearly state that this treatment can be damaged by low heat and by solvents, and that in some cases the ruby is actually held together by the glass itself.

Some gemstone dealers, including a few of our Members, have made a quick profit in selling gemstones subject to new treatments, only to have caused some buyers to shy away from selling color altogether. Many national chain stores and high-end retailers have instructed their buyers to purchase only from dealers who clearly and consistently maintain ethical trade practices.

Full and complete disclosure is a fundamental requirement of Membership in AGTA. The Board of Directors has instructed the staff to gather all commercial documents from our Members in order that they may conduct a review of disclosure codes on all documents. We will be reviewing disclosure more than ever on the floor of our shows and will file grievances against Members who do



not properly adhere to our code of Ethics policy (which each of us has signed to and agreed to uphold as a requisite of continued Membership).

The Board will be presenting a revised Constitution and By-Laws to the Membership for approval within the next few months. In our revised Constitution Preamble we have stated that one of our new goals is to: “promote global fair trade practices for the supply chain.” We have to begin this process by assuring our own ethical practices. Then, by aligning ourselves with other responsible organizations within the international mining, cutting and manufacturing industries that are working towards these fair trade principles, we can begin to affect positive changes in our Trade – worldwide.

I have listed websites of some of the organizations I mentioned above. Check them out. Get involved. Every marketing study for our industry in the past year has shown that the 25-to 35-year old consumer is extremely interested in purchasing from “green” retailers.

These retailers will be shopping for dealers they can rely upon to be informed and trustworthy.

madisondialogue.org
communitymining.org
greengold-oroverde.org
casmsite.org
responsiblemining.net
rjp.org▲

Sincerely,

Barbara Lawrence

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Without argument 2008 has ushered in the end of a difficult year for the jewelry business and the first quarter has done little to lift people's projections for the remainder. We were very pleased with attendance figures at GemFair Tucson but then again, like most of our Members exhibiting there, we had conservative expectations. In all, the less than 5% drop in attendance was offset by the general sense that attendees were buying and that many of our Member's had a good show.

In slow times, you can't just sit back and wait for things to improve; you need to drive that improvement. The following are some of the areas that we are focusing on to improve the Association and to assist our Members in strengthening their businesses.

Clearly the more Members we bring into our Association the stronger and more vital we all become. New Retail Members are vital partners with our Wholesale Members. If I could identify one characteristic that makes a company a strong candidate for Membership is passion for the product. It is this visceral connection to colored gemstones that encourages our Members to support an organization that is constantly striving to improve the sphere of the colored gemstone business. But passion must be matched with practicality and Josh Garcia, our Membership Administrator, has been working diligently this year to improve our existing Member benefit programs as well as new offerings. At GemFair Tucson, Josh leveraged our improved and more competitive FedEx shipping program, credit card programs offered through Bank of America and our health benefits package from Association Health Programs, along with our existing benefits programs to attract over seventy new AGTA Members, bringing our new Membership enrollments to over 100 since the first of the year.

Our Retail and Manufacturing Members rely on a vibrant network of contacts for the gemstones and gemstone jewelry they need. Our new Member Source Directory, in both printed and electronic form, has been distributed to over 20,000 companies, and continues to be the most effective tool for our Wholesale Members to access a growing and more diverse client base. Our Retail

Members consistently remark that it is their most valuable tool in locating the products they need.

Mary Lou Keen, our Trade Show Manager, has just finished compiling the results of our post GemFair exhibitor and buyer surveys, which will be posted on our website. The comments we received are extremely helpful for the show committee and the staff to introduce improvements. Buyers continue to ask for a broad range of seminars, better food and a continued effort to bring new and exciting product from which to select. They also want to see a more consistent effort on the exhibitor's part to provide full and clear disclosure of gemstone treatments.

Our Exhibiting Members have expressed an interest in a shorter show or closing on Sunday. We are currently working with the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society, our contractual partners at the Tucson Convention Center, to see if we could implement some changes by the 2010 show. Our exhibitors have also encouraged us to develop stronger strategies to bring in more quality buyers; this will be one of our prime directives this year.

Consistently, our Retail Members have expressed their interest in a broader range of marketing materials to help them grow their businesses and educate both their staff and customers. To help us achieve this goal, we have added a new Marketing Manager. Many of you already know Adam Graham, from his tenure with the American Gem Society and Rapaport. Adam and the rest of the team at AGTA have already begun development and production of an expanded array of point of sale materials and educational tools to complement the gemcards, stock photography, posters and brochures.

He will also be upgrading the look and functionality of both our websites agta.org and addmorecolortoyourlife.com. He and Josh have just completed the design of our Spectrum Competition announcement which will be available at the Las Vegas JCK show. There are some exciting plans to help us celebrate the 25th anniversary of the competition. Be sure to stop by the booth and get the details.

Two new and exciting additions to our



AGTA GTC offerings were introduced this year, the JewelFolio™, an uber report that provides a gemstone client with a personalized volume of romance, historical profile and in-depth scientific testing data. Each JewelFolio™ is an individually prepared book unique to the gemstone submitted. Along with this unique service, the AGTA GTC also introduced the Tanzanite Grading Reports, comprehensive reports that express the quality of a tanzanite utilizing the Tanzanite Foundation's Quality Scale. Both of these new products provide our Members with the kinds of tools that can make or break a gemstone sales presentation. Stop by the booth and see these new offerings or visit agta-gtc.org.

To complement our existing world class gemological staff, we have hired a new Business Manager, Aashish (Ash) Shah. Ash will be focusing on improving communication with our clients, shortening turn around time and introducing our laboratory services to new customers. We know our clients perceive our reports as being the premier gemstone reports in the business, and we want the client experience with our lab to be equal to the product.

Stop by and introduce yourself at our booth in the JCK Las Vegas Show. If you are a Member and you've got ideas on how we can do a better job for you then let us know. If you're not a Member stop by the booth and let us show you how we can make you more money within minutes of joining our Association!▲

Sincerely,

AGTA ELECTS NEW BOARD

At the February 2008 AGTA Board of Directors meeting in Tucson, Arizona, five newly elected Members took office. Those positions included Vice President, Secretary and three Director positions. The new Board Members will serve three-year terms. "We are pleased to welcome the newly elected Board Members," said Douglas K. Hucker, CEO of the AGTA. "New ideas will continue to grow the Association, our Membership and Shows." The following officers and directors were elected:

Vice President - Robert Bentley

Robert Bentley Company, Inc.

Robert has served on the Board since 2004. "New outreach programs for membership and exciting promotional projects are underway. We look forward to advancing our goals in these areas."

Secretary - Betty Sue King

King's Ransom

Betty Sue has served on the Board for two consecutive terms. "As co-chair of the Membership Committee, my direction is to grow our membership and incorporate more benefits for our members. Together we can build and strengthen trust in the values of our organization as The Authority in Color™. My overall focus is to emphasize the importance of disclosure to all wholesalers, designers and retailers."

Director - Benjamin (BJ) Hackman

Intercolor, Inc.

BJ has served two previous terms on the Board of Directors. He realizes there has been a tremendous amount of change taking place within the colored gemstone trade. "My goal, serving on the Board, has always been to promote colored gemstones and thus improve the businesses of our fellow AGTA Members."

Director - Bill Larson

Pala International, Inc.

Bill has served on the Board of Directors in its early years. "I have loved colored gemstones

much of my life, and have committed to serve on the Board during a most interesting time for our industry. Treatments, environmental concerns and politics complicate an already difficult and complex business."

Director - Gerry Manning

Manning International, Inc.

Gerry has previously been on the Board of Directors. "Providing input regarding marketing tools, financial resources for developing consumer "pull" for our Members' products. Helping to create Pride of Membership in Retail Member organizations through meaningful benchmarks for top performers and proper recognition for up-and-coming performers who avail themselves of our Consumer Awareness programs, educational and marketing tools. Developing more effective tools for the above."

The newly elected members of the Board will join the current Officers and Directors who are serving terms: Barbara Lawrence of Boston Gems and Findings, Inc., President; Kambiz Sabouri of Gem 2000, Inc., Secretary; Sampat Poddar of Byrex Gems, Inc., Treasurer; Peter Bazar of Imperial-Deltah, Inc., Director; Eric Schwotzer of Penn Gem International, Director; Glenn Lehrer of Lehrer Designs, Director; Sushil Goyal of Liberty Gems, Inc., Director; John Bachman of John M. Bachman, Inc., Director; Joe Orlando of Stuller, Inc., Director; and Eric Braunwart of Columbia Gem House, Inc., Past President.

The AGTA Membership has passed a Constitutional Amendment that has changed the dates of the upcoming election cycle. The AGTA Election Newsletter will be mailed out August 10, 2008. Ballots will be counted on September 10, 2008. The newly elected Board Members will take office at the AGTA Board meeting in February 2009.

For more information about the election and the Board of Directors, visit www.agta.org. ▲



Robert Bentley



Betty Sue King



Benjamin Hackman



Bill Larson



Gerry Manning

AGTA GemFair™ TUCSON - THE WORLD'S PREMIER COLORED GEMSTONE EVENT

The 26th annual AGTA GemFair™ Tucson, once again lived up to its reputation as the world's finest industry showcase of natural colored gemstones, cultured pearls and designer jewelry. Only AGTA GemFair™ Tucson gives buyers access to the industry's leading companies where in just one week's time you can do a year's worth of business!

GemFair showcased the latest in natural colored gemstones and cultured pearls, products and trends, attracted retailers, manufacturers, media and buyers from around the globe. AGTA's Chief Executive Officer, Douglas K. Hucker announced final registration and exhibitor numbers for the 2008 AGTA GemFair™ Tucson show. At show close, AGTA reported a 6.2 percent increase in attending companies, totaling 5,496 companies representing 9,399 buyers. AGTA GemFair™ Tucson showcased 389 exhibitors. "While we did see a slight decline in buyers (4.8%), the quality of buyer was good and most exhibitors at the show did better than they expected. GemFair Tucson continues to be the most important venue for colored gemstones and cultured pearls in the world and most serious buyers know that it is a



must-attend event." said Hucker.

One major highlight at this year's show was the Colored Diamond Pavilion. Showcasing fancy colored diamonds in a range of colors and qualities, it was the newest addition to GemHall II. Buyers could choose from a vast selection of merchandise from reputable, ethical dealers.

AGTA GemFair™ Tucson also featured the Spectrum of Design Jewelry Pavilion. The Pavilion showcased the most creative and talented designers in the United States and Canada. The designers offered a wide range of creations, from classic to contemporary styles. Style-savvy retailers look to AGTA's

designers to anticipate "what's next" in colored gemstone jewelry design.

The AGTA was proud to announce the addition of the Stuller Learning Institute. The Institute held demonstrations that covered a variety of topics taught by highly-experienced jewelry masters. From Digital Photography to the Art of Engraving, demonstrations were held the entire week and were free to anyone wishing to attend.

To kick things off, the AGTA hosted the 12th Annual Coyote Classic Charity Golf Tournament on Monday, February 4th at the Canoa Ranch Golf Club. 56 brave golfers endured rain, sleet, snow and 30-mile an hour winds to benefit



Buyers on Opening Day



Niveet Nagpal, Salam Wakim and Omi Nagpal



Doug Hucker, Cecilia Gardner and Joseph DeCicco

the Special Olympics. The winning foursome included Bob Thompson, Jordan Schacht, Mike Bradford and Mike Mars. The AGTA raised over \$20,000 to benefit this worthwhile cause—exceeding last year's donation!

Nearly 400 people gathered on Saturday, February 9th for the AGTA Dinner Dance and Awards Gala. Sponsored by Jewelers Mutual Insurance and the Diamond Council of America, the show-stopping event was the talk of Tucson. Guests enjoyed fabulous food, cocktails and live entertainment from The Robert Street Band. The Gala honored the winners of the 2008 AGTA Spectrum Awards™ and Cutting Edge Competition. Winners were awarded one-of-a-kind hand-crafted trophies designed by Gessel Studios. For the first time, a video highlighted the AGTA Spectrum Awards™ media event and winners. Robert Kane and Fine Gems International sponsored the exciting video that helped showcase what the premiere colored gemstone and cultured pearl design competition is all about.

AGTA GemFair™ Tucson offered important educational seminars designed to help industry professionals looking for new and innovative strategies create opportunities for profit and growth in their businesses. The exciting line-

up of FREE seminars offered education at every level—from basic to advanced. The program proved very popular with participants, with packed rooms and Q & A sessions. Attendees had the opportunity to learn from and network with peers and colleagues, ask questions and take home useful and practical information they can put to use immediately. The 32 free seminars included practical bench techniques, effective sales and marketing strategies, financial management in today's economy and industry trends.

Mark your calendars to join us next year, February 4-9, 2009 for AGTA GemFair™ Tucson at the Tucson Convention Center in Tucson, Arizona. Information about the show is available on our website (www.agta.org) or by calling 800-879-6259.

For further information, please contact:

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Rudi Wobito, Ralph Wobito, Dalan Hargrave & Kathy Hargrave



Elise Misiorowski, Cindy Ramsey-Chandler & Terry Chandler



Campbell Graham, Richard Kremenz, Danielle Barber and David Moy



422.99 ct Logan Sapphire Brooch from Smithsonian National Gem Collection



Stuller Learning Institute

AGTA GTC & GEMWORLD INTERNATIONAL CO-HOST WORLD OF GEMS CONFERENCE

This September 13-14, Chicago will be the place to be for the inaugural World of Gems Conference. This important event is being co-hosted by two industry-leading organizations, the AGTA Gemological Testing Center and Gemworld International, Inc. The conference theme is "Integration of Information" and is being held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare.

The conference will cover colored gemstones, cultured pearls and diamonds, and will also touch on appraisal topics, though the focus will be on gemology. The tentative agenda has ruby, emerald and sapphire being covered the first day and pearl, diamond and appraising on day two. Attendees will not only learn valuable information on topics such as gem treatments, but will then be offered practical ideas that they can integrate into their daily business.

Identification, pricing, and disclosure will all be a part of the colored gemstone topics discussed. The pearl sessions will focus on treatments, retailing, varieties and pricing. In the diamond-related sessions, the topics will include identifying treatments and synthetics, pricing and cut and light performance.

Key gemological topics will be presented at this 2-day conference by some of the best in the industry and will have broad appeal to retailers, wholesalers and appraisers. The conference will be educational with a great opportunity for all attendees to network with industry leaders. Speakers include Dr. Lore Kiefert and Richard Hughes of the AGTA GTC and Richard Drucker and Stuart Robertson from Gemworld International, Inc. Other confirmed presenters include John Koivula from the Gemological Institute of America, Robert Kane, President, Fine Gems International, Gary Roskin, Senior Editor, *JCK Magazine*, Ronald Ringsrud, President, Ronald Ringsrud Co., Gina Latendresse, President, American Pearl Co., and Paul Shannon, President Diamond Technologies, Inc.

On Friday, September 12, the day preceding the conference, there will be several free sessions for attendees. Gemworld International and The Edge will be hosting free demonstrations of their GemGuide Appraisal Software and jewelry inventory software respectively. User Group meetings will be open to all. Gemvision CAD-CAM systems will also be hosting a technology session to be announced. These events will start between 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm so you may want to arrive early to attend these events.

On Monday, September 15, the AGTA GTC will present a full day, hands-on class on the latest developments in ruby and sapphire treatments. This session is \$800 per person and is limited to ten people. Contact Dr. Lore Kiefert directly at the AGTA GTC at 212-752-1717 to sign up for this session.

The conference will be a global event as participants have signed up from across the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany. The speakers and program agenda will be posted and updated on the website. For more details or to register for the conference, go to www.worldofgemsconference.com.

The conference is only \$395.00, which includes all educational sessions, breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday plus a cocktail reception. Members of the AGTA or subscribers to the GemGuide will receive a \$50.00 discount. The room rate at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare is \$135.00 per night if you mention World of Gems Conference at the time you book.

The AGTA GTC is a premier laboratory working in the fields of colored gemstone identification, treatment assessment and origin identification. They are celebrating their ten-year anniversary at this conference. Gemworld International, Inc. is the publisher of the GemGuide, providing gemstone pricing benchmarks to the industry since 1982. Gemworld has provided more than 200 educational seminars worldwide for other organizations. This is their first hosted event. ▲

SEPTEMBER 13 - 14, 2008

AGTA

GEMOLOGICAL TESTING CENTER



AGTA MAKES IT'S POSITION ON GSP KNOWN IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

AGTA's Board of Directors took a position in the first quarter of this year to oppose a proposal in the U.S. Congress to reinstate the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) provision for India and Thailand. These GSP provisions would have again allowed India and Thailand to export jewelry produced in their countries duty-free to the U.S. Both countries held this duty-free GSP provision for many years until it was revoked by the Bush administration about ten months ago, based on an analysis requested by Congress to determine the current need for these duty exemptions.

It is AGTA's position that India and Thailand's industries have grown to a level that surpasses the statutory requirement to qualify for GSP duty-free status. AGTA would be willing to look at a tariff agreement with no duty for either side, but as long as our trading partners continue to have duties restricting the importation of U.S. merchandise to their countries, the U.S. should continue to have it's duties of 5 1/2% to 7% stay

in place. AGTA was supported in this position by MJSA.

Both AGTA's and MJSA's position on GSP was presented and expressed in person to various Congressional delegations, House and Senate committees and the White House Office of Trade in meetings on April 22 and 23. All parties were happy to receive information in reference to the U.S. jewelry industry's concerns.

It is important to note that the products most AGTA Firm Members import, loose or uncut gemstones, are duty-free entering the U.S., no matter if a country is a GSP holder or not. These duties and GSP provisions only affect finished jewelry. The current status of duty of 5 1/2% to 7% on jewelry imports from India and Thailand (China already pays these duties) will help support our domestic U.S. manufacturing base. This base is comprised of many of our customers and AGTA Members. ▲

ASSOCIATION HEALTH PROGRAMS

AGTA is proud to partner with Association Health Programs to help combat the rising cost of health insurance. The following benefits are offered nationwide, and the programs include health, life, long-term care, accident, vision and dental insurance, cancer coverage, disability income, critical illness, and more!

Stuart Pase, President, and Certified Senior Advisor, encourages all AGTA Members to take advantage of these special benefits, protection, underwriting and pricing. AGTA Members will join the clients of AHP, which include over 150 national associations.

AGTA Members can take advantage of better insurance coverage at the lowest possible rates through a comprehensive health insurance program. Long-term care and life insurance are also being offered with savings up to 40%.

All national 'A' rated name brand insurance companies are available. Members can receive enhanced benefits for themselves, their families, and their employees-both full

and part-time! Programs are comprehensive, all-inclusive and include co-pays, choice of deductibles, routine care and prescription drug coverage and the new availability of Health Savings Accounts.

New comprehensive long-term care insurance includes home health care, assisted living and nursing home care. With the proper plan to meet your budget you will have money in the future to provide for services in your home and/or assisted living or nursing home care.

The program specializes in hard-to-insure high risk cases. As a Member benefit, we will compare your current rates and 95% of the time we guarantee better coverage and lower costs.

For a free evaluation of your current benefits, please contact:
 AGTA Association Health Programs
 12721 Metcalf Ave., Ste. 100
 Overland Park, KS 66213
 www.associationpros.com
 888-450-3040 ▲

SPECTRUM^{25th} AWARDS

For 25 years, the AGTA Spectrum Awards™ has been the premiere design and cutting competition for designers and lapidaries who work with colored gemstone and cultured pearls. Winning a Spectrum Award is considered one of the industry's most-esteemed honors, and winning designs often set the trends for seasons to come.

Design in Color

One of AGTA's biggest contributions in the promotion of color has come from its AGTA Spectrum Awards™ and Cutting Edge Award competitions, launched in 1984 and 1991, respectively. Spectrum recognizes the innovative use of gemstones and cultured pearls in finished fine jewelry design. Cutting Edge honors creativity in lapidary arts, including faceted gems, carvings and objects of art.

All AGTA Members and aspiring designers and lapidaries are urged to participate. Start now to be ahead of the September 26, 2008, entry deadline!

To celebrate the silver anniversary of the AGTA Spectrum Awards™, we are going PLATINUM! AGTA is pleased to partner again with the Platinum Guild International (PGI) to offer a Platinum Honors division.

"We are very pleased to have the Platinum Guild once again participate in the Spectrum Awards Competition," stated Douglas K. Hucker, AGTA CEO. "Many of our entrants enjoy working with platinum and this will provide an opportunity for increased recognition and exposure."

The competition will augment the existing categories with a Platinum Honors Division to be awarded in each. Categories will include Bridal Wear, Classical, Day Wear, Evening Wear, Men's Wear and Best Use of Platinum and Color. Winners of the Platinum Honors award in each category will receive a Platinum Honors trophy, to be presented at the annual AGTA dinner in Tucson 2009, along with individual value-added media and promotion packages, valued between \$8,000 - \$30,000, from Platinum Guild International.

In order for jewelry to be eligible, the piece must be 90% platinum not including the gemstones. The platinum must also meet ISO standards (900 or 950).

Also new for the 2009 competition will be the Best Use of Pearls.

AGTA Spectrum Awards™ categories include

Best Use of Show
Best Use of Color
Best Use of Pearls
Bridal Wear
Classical
Day Wear
Evening Wear
Men's Wear
Fashion Forward Honors

Manufacturing Honors

PGI Platinum Honors

Sponsored by the



Cutting Edge Awards categories include

Open Category

1. Classic gemstone
2. All other faceted gemstones
3. Phenomenal gemstones

Pairs & Suites

Faceting

Carving

Combination

Objects of Art

Set the Standard

Winners set the standards of excellence in the industry and create the trends of tomorrow.

Rewards

Entering the AGTA Spectrum Awards™ offers maximum exposure for entrants and winners.

Designers and lapidaries have the unique opportunity to have their entry viewed at a media event by the nation's top editors of trade and consumer magazines, fashion stylists and costume designers. In addition, all entries are featured on www.agta.org.

Winners are recognized for their innovative and trend-setting designs in the leading trade publications. The AGTA submits model cover shots that are featured in the January and February issues. There will be article and feature coverage for the prize-winning designs in magazines and newspapers. Event updates, photographs and press releases are sent to media.

Winning designs are spotlighted on the American Gem Trade Association's websites: www.agta.org and www.addmorecolortoyourlife.com.

All AGTA Spectrum Awards™ winning pieces are showcased at AGTA GemFair™ Tucson, giving winners exposure to thousands of potential customers.

Gessell Studios designs and hand-crafts the AGTA Spectrum trophies. Polly Gessell sculpts the awards in a unique style by combining sand-blasting with carved-glass techniques. This is the only competition of its kind where winners are honored with one-of-a-kind works of art.

The AGTA Dinner Dance and Awards Gala will honor the winners of the 2009 AGTA Spectrum Awards™. The elaborate presentation is always the talk of Tucson and is open to all attendees and exhibitors.

Judging

Spectrum Award winners will be selected by distinguished members of the industry. Entries are judged on criteria which include overall beauty and wearability, innovative design, effective use of materials, quality of gemstones, quality of workmanship, broad-base consumer appeal and potential to generate positive publicity for natural colored gemstones and cultured pearls.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all individuals living in the United States and Canada. You do not have to be a Member of the AGTA to enter. Any jewelry produced after October 2007, and not previously entered into an AGTA Spectrum Awards™ competition, may be entered. Entries must be finished pieces; no drawings will be accepted.

Enter Now

Entries due September 26, 2008.

New York City Drop-Off Program

Any entrant can hand deliver his or her competition pieces in person at the AGTA GTC. Entry forms and payment must be submitted to the AGTA's Dallas office by September 26, 2008. Please note, if you utilize the New York Drop-Off Program, you will also be required to pick it up at this location. Date to follow, no exceptions.

Consider becoming part of history and help AGTA celebrate the 25th Anniversary of this prestigious event. For more details, please go to www.agta.org.▲

FALL BACK INTO COLOR



By Deborah Yonick

Eager for summer to arrive, most of us are not looking that far ahead to what will be on our got-to-get list for fall 2008. But those who attended the mega marathon of runway shows from New York to London, Milan to Paris in February and March wished the fashions previewed were available now for whatever remnants of cold weather lingers.

Unlike the moody palette of the fall-winter season we're leaving behind the one we have to look forward to is characterized by rich, elegant hues. In fact, color is one of the two central themes in apparel for the season, marked by strong jewel tones against neutral backgrounds.

This fall, it's all about sharp contrasts: fragility with strength, sexy with sweet, masculine with feminine. The look is more sophisticated, not overtly girly, and less drapery, more structured. Dresses remain important, but look newest in a sheath shape or lengths to or below the knee. But the emphasis is on easy, modern separates, particularly jackets, which can be worn in different ways. The add-on factor of separates presents more choices and means of expression for the incurably fashionable, as well as "seasonless" dressing in the fine art of layering. Conventional tones like warm autumn hues, chocolate browns and steel grays work well with cooler, crisper blues, greens and purples, which were among the top five colors used by designers showing in New York, followed by variations of warm red, orange and

yellow. In Europe, many of the color choices, while similar to those spied in New York, looked more revved up in neon sorbet shades, flame red, deep indigo, magenta, aubergine, fuchsia, vivid peacock, emerald green, teal, chartreuse, bright clementine, and zingy marigold.

Staple shades in the fall wardrobe are blues and purples, as illustrated by "Blue Iris" a balanced blue with purple undertones hailed the "Color of the Year" by the Pantone Color Institute. Also listed in Pantone's top 10 are dramatic lilac with red undertones; serene yet sophisticated Caribbean blue; classic navy warmed with red; shady glade sans yellow undercurrents; true, rich red; soft rose with hints of pink and brown; ochre in a mellow yellow with a dash of mustard; burnt orange with a touch of purple; and mushroom that's not quite gray or brown or green.

Factors such as the presidential elections, environmental concerns, technological advances, and globalization influence these color directions, explains Jaime Stephens, executive director of the Color Marketing Group based in Alexandria, Virginia. "Blue, the 'trust me' color continues to show up on the campaign trail this election year. Blue also is inspired by environmentalism, as well as green. The eco push is undoubtedly fueling demand for items that look natural, such as materials that appear handmade, un-dyed, unbleached, and

naturally imperfect."

Globalization continues to inspire a love for ethnic accent colors, particularly from India, China and Latin America, says Stephens. "To Moroccan reds and glowing oranges, add rosy pinks, sunny golden yellows, and lots of turquoise. In fashion, these ethnic accents show up as 'punch' colors often paired with neutrals like rich browns." Moreover, she hails shimmery, specialized finishes as popular, with metallics shifting more toward warmer tones.

The second key trend for fall is embellishment. From gem covered skirts to crystal encrusted necklines, and beading, fringing and chain mail, apparel that has its own adornment built in needs little in the way of jewels to accessorize. However, this direction also inspires demand for gemmy jewels, especially when paired with apparel lacking ornamentation.

Showing in Milan, Burberry adorned its collection revealing tomboyish charm with huge gem-covered necklaces. Marni in Milan dressed its playful yet elegant line with large bead necklaces in geometric shapes. In New York, Badgley Mischka accessorized its line in collaboration with fine jewelry designer Steven Zale of Zalemark,



including an exquisite ruby cabochon oval drop necklace in gold and diamonds set against a simple black silk dress with boots. Zalemark, with fashion's design duo, is developing a two-tier Couture and Bridal line under the Badgley Mischka label, which will hit stores this fall.

Fashion designer Naeem Khan also teamed up with New York jewelry designer Kara Ross, debuting her new boutique line during Fashion Week. Known for her gem-set fine jewelry in 18K gold, Ross' new line brings more affordable prices in big, bold looks set with gems like malachite, tiger's eye and amethyst in a gold and rhodium plated base. Highlights spotted on the runway include large petal rings and cabochon gem cuff bracelets. While L.A. fashion designer Catherine Malandrino in New York debuted her first jewelry collection of raw minerals and gems like jade, aventurine, tiger's eye, and agate with enamel and silver.

Popular fall fashion colors echo the gems destined to be winners for the season like emerald, ruby, sapphire, amethyst, turquoise, garnet, jade, and

aquamarine. Fine jewelry must have include big, bold cocktail rings, gem-encrusted bracelets, large pendants that resemble medallions, statement necklaces, and brooches that can be worn as a belt buckle, button, or appliqué-like embellishment. As in fashion, layering remains an important look in necklaces and bracelets, especially when different textures, finishes, materials and colors are mixed together.

While taping during the New York shows, Finola Hughes, host of the Style Network's "How Do I Look?" says she sees the market entering a time of jewelry with greater personal meaning, canonizing items like gold charms, ethnic pieces, and vintage designs. "It's very much about personal style and expressing what makes you unique," she says. "In a world where products are turned out in mass quantities, people want to embrace things that speak to them and who they are."

This connection distinguishes jewelry

purchases from other accessory acquisitions. Okay, who doesn't love shoes and handbags? But they don't carry the same emotional cachet (or lasting value) as fine jewelry does.

Fine jewelry can creatively enhance your personal style, without ever wearing out or going out of style. So, buy a few key fashion separates this fall. But remember, the smartest way to update your wardrobe is to invest in gem-set jewels that can effortlessly transform any outfit into something spectacular and one-of-a-kind—like you!

To see some of the seasons hottest looks log onto www.addmorecolor toyourlife.com. ▲

Image courtesy of Akiva Gil

AGTA & TANZANITE FOUNDATION ESTABLISH AGTA TANZANITE FUND

The AGTA and the Tanzanite Foundation have established the AGTA Tanzanite Fund, a Tanzanian relief fund to support those affected by the recent disaster in the Merelani area of Tanzania, Africa.

Merelani located in Northern Tanzania experienced severe rainfall over several days and as a result has caused flooding disasters in the tanzanite mining area. This area is divided up into four blocks – A, B, C and D. TanzaniteOne operates Block C in world-leading safe and ethical mining conditions. No employees of TanzaniteOne have been injured or trapped in these floods. 75 casualties have been reported and thousands have been displaced from their homes.

TanzaniteOne has been responsible for spearheading the recovery and rescue operations in conjunction with Barrick, Africa and assisting the government and the Tanzanians to rectify the situation. Tanzanite Foundation Members and TanzaniteOne were the first to make large sum donations. Funds will be distributed in various ways. The main focus will be on immediate relief and assistance to the families, as well as future projects. Furthermore, strategies and infrastructure encompassing safety measures will be implemented in order to

attempt to prevent such a tragedy from occurring again.

The AGTA and the Tanzanite Foundation sincerely thank you in advance for your generosity. Please note that all donations will be acknowledged with an invoice. 100% of the funds donated will be used for this worthy cause.

Checks can be made out to AGTA Tanzanite Fund and sent to the Tanzanite Foundation:
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For further information, please contact Hayley Henning at the Tanzanite Foundation 212-575-3020 or via email at hayley@tanzanitefoundation.org. ▲

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JA is a strong show serving the independent jeweler and the northeast market with over 13,000 buyers in attendance representing over 3,200 stores. Sponsored by the largest jewelry retail association, Jewelers of America, this show has the unique advantage of being located in New York, the jewelry capital of the world, and home to the majority of U.S.-based manufacturers, retailers and diamond dealers. In addition, colored gemstones and cultured pearls are an important segment of the market—attendees are looking to source at the JA New York Summer Show.

There are many reasons our Members exhibit at the JA New York Summer Show year after year, and you can join them

today. There is still room for AGTA gemstone, cultured pearl dealers and manufacturers of fine gemstone jewelry to exhibit in the AGTA Pavilion at the JA New York Summer Show, July 27 - 30, 2008.

All AGTA Firm Members are encouraged to reserve a booth today! The show booth package includes a hard-wall booth shell, carpeting and company sign for a secure and professional look.

Contact Mary Lou Keen, Trade Show Manager at 800-972-1162. ▲

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