

### EDITORS

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### Diamond Ring Buying Guide, 6th Ed.

By Renée Newman, 160 pp., illus., publ. by International Jewelry Publications, Los Angeles, CA, 2002. US\$17.95\*

This is another fine update in a series of books that are useful to both the jewelry industry and consumers. This sixth edition is current on recent changes in the diamond industry, particularly in its discussion of diamond treatments. It provides explanations of HPHT, fracture filling, laser drilling, coatings, and irradiation, with information on how to detect them.

Chapter 6, "Judging Cut Quality," deals with the thorniest issue in the diamond world in a nontechnical fashion. With generous photo examples, one can easily view the differences between a good cut and an inexact cut. A comparison of the AGS, GIA, and HRD proportion-grading standards illustrates the dilemma created by the lack of a unified standard. However, the chapter ends with a very practical section on "Judging Cut with the Eye Instead of with Numbers."

Newman makes the gemological data easy to understand for novice and veteran alike. The terminology is not confusing, but rather clear and concise, with a writing style that is spare and factual. This book could be used as a training manual for your sales staff, or as a gift for those favored and inquisitive customers.

For the consumer, everything is there, so that the book serves as a checklist for the purchase, mounting, and care of a diamond. The photos are excellent, and there are plenty of

uncomplicated illustrations to drive home the verbal points. *The Diamond Ring Buying Guide* is an entire course on judging diamonds in 156 pages of well-organized information.

GAIL BRETT LEVINE  
Publisher, Auction Market Resource  
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### Tiaras: Past and Present

By Geoffrey Munn, 128 pp., illus., publ. by V&A Publications, London, 2002. US\$22.50\*

Today when you think jewelry, you rarely think "tiara." But as Geoffrey Munn points out in this excellent book, for much of history tiaras have been essential parts of jewelry ensembles for women of wealth. Since the development of the art of goldsmithing in ancient times, writes Munn, tiaras have been associated with "privilege and ostentation."

In this exceptionally well-illustrated work, Munn follows the history of tiaras, starting with early Greek and Roman use of flower and leaf head wreaths, through the incorporation of tiaras into the traditional costume of Russian women and their use as the traditional adornment of brides. Tiaras were embraced by European nobility in the 18th and 19th centuries, and were the mark of married women at society functions. Although the use of tiaras fell by the wayside in the more casual and democratic 20th century, modern designers are reintroducing the tiara with a contemporary flair and unusual materials.

Keith Davey's superb photos clearly show the workmanship, design, and

gemstones of these remarkable pieces. The tiara photos are complemented by remarkable portraits, ancient and modern, of the owners wearing their pieces, as well as by original renderings of tiaras produced by well-known jewelry houses such as Boucheron, E. Wolff & Company, and Fabergé.

One has to go to great lengths to find anything even mildly critical to say about *Tiaras: Past and Present*. The only passage I found slow in this immensely readable and fascinating book was the complex and somewhat confusing (to an American) enumeration of which tiaras were owned by which members of the British and European royalty in the 20th century (in the chapter "At Court"). However, such a listing is invaluable to jewelry historians researching specific pieces. And the stories about these individual women, often found in the picture captions, are delightful.

As Munn shows, tiaras are a window into cultural history, and they act as a lens through which we see the development of jewelry art itself. *Tiaras: Past and Present* is a worthwhile addition to the libraries of art and jewelry historians for its personal sketches and documentation of many pieces. It is also sure to fascinate jewelers and gemologists with breathtaking designs and gemstones. Taken all

*\*This book is available for purchase through the GIA Bookstore, 5345 Armada Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92008. Telephone: (800) 421-7250, ext. 4200; outside the U.S. (760) 603-4200. Fax: (760) 603-4266.*

together, the book creates in the reader a true appreciation of what Munn calls the "noblest and most flattering of jewels."

SHARON ELAINE THOMPSON  
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### **Diamond Stories: Enduring Change on 47th Street**

*By Renee Rose Shield, 234 pp., illus., publ. by Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2002. US\$29.95*

The author, an accomplished cultural anthropologist, is a niece and cousin of several New York diamantaires. In researching this book, she spent more than 14 years talking with diamond people in their offices and in the New York Diamond Dealers Club. The result is an intimate and very personal look at the closed world of the Jewish diamond brokers, from the philosophical humor that peppers much of their conversation to the ways in which the strict religious practices of the ultra-orthodox and Hasidim are integrated into their business dealings.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first four describe in detail the business world of the brokers, who generally act as go-betweens for large manufacturers and dealers. There is a highly competitive arena—many subsist on small commissions for each transaction—filled with rituals, customs, and rules.

In this first part, the author attempts to establish the perspective of New York Jewish life and the city's thriving diamond community within the diamond industry as a whole. The author offers a brief history of the diamond industry, a now somewhat out-of-date discussion of De Beers's role, and a look at key issues that affect the diamond market, including a brief review of the conflict diamond issues, balanced with a discussion of the prosperity that diamonds bring to some countries.

The author then discusses the atmosphere in the DDC and the dealers' offices, often through her personal experiences with family members in the business. She uses a number of

anecdotes and vignettes to demonstrate how traders look at diamonds and deal with one another as well as with a female "stranger" in their midst. She uses fictitious names to preserve her subjects' privacy.

The middle of the book offers a detailed look at diamond trading rules and customs, from the haggling over price to the sealing of the diamond in a cachet (small envelope) until the buyer says "Mahzal" and offers his handshake. Within this simple procedure are time-honored rules. One cannot, for example, show the diamond to another buyer after it has been "cached." One broker was roundly criticized for his practice of making high counteroffers to one dealer, then turning around and selling to someone else for a much lower premium before the first buyer actually refused the deal.

The author discusses in detail how GIA diamond grading reports and the *Rapaport Report* price lists have revolutionized the industry. As might be expected, the "old guard" brokers complained that price lists and "certs" have removed the human factor from the diamond business, but the author makes the counter-argument that they have helped level the playing field and broaden consumer confidence, such that sales are probably higher as a result.

The final part of the book discusses the changes taking place in the New York industry: Women are making slow inroads into the diamond trade, and the network of orthodox and Hasidic brokers is declining as a majority of the business now goes to big players who rarely use the DDC or brokers. Change comes slowly inside the club, partly because so many elderly members do not want to retire. One dealer in his nineties, who still visited the club every day, told the author that he did not want "to become bored or lazy" and still loved his work after all the years.

The author does tend to bound abruptly from subject to subject, making the book difficult to follow at times. Moreover, it is in a netherworld between an academic anthropological

study and a book written for a popular audience. The author does expressly state the boundaries of her study (the ultraorthodox Jews and Hasidim for whom the DDC is a center of their business life), but it seems that a book on New York's diamond community that is intended for a general audience should at least acknowledge the large number of Indian dealers and the growing number of Asians who have become integral to the industry.

Nevertheless, *Diamond Stories* is the best view of the cloistered world of New York's Jewish diamond community that anyone has ever set down in print. The author captures the trading environment, the negotiation rituals, and the sardonic wit and "folklore" with a sympathetic insider's view and without the stereotypes and clichés to which others have fallen prey. Throughout the book, she relates how diamond dealers admonished her to "get the tone right." That she has done very well.

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### **Perlen**

*By Elisabeth Strack, 696 pp., illus., publ. by Rühle-Diebener-Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany, 2000 (in German). €66.00*

Originally published in 1982, with this revised and updated edition *Perlen* has grown into one of the most comprehensive textbooks on pearls. The first half of the book is devoted to an in-depth discussion of the occurrences, formation, distribution, and evaluation of natural pearls. The opening chapters cover the history of the pearl and the important role it has played throughout the centuries. The next chapters provide an extensive review of the taxonomy and biology of all pearl-forming mollusks and their occurrences (organized by region). These are followed by a description of the physical and optical properties of pearls and their evaluation on today's market. A complete account of the most famous pearls concludes the first part of the book.

The second part starts with a detailed history of the culturing process. Over the course of the next 12 chapters, the author elaborates with the same thoroughness on cultured pearls, assembled cultured pearls, and imitation pearls. Again, occurrences, formation, evaluation, and distribution are discussed by region. A brief chapter focuses on the physical and optical properties of cultured pearls, followed by a description of the countless imitation pearls. The remaining chapters deal with the various techniques developed to identify the different types of pearls encountered on today's market. A chapter on the care of pearls concludes the book.

The comprehensive bibliography at the end of each chapter further underscores the value of this publication. This new edition represents a major contribution to the literature on pearls and is essential in any gemological library. Although written in German, an English language version will be available in the near future.

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### **Diamonds: In the Heart of the Earth, in the Heart of Stars, at the Heart of Power**

*By Hubert Bari and Violaine Sautter, Eds., 351 pp., illus., publ. by Vilo International, Éditions Adam Biro, Paris, 2001. US\$60.00*

To understand diamonds is to understand the structure and history of the Earth itself. That premise is the cornerstone for this book.

The 2001 exhibit for which this served as a catalogue debuted at the French National History Museum in Paris, itself a monument to mineralogy. The book's 15 contributors reflect the museum's scholarly tradition across a range of disciplines that includes archivists, curators, gemologists, geologists, historians, academics, and researchers from astrophysics to industrial diamond science.

The book succeeds in capturing the enormous, perhaps unequalled,

scope of the exhibit. Whether culled from ancient civilizations, modern-day sirens, or meteoric dust, the beautifully portrayed diamonds in this book mark and illuminate the global history of rulers, adventurers, art, science, religion, human passions—and of the Earth itself.

Chapters are organized to reflect the many lives of diamonds, from jewels to tools and from the reaches of intergalactic space to the depths of diamond mines and the Earth's core. A few technical chapters deliver concise synopses of topics such as diamond grading, synthetics, and the evolution of diamond cuts. Other chapters explore diamond's sacred nature in the world's religions, magnificently illustrated by a treasure trove of rare manuscripts, religious texts, and lapidaries. Diamond's regal stature at the heart of power is examined in chapters that chronicle the gem's unique role in civilizations around the world and across centuries, best illustrated in the accounts of the diamonds of maharajahs, mughals, and monarchs.

Crisp, high-quality photographs deliver a visual feast of famed as well as rarely seen gems, along with precious artifacts such as a handwritten copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, one of the most important texts in Buddhism. De Beers's contributions include important photodocumentation of the history of modern mining as well as the company's collection of unusual crystals. Artful photographic images of some of the world's most revered diamonds are accompanied by enlightening text and a refreshingly unencumbered layout. Color is used tastefully and with striking fidelity to the gems still sparkling in this reviewer's memory. Where appropriate, superb diagrams, tables, and renderings provide further explication and add visual interest for the reader.

In addition to featuring an unprecedented collection of many of the most important diamonds in history, *Diamonds* provides a rare glimpse of some of the most dazzling jewelry ever created. Beyond the gathering of such major jewels as the Incomparable, the Star of South Africa, the Nassak, both

Sancys, and the uncut Dutoitspan, readers are treated to seldom-seen pieces from the houses of Mouawad, Tiffany, and Cartier. A sampling of these other notables includes the 69.68 ct Excelsior I, set in a fabulous bracelet, and the 287.42 ct Tiffany diamond crowned by a Schlumberger setting. Contemporary masterpieces, if somewhat whimsical, include Cartier alligator brooches and a pair of Cartier diamond-and-rock-crystal bracelets worn by Gloria Swanson.

Michael Hing's translation is competent, if occasionally quaint. The very minor stylistic deficiencies seen with multi-authored books—the staccato-like flow of an occasional chapter, an author's excessive fondness for exclamation—are quibbles beneath the book's ambitious scope and triumphs. Although limited to 50 terms, the glossary still manages to capture the essence of diamond. Lacking an index (the book's single noteworthy flaw), the reader has no choice but to rediscover the exhibit's magic by flipping one breathtaking page after another.

For any jeweler, historian, gemologist, or diamond devotee, this affordably priced catalogue will provide a lasting treasure from which to learn and savor the wonder and magnificence that is diamond.

MATILDE PARENTE, G.G.

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### **The Jewels of Jean Schlumberger**

*By Chantal Bizot, Marie-Noël De Gary, and Évelyne Possémé, translated by Alexandra Bonfante-Warren, 157 pp., illus., publ. by Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2001. US\$39.95\**

Originally published in French, this book served as the catalogue for the 1995–1996 exhibit "A Diamond in the City, Jean Schlumberger 1907–1987, Jewelry and Objects," which was held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. The book also serves as a visual testament to the creative genius of one of the 20th century's greatest jewelry designers.

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Schlumberger's designs were often inspired by flora and fauna, which is evident in the many photographs and original design sketches printed throughout the book. The first nine chapters divide Schlumberger's work into loose categories such as "Sea," which features fanciful sea creatures; "Flowers and Fruit," which highlights jewelry and other objects inspired by plant life; and "Wings," which features brooches of feathers and wings. Light on text, these chapters are a delight to flip through. Each page leaves the reader wondering what wonderful jewel or object of great beauty lies on the next. Most of the items featured were created during Schlumberger's long and illustrious tenure with Tiffany & Co.

Following these chapters are three sections, each written by one of the three authors, in which the author gives her own interpretation of Schlumberger's designs and some insight into his inspirations and influences. The book finishes with a chronology of Schlumberger's life, a catalogue of the exhibit, and a bibliography. Beautiful and satisfying, this book is a "must have" for anyone who appreciates creative and fanciful design.

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## OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

**Glossary of Obsolete Mineral Names.**  
*By Peter Bayliss, 235 pp., publ. by The Mineralogical Record Inc., Tucson, AZ, 2000. US\$32.00.* Three years ago, Dr. Anthony Kampf published a glowing review of J. de Fourestier's *Glossary of Mineral Synonyms (Gems & Gemology*, Summer 1999, pp. 158–159), referring to it as "an essential reference." He pointed out that this compilation of about 35,000

entries of mineral and gem synonyms, variety names, names for synthetics, and trade terms that have been used throughout history was a marvelous resource for collectors, curators, researchers, and others in the gem trade. Now available is another extremely valuable book, which covers the same ground with approximately 32,000 entries.

Professor Bayliss's book (like de Fourestier's) is based on strict adherence to the rules of modern mineralogical nomenclature, which allow only one name to be applied to a mineral species; variations based on color, or physical or chemical properties, are relegated to "obsolete" status. Therefore, the "obsolete" terms *ruby*, *sapphire*, *amethyst*, *rubellite*, *hyacinth*, and a great number of other common and rare gemological terms, which have been placed in the mineralogical rubbish bin, are included here. This volume, in contrast to that of de Fourestier, gives a reference for every entry, which is of great value for those desiring to research a term further.

A very detailed comparison of both books by Dr. J. A. Mandarino (*Canadian Mineralogist*, Vol. 38, 2000, pp. 768–771) showed that there are differences in the categorization of some obsolete terms by the two authors, and, not unexpectedly given the magnitude of these compilations, certain rare terms are found in one but not in the other. In agreement with Dr. Mandarino, I recommend both glossaries to gemologists. Fortunately, both are very reasonably priced. Considering the staggering effort that goes into such compilations, it is extremely unlikely that another competitor will surface within the next few decades and render the present glossaries obsolete.

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## MEDIA REVIEW

### Modern Gemmology, SSEF Tutorials 1 & 2

*By SSEF Swiss Gemmological Institute, www.ssef.ch, Basel, Switzerland, 2001. Available in PC or Mac format. US \$150 each/\$250 for both.*

These two CD-ROM tutorials contain a wide and interesting variety of topics from diamond grading to synthetic gems. The first CD contains four separate presentations: (1) natural, synthetic, and imitation diamonds and diamond treatments; (2) the identification of emerald treatments; (3) pearls; and (4) ruby. The second CD continues with presentations on four different topics: (1) synthetic gem materials, (2) diamond grading at the SSEF Swiss Gemmological Institute, (3) gem treatments, and (4) determination of locality of origin for corundum.

The information on the CDs is presented in slideshow form, with still images and accompanying text. Especially interesting for this reviewer was the ruby discussion on the first CD, which goes into considerable depth on the process of "healing" fissures and fractures with heat treatment. Macro- and microphotographs supplement the information in both tutorials.

Individuals using the GIA Diamond Grading system should keep in mind that the diamond grading system discussed on the second CD is that of CIBJO, so there are noticeable differences in terminology and technique. A few grammatical errors are present in both CDs, but they are not distracting and they do not interfere with the delivery of information. Both of these tutorials contain information that is timely and useful for the gemologist.

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