

### Greg goes bronze

Since 2005 the Lord Mayor's commendations acknowledge and celebrate the long-term commitment of independent small business proprietors to the City of Melbourne municipality.

Greg John was invited to join Abrecht Bird Jewellers as a partner in 2000 and was honoured with a bronze award at the Melbourne Town Hall on Wednesday 1 October 2014.

His story follows on page 4.



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### JAA Design Award

Honouring the best emerging as well as established jewellers, the Jewellers Association of Australia Awards recognise individuals with the highest levels of artistic creativity and excellence of quality and style.

Abrecht Bird Jewellers Jarrad McErlain and Eleanor Hawke were proud to be given the opportunity to enter and both produced outstanding pieces of work. Jarrad's 'Fleur Navire' (flower vessel), a handcrafted bride bouquet vessel in sterling silver, caught the eye of the judges and was a finalist in the award. In Jarrad's words: 'I wanted to create something for a traditional wedding, but perhaps not for the traditional bride. I did not want to create something overstated, but rather a piece that accentuated the beauty of the bride.'



Eleanor entered the Apprentice and Student Design and Craftsmanship Award with a stunning pair of earrings. The design was a tribute to her outstanding talent, requiring hours of meticulous and complex saw piercing.

Jarrad, and our master jeweller, Greg John, travelled to Sydney for the awards presentation night held in conjunction with the JAA trade fair – while there, Jarrad represented our company with great distinction, taking to the stage at a 'meet the designer' forum.

The two outstanding designs are now on display in our showroom.

Visit our website and click on the JAA Awards link to witness a showcase of Australian talent.



## Gemmology Corner

### Sapphire mining in Australia

In the 1850s sapphires were discovered in the New England district of northern New South Wales by prospectors looking for gold and tin, but despite the vast resources, commercial production did not take place for another 60 years. Central Queensland deposits were discovered in the 1890s. Later a third location at Lava Plains, a remote and inhospitable field in the dry inland of Northern Queensland, produced significant quantities from the 1980s until worked to exhaustion in 1993.

*'...from the 1970s until the early '90s, Australia produced an estimated 70% of the world's sapphires.'*

These areas were prolific – in fact, from the 1970s until the early '90s, Australia produced an estimated 70% of the world's sapphires.

However, like much of Australia's vast mineral wealth, the resource was almost 'given away' with no 'value adding' domestically. Typically, miners were individuals, small syndicates or companies who showed little interest in uniting to achieve fair prices. Greg John lived and worked as a jeweller in the gemfields location of Emerald in Central Queensland in the late 1980s. He recalls how Thai buyers would come to town and 'set up shop' on the gemfields in makeshift huts (away from the prying eyes of the tax man). They would be visited by a string of local miners who universally complained about being on the losing end of the haggling process. Greg has memories of seeing literally tons of rough sapphire leaving the area in drums destined for the cutting centres of Bangkok and Chantaburi.

Furthermore, for several decades the recognition of Australia's top colour sapphire was concealed by many traders in an effort to control the supply and price of the gems. As a result, the best Australian material was often sold as 'Ceylon' or 'Thai' origin and this obscured the very high quality and outstanding colour range of our local stones. Only the lower, darker grades were 'labelled' as Australian.



The result? Local gem merchants report that until very recently, aside from a few fossickers, there was almost no one mining Australian sapphires anymore. Our recent experience bears this out – it is very difficult now to obtain Australian material – a far cry from the abundance of years gone by.

However, in 'late' breaking (and more optimistic) news – a major mining operation has set up in the past six months on a new lease at the bottom of King's Plains – between Inverell and Glen Innes. This is a rich deposit with mining previously denied by the landowner. Mind you, all production is currently sold to Thai and Chinese buyers as 'mine run'. Fine selected rough is not available to local gem cutters.

In the Central Queensland fields it is rumoured that a company (publicly listed on the London stock exchange) has taken up extensive leases.

*Leon Corn*  
FGAA Dip DT

## New Releases



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## Coloured Diamond News

A 13-carat vivid blue diamond, 'The Blue', has been purchased by American jewellery retailer Harry Winston for a record US\$23.8m. The diamond has been described as absolutely pure externally and internally.



The Australian Argyle diamond mine produces more than 90% of the world's pink diamonds. The very best of these are sold by Rio Tinto at the Argyle Pink Diamond Tender. This year celebrates the 30th anniversary of the tender and 51 pink and purplish red and 4 fancy red diamonds were offered for sale with the secret bidding process closing on 8 October 2014.

The hero of the 2014 collection is a spectacular 1.21-carat, radiant cut, fancy red diamond named 'Argyle Cardinal'.

We have witnessed sustained demand and dramatic price growth for Argyle pink diamonds over past decades. Although Rio Tinto extended the life of its Argyle mine by moving from the original open cut to underground mining, the resource is expected to be exhausted by 2020.

*Peter Bird*  
FGAA



*Exciting new wedding ring designs for men!*

***Pictured page 2 and below, left to right:***

- 1.** 18 carat yellow and white gold pink sapphire and diamond ring \$5,690
- 2.** 18 carat white gold solitaire diamond ring (0.70ct) \$3,700
- 3.** 18 carat white gold sapphire and diamond drop earrings POA
- 4.** 18 carat white gold diamond ring (12 = 0.33ct) \$1,345
- 5.** 18 carat white gold diamond cluster ring (TDW: 0.70ct) \$2,340
- 6.** 14 carat white and rose gold diamond earrings (TDW: 0.86ct) \$2,710
- 7.** 18 carat white gold solitaire diamond ring (1.05ct) \$9,900
- 8.** 9 carat yellow and white gold aquamarine and diamond ring \$1,030
- 9.** 18 carat white gold multi-diamond ring (1.00ct centre) \$11,300
- 10.** 18 carat white gold topaz and diamond ring \$1,195



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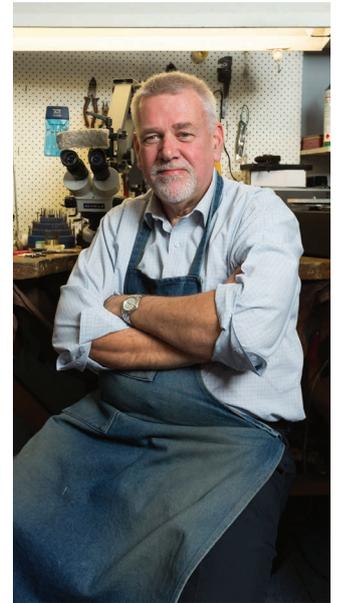


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# Form and function in perfect harmony



*'I consider myself a designer/stylist, using logic and common sense combined with the beauty and aesthetic of Nature to inspire all my creations, be they in precious metals, wood, photography, graphics or music.'*



Music came first, joining my father at the Mordialloc City Band at the age of 4½. I still have instruments all over the house and a small digital recording/photographic studio. I cannot imagine life without harmony.

Growing up on the edge of Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, was the catalyst for a life-long love of water: being on it, under it, or at the very least, near it. Sailing and ocean racing was a passion affording me 5 years in adventure land as foredeck/mastman aboard John Lake's 52-ft racing yacht 'Flying Colours' ... fantastic!

In my early teens I began designing graphic schemes for racing cars, as well as providing illustrations for international magazine articles and books for an author friend, resulting in my apprenticeship in jewellery in 1970.

In those 45 years I have applied my craft in studio workshops from Melbourne to Central Queensland, experiencing along the way the thrill of training new craftspeople through apprenticeships and developing new skills to enable me to stay at the forefront of all methods of production.

I have had the wonderful opportunity to open two retail shops, one in Bentleigh, the other in the beautiful bayside city of Mornington, specialising in hand makes and remodelling, with operational workshops visible from the retail floor.

Establishing and running the workshop studio in the Makers Mark Gallery in Collins Street Melbourne gave me exposure to many of our wonderful Australian artists and their approach to design. I consider myself fortunate to have worked for and alongside many inspirational craftsmen and women, including Bernard Jackson (in my opinion one of the most brilliant and creative artists in precious materials).

For the last 14 years I have been a partner, the principal designer and master craftsman for Abrecht Bird Jewellers. Having been able to use my passion for design has always been easy because I enjoy what I do. I can never really see myself ever 'retiring'. There will always be ANOTHER design or idea just waiting to be created.

*Greg John*  
FGAA Dip DT



# Destined for greatness

What a year it has been for Eleanor Hawke! Following on from winning the 2013 Regional Worldskills Trade Olympics, Eleanor has also taken out 'Apprentice of the Year'. We are all very proud of her achievements. Well done, Eleanor!

In other staff news, we all have our fingers crossed for Marg and Kylie who are (at the time of writing) in the middle of exams. Having completed their Gemmology Diplomas last year, they have taken on three more courses

this year: Practical Diamond Grading, Diploma of Diamond Technology and a course to gain accreditation as registered jewellery valuers. We are proud of the fact that our staff delight in taking on challenges to seek the highest qualifications available.



*Following her win at the Worldskills Trade Olympics, Eleanor Hawke is honoured again, this time as 'Apprentice of the Year'.*

## Gift Ideas



**Pictured above, left to right:**

- 1. 18 carat white gold pink and white diamond 'art deco' style ring (0.50ct centre) \$6,535
- 2. 18 carat white gold pear-shaped topaz and diamond pendant\*\* \$970
- 3. 18 carat white gold Tahitian pearl and diamond pendant\*\* \$1,185
- 4. 18 carat white gold Tahitian pearl and diamond earrings (10–11 mm) \$1,775
- 5. 18 carat yellow gold amethyst and diamond pendant\*\* \$490
- 6. 18 carat two-tone mandarin garnet drop earrings (2.65ct) \$3,580
- 7. 18 carat white gold South Sea pearl and diamond ring (9.5–10 mm) \$1,675
- 8. 9 carat freshwater pearl and diamond earrings (10–10.5 mm) \$960
- 9. 9 carat white gold tanzanite and diamond stud earrings \$675
- 10. 9 carat yellow gold 'infinity' bracelet \$940
- 11. 9 carat white gold 'infinity' bracelet \$1,105

\*\*Chains not included in price

# Gift Ideas



- Pictured above, left to right:**
- 12.** 18 carat yellow gold mesh bangle \$2,400
  - 13.** 18 carat white gold diamond stud earrings \$2,290
  - 14.** 18 carat white and rose gold pink and white diamond ring \$2,030
  - 15.** 9 carat white gold topaz and diamond pendant\*\* \$375
  - 16.** 9 carat white gold blue topaz and diamond ring \$745
  - 17.** 18 carat white gold pink and white diamond pendant\*\* \$3,150
  - 18.** 18 carat two-tone aquamarine and citrine stud earrings \$1,325
  - 19.** 9 carat yellow and white gold peridot and diamond ring \$810
  - 20.** 18 carat white gold ruby and diamond drop earrings \$2,290
  - 21.** 18 carat white gold Tahitian pearl and diamond earrings \$1,630
  - 22.** 9 carat yellow gold amethyst and crystal flower earrings \$955
  - 23.** 9 carat yellow gold emerald and crystal flower earrings \$1,065
  - 24.** 18 carat yellow gold South Sea pearl pendant (9–10 mm)\*\* \$490
- \*\*Chains not included in price*



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The exception will be white gold articles that require rhodium plating (additional charge) – we will endeavour to have these pieces available at the end of the same day.