

BOOK REVIEWS

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Adventures at the Bench: Tricks to Overcome a Jeweler's Daily Challenges

*By Juergen Maerz, 110 pp., illus.,
publ. by MJSA Press
[www.mjasa.org/info_press.php],
Providence, RI, 2006. US\$34.95*

You may know Juergen Maerz, aka "Mr. Platinum," as the gold- and silversmith from Idar-Oberstein who became one of the first Jewelers of America Certified Master Bench Jewelers. With an impressive background as an educator in the United States, he has been the director of technical education for PGI (Platinum Guild International) for many years.

The foreword (by Alan Revere, director of the Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts in San Francisco) is titled "A Bag of Timesaving Tricks"; one might argue that *lifesaving* would have been the more appropriate adjective. While Mr. Maerz's vast background certainly would have allowed, it does not appear he had any intention of writing the equivalent of a Wagnerian "Ring Cycle," with an underlying progression or plot. Instead, he has opted for a compilation of apparently randomly chosen articles, a little in the style of Schubert's *lieder*, his exquisite songs.

The overall design of this book is contemporary in the sense that both aesthetic and functional considerations have been taken into account. *Adventures at the Bench* is divided into five sections: "Bench Tricks & Tales," "Basic Platinum Fabrication," "Lasers & Platinum," "Step-by-Step Projects (With a Few Tricks)," and "Bench Resources." "Bench Tricks"

is a compilation of 29 techniques, each a page in length with up to six illustrations. These cover everything from how to distinguish platinum from white gold alloys to how to make sanding laps with a compact disc. The three subsequent sections cover three to nine projects apiece, each about two to five pages long, with numerous sequential how-to illustrations. "Bench Resources" concludes the book with an appendix of sponsored overviews of refiners, casters, and similar providers of goods and services to the trade.

Efficiency of communication is the mark of an experienced educator, and *Adventures at the Bench* stands out with its tightly focused articles. Descriptions are complete, detailed, and coherent, yet the wording is still concise. The illustrations, all but one of which are photographs, are remarkably accurate in their sequential context. Mr. Maerz clearly understands how to keep even the longest of projects from being excessively complex or difficult. Every now and then, he throws in a humorous account of the kind of hard learning experience-cum-disaster to which every jaded goldsmith can relate.

Purists may seize on the quality of the photographs. Shooting all but a dozen of the 400 or so color photos covering such a wide range of subjects would be a challenge for any professional photographer, let alone an amateur. While one would have hoped for more attention to the image processing, the sequential illustrations still come across clearly by merit of their underlying coherence.

At a time when a goldsmith's

skills are no longer passed from master to apprentice over the course of years, *Adventures at the Bench* serves as a welcome reference for students as well as self-taught tradespeople and bench jewelers, regardless of their background. Business owners, gemologists, and designers alike will find Mr. Maerz's oeuvre an indispensable addition to their libraries, as it answers many potential questions concerning procedures for the shop floor.

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Jeweled Garden: A Colorful History of Gems, Jewels, and Nature

*By Suzanne Tennenbaum and Janet
Zapata, 216 pp., illus., publ. by
The Vendome Press, New York,
2006. US\$50.00*

As an eternal muse, Nature has inspired creative expression from prehistoric cave paintings to übermodern architect Santiago Calatrava's wind-swept wonders. Jewelry artists turn to the natural world as a perennial design theme, perhaps in part to honor the jewelers' earth-sprung medium.

In *Jeweled Garden*, a collaborative effort by jewelry collector Suzanne Tennenbaum and decorative arts historian Janet Zapata, readers are served a cornucopia of jeweled delights that transcend the book's modest subtitle. Following a brief historical introduction, the authors set their sights on the fertile 200-year period from the

early nineteenth century to the present. Under their guidance, the narrative unfolds with cohesion and a sense of time and place, all richly detailed by 375 full-color photographs and informed text.

In one fine example after another, the book illustrates how nineteenth century jewelry artists embraced botanical imagery, just as appreciation for the decorative qualities of plants took root beside their traditional uses as foods and medicines. Naturalist expressions such as the 2,637-diamond rose blossom brooch by Parisian jeweler Théodore Fester (1854) are followed by the enamel and gemstone orchid and iris brooches intricately fashioned by Henri Vever and Paulding Farnham for Tiffany & Co. decades later.

Five of the book's six chapters examine art movements of the twentieth century to the present, from Art Nouveau to the as-yet-unnamed present-day style the authors cite as distinctive and individualist. Art Deco *tutti frutti* styles yield to the naturalist revival of the 1930s and 1940s, typified by Cartier's stunning diamond palm tree (1939), which was said to have been inspired by African and Asian explorations. Foliate and floral artistry blossomed to new levels as design houses and artists such as Fulco di Verdura, Paul Flato, Seaman Schepps, and lesser-known trendsetter Suzanne Belperron incorporated carvings, cabochon, and dome-shaped bombé forms in their work.

With fashion designer Christian Dior's "New Look" inaugurating the jet-set style of the 1950s and '60s, designs emerged that evoked stylized conservatism, as in Van Cleef & Arpels' invisibly set flower-head brooches, as well as playfulness, exemplified by a knotted gold watch by Pierre Sterlé and a quirky *en tremblant* wisteria brooch by Marchak (ca. 1955).

The book concludes with the individualist styling of jewelry's new designer breed. The venerable orchid brooch motif takes on a modern flair in an exquisite design ca. 1960 by Oscar Ghiso of the Buenos Aires-based

design house. Peridots and brown diamonds comprise an inventive pussy willow brooch by Edmond Chin (2002) alongside floral feasts by JAR, Bulgari, Stefan Hammerle, and others.

The narrative takes a slight stumble in the last chapter, occasionally veering into branding slogans and ending as though out of steam. Overall, however, the text is written with scholarly insight, a keen eye for the extraordinary, and the authors' fitting enchantment with their subject matter. An index would have been nice, and a brief glossary of specialized terms might have helped readers missing green thumbs, although a few are explained in the book's useful endnotes.

The book's superb production and multisourced photography are accentuated by artful layout and clear legends. Bygone images of publicity materials, royals in regalia, rare archival photographs, and artists' sketches further enhance the book's visual delights.

While *Jeweled Garden* will intrigue anyone interested in jewelry design, fashion, and history, this 10-inch-square volume deserves a wider audience beyond the jewelry cognoscenti. Gorgeous to look at and a joy to read, it will also bring endless pleasure to aesthetes of every stripe, nature lovers, gardening enthusiasts, and all who stop to smell the roses.

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**Pedras Preciosas No Arte e
Devoção: Tesouros Gemológicos
na Arquidiocese de Évora
[Precious Stones in Art and
Devotion: Gemstone Treasures
of the Archdiocese of Évora]**

By Rui Galopim de Carvalho, 154 pp., illus., publ. by Fundação Eugênio de Almeida, Évora, Portugal, 2006 [in Portuguese and English, no price information available].

Written by a man who is perhaps Portugal's best-known and most-

respected gemologist, this book is a testament to the author's passion for gemology and the trust he has won from those who guard his country's historical treasures. Having established himself over the last decade through his gemological classification of various important Portuguese museum collections, Mr. Galopim was invited by the Eugênio de Almeida Foundation and the Inventory of the Movable Cultural Heritage of the Archdiocese of Évora project to write this book. The goal was the correct identification of the gemstones and precious metals contained in the many jeweled objects belonging to the Archdiocese, and the dissemination of the artistic heritage they represent.

To say that the author succeeded in his goal is an understatement. *Pedras Preciosas* is more of a cross between a history book and a gem identification manual than a museum catalog. Mr. Galopim educates the reader on many aspects of gemology in each chapter: the history and historical sources of the gemstones referenced, name derivations, gemological testing techniques used, and current sources of production. The book ends with multiple pages of footnotes and a glossary.

Although rich in history and a valuable gemological guide, as a catalog of the collection it left me wanting more. Organized by gemological material, each section refers to only one or two pieces and provides little history about them, so the significance of each item is unclear. Were these the most important pieces belonging to the Archdiocese? Or were they the ones the author found most interesting gemologically? The general quality of the photographs is very good, and I would have enjoyed seeing more images of the collection instead of photomicrographs of the inclusions used to aid in the identification. In addition, it is evident that the book was written primarily for a Portuguese-speaking audience, as photographs of the pieces are included only in the first, Portuguese, half and omitted in the English section. I think the book

would have been even more effective if photos had been included with the English section, too.

Overall, I am sure the Archbishop of Évora, who contributed an introduction, was pleased with this lovely, very readable book. Thanks to Mr. Galopim, the people of Portugal have gained another valuable and attractive reference work on their historical religious treasures.

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Shamelessly: Jewelry from Kenneth Jay Lane

By Nancy N. Schiffer, 240 pp., illus., publ. by Schiffer Publishing Ltd. [<http://www.schifferbooks.com>], Atglen, PA, 2007. US\$59.95

Costume Jewelry for Haute Couture

By Florence Muller, 271 pp., illus., publ. by The Vendome Press, New York, 2007. US\$75.00

Costume jewelry plays a critical but often underappreciated role in the awareness and interest in jewelry overall. It mirrors the contemporary styles of precious gem and metal jewelry, and it makes these trends affordable for a broader spectrum of society. These two books review similar yet distinct examples of the best that costume jewelry has to offer.

Shamelessly: Jewelry from Kenneth Jay Lane features one of the most notable designers in the costume jewelry genre. Right out of design school in the mid-1950s, KJL landed a job in the art department at *American Vogue*. Diana Vreeland, *Vogue's* editor-in-chief, became a close friend and introduced him to a wide circle of New York's most influential society mavens. When KJL began designing and fabricating jewelry in 1964, he would give these friends pieces to wear, and their patronage launched his career. Bold and stylish, with a flair for the dra-

matic, KJL's costume jewelry has been worn by an impressive list of luminaries, including the Duchess of Windsor, Britain's Princess Margaret, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Nancy Reagan, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Joan Collins, Audrey Hepburn, Jessica Simpson, and Paris Hilton, to name just a few.

The book is laid out in what might be considered an extended outline form. A brief biographical chapter, "KJL Himself," is followed by three chapters that each contain 11 short sections on related themes. Under "Design Inspirations," for example, there are sections on ancient Egypt, China, India, and other cultures, while "Motifs" contains sections on flowers, fruit, birds, and so forth. Each section is lavishly illustrated with color photos of jewelry, KJL with his royal and celebrity friends, models and actresses wearing his jewelry, and magazine covers and spreads featuring his work.

There is very little text. A brief paragraph introduces each chapter and section, and the remaining text consists of photo captions interspersed with amusing and telling quotes from the designer about his work. Unfortunately, the captions cause some confusion, as the descriptions of the gem materials are not consistent. While some of the jewelry uses natural gem materials (mother-of-pearl, tiger's-eye, and bone), most of it contains imitation gems. A small caveat at the beginning lists the synthetic gem materials that appear in the book. Amethyst, jade, and ivory aren't on the list, yet they appear in the captions. Is the "amethyst" a natural variety of quartz, a synthetic, or glass? Is the "jade" a nephrite carving or molded glass? Is the "ivory" actually carved natural bone—elephant ivory would be highly unlikely—or is it plastic?

Despite these shortcomings, *Shamelessly: Jewelry from Kenneth Jay Lane* is a charming compendium that collectors and appraisers will find useful for identifying the work of this legend in his own time.

Costume Jewelry for Haute

Couture, originally published in French as *Les Paruriers, Bijoux de la Haute Couture*, was the catalog for an exhibition of the same name that went on view in France in 2006. The term *paruriers* refers to manufacturers of costume jewelry for the French *haute couture* fashion houses.

Because the cost of natural gems and precious metals imposes certain limitations on the size and nature of a fine piece of jewelry, *haute couture* houses of the early 1900s, such as Poiret and Chanel, hired *paruriers* to create costume jewelry as accessories for their latest dress designs. Costume jewelry, using imitation gems set in inexpensive metals, could look extravagant yet still remain affordable.

Paruriers collaborated with the fashion house to create an agreed-upon design. They were selected for their imagination, fashion sense, good taste, and high quality of fabrication. Because pieces were stamped with the *couturier's* name, if they were marked at all, the *parurier's* contribution to high fashion remained virtually unknown until recently.

The design aesthetic of *haute couture* jewelry is in a class by itself. Like the clothing it accompanies, it is on the vanguard of jewelry design, intended for dramatic impact on the catwalk. Highly unconventional and exaggerated for effect, *haute couture* jewelry incorporates a wide range of materials, including glass, plastic, enamel, beads, wood, shell, fabric, and feathers, in bold, eye-catching pieces that cannot be ignored. Few of these pieces imitate precious jewelry designs: Most break new ground in terms of color, size, movement, and style.

The book is organized into three main chapters. The first outlines the origins and history of costume jewelry from antiquity to the 19th century. It goes on to describe how jewelry by *paruriers* departed from the mainstream and was elevated to an art form through its alliance with *haute couture*. The second chapter, by far the largest, gives very brief historical profiles for the *haute couture* houses

followed by apparently everything that could be gleaned about the *paruriers*. The final chapter, "The Jewelry Trade and Its Demands," discusses materials, techniques, and the manner of collaboration between *paruriers* and *couturiers* from the 1930s to the present day.

The translation from French to English makes this book a challenging read, but it is worth forging ahead. *Costume Jewelry for Haute Couture* champions this exclusive niche in the costume jewelry world. The author has researched the subject in depth, and has supplemented the text with footnotes, an index of designers, and an extensive bibliography.

Throughout, the book is handsomely illustrated with color images of the jewelry itself and fashion models wearing various pieces. Historic black-and-white photos of the workshops, advertisements, models on the runway, and the *paruriers* themselves add tone and balance to the whole.

Costume Jewelry for Haute Couture provides insight into a little-known segment of the jewelry world, illustrating the important link between jewelry design and clothing fashion in the 20th century. Jewelry historians will find this perspective informative and enlightening.

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OTHER MEDIA RECEIVED

Pearl Oyster Information Bulletin, No. 17. By various authors, 48 pp., illus., publ. by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, www.spc.int/Coastfish/News/POIB/17/POIB17.pdf, December 2006, free. This electronic newsletter, back in publication after a nearly three-year hiatus, includes abstracts of selected presentations at the 2005 and 2006 World Aqua-

culture Society conferences and the 2006 International Symposium on Genetics in Aquaculture. Also included is a report from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Pearl Meeting in Fiji in December 2005, as well an article on pearl culturing in Africa.

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The Jeweled Menagerie: The World of Animals in Gems. By Suzanne Tennenbaum and Janet Zapata, 216 pp., illus., publ. by Thames & Hudson, New York, 2007, US\$34.95. This is a paperback version of the 2001 work by Tennenbaum and Zapata (see the Winter 2001 *Gems & Gemology*, pp. 344–345, for the full review).

TWO

Kimberlite and Related Rocks of India. By Fareeduddin and M. S. Rao, Eds., 271 pp., illus., publ. by the Geological Society of India [www.gsi.gov.in], Bangalore, 2007, Rs20. This special issue of the *Journal of the Geological Society of India* (Vol. 69, No. 3) is the product of a conference and related field work that took place in Bangalore in November 2005. The topics include a historical review of diamond exploration in India, a review of current knowledge of Indian kimberlites and lamproites, and detailed analyses of known occurrences throughout India.

TWO

Paraíba Tourmaline "Electric Blue Brilliance Burnt into Our Minds." By Masashi Furuya, 23 pp., illus., publ. by the Japan Germany Gemmological Laboratory [jgg@l@sapphire.co.jp], Kofu, Japan, 2007, ¥1,500. This illustrated guide to "Paraíba" tourmaline was written for a broad audience, including gemstone enthusiasts and dealers. Contained in the booklet are chemical and gemological properties

of many types of tourmaline, as well as a brief account of Paraíba tourmaline's introduction into the gemstone market. The author describes the history and current activity at many of the mining areas for copper-bearing tourmaline in Brazil, Nigeria, and Mozambique through location maps and 120 color photos of gemstones and mining operations. This discussion includes his personal accounts of visits to most of the "Paraíba" mining areas in Brazil. Chemical (EDXRF) and absorption spectroscopy data are provided for tourmalines from many of the mines. Mr. Furuya also gives a brief evaluation of the future market for Paraíba tourmaline.

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The Geology of Gem Deposits. Edited by Lee A. Groat, 276 pp., illus., publ. by the Mineralogical Association of Canada [www.mineralogicalassociation.ca], Quebec, 2007, US\$50.00. This volume was published to accompany a two-day short course that was held May 21–22, 2007, in Yellowknife, Canada, in conjunction with the joint annual meeting of the Geological and Mineralogical associations of Canada. The book consists of 10 chapters on different gemstones; each chapter is written by experts on the geologic occurrence of these gem materials. These chapters summarize the presentations made at the two-day meeting, which covered the following topics: the geology of diamonds, corundum, emerald, other gem beryls such as aquamarine, jade, and several other important gem minerals; gem occurrences in pegmatites; and a review of colored gem occurrences in Canada. Suggestions for gem exploration are provided.

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