

BOOK REVIEWS

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Henry Dunay: A Precious Life

By Penny Proddow and Marion Fasel, 223 pp., illus., publ. by Harry N. Abrams [www.hnabooks.com], New York, 2007. US\$60.00

This beautiful work is not only a gift to inspire the collector but also a must-read for the designer, master goldsmith, and jewelry enthusiast. The reader will be transported into an American dream story of drive and passion that produced one of the great jewelry designers of our time. The book is divided into four sections, with essays by journalists Penny Proddow, Marion Fasel, and Jeryl Brunner, and by curator George Harlow.

Henry Dunay, who began his life in 1935 as Henry Loniewski, became a messenger to a New York jewelry workshop at the age of 14. From there, his dedication and perseverance earned him a promotion to jeweler's apprentice. During these years in the Bowery, he worked nonstop to master every aspect of diamond setting.

Henry was born with design and precision in his blood. Growing up in the midst of Manhattan's world-famous retail jewelers—names like Harry Winston, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Tiffany & Co.—he gained a keen awareness of the elements used in fine jewelry making, and mastered the techniques of contemporaries such as David Webb. Yet Dunay took everything he touched to a new level of beauty and design, producing imaginative, magnificent, truly distinctive jewelry.

In 1967, Dunay got his first real break as a designer when he won the De Beers Diamonds International

Award. The road to success, however, was not an easy one. During the 1970s, when times were difficult in New York, he set his sights on other areas of the country. He eventually networked his way into the famed Neiman Marcus department store in Dallas, Texas, where some of his wealthiest and most faithful followers can still be found. Soon, Dunay's pieces were sold before they even appeared on the sales floor.

Stephen Magner, vice president of Neiman Marcus's jewelry division from 1984 to 2005, wrote in the introduction, "Through the endless public appearances, conversations with followers, as well as vast travel experience in sourcing materials, the collections came to truly reflect Henry's heart, soul, and personality." His relationship with Neiman Marcus has lasted more than 30 years, and the stories of a number of top Neiman Marcus clients are recounted in Brunner's section titled "Suntanned Ladies: Henry's Muses Sing a Song of Beauty." Some of his clients have Dunay collections larger than the Neiman Marcus inventory, and in their interviews they share their favorite pieces with the reader and describe why Henry Dunay is a part of their style. Dunay's creations have adorned presidents' wives, famous actors, and dignitaries throughout the world, and their stories come to life here through beautiful photographs and delicious details.

Harlow's section, "Coloring Henry: An Education on Colored Stones," compares Dunay to famed mineralogist George Frederick Kunz, who was Tiffany & Co.'s gem expert

in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even in a diamond-driven market, Dunay realized that colored gemstones other than the big three (ruby, emerald, and sapphire) could be combined with his designs to create less-expensive pieces. Using his keen eye for the combination of fineness and form, and how they fit his designs, Dunay started his own line of colored stone jewelry.

As a designer, Dunay quickly saw opportunities in both fashioned gems and natural crystals, and this early work inspired him to further his education in colored gems by traveling to the market in Idar-Oberstein, Germany. This section also describes his special relationship with mentor and business partner Hans Jurgen Henn. From his travels with Henn in the Himalayas to his annual pilgrimage to the coral capital of Torre del Greco in Italy—as well as trips to Tanzania, Myanmar, Russia, and Ukraine—Dunay has spanned the globe. His ability to combine metals with gem finds from his travels leaves the reader captivated.

Dunay's passion has permeated his family's everyday life, and his son and daughter share delightful stories of how they've seen their father's designs come from a deep inner place, from his soul. The craft was always paramount in their family life—Paul Dunay began joining his father on business trips at the age of 12—but it is evident that Dunay, now a grandfather, treats his family with the love he gives his creations.

Full-page museum-quality photographs and original renderings of these collectible pieces glitter on each

page. The book will help the reader appreciate how Henry Dunay's autonomous craftsmanship has defined him as a modern-day Fabergé. Before reading this book, I was not necessarily a fan of Dunay. This book inspired me so much that it sent me on my own search for Dunay pieces in the secondhand market, and what a delightful treasure hunt it has been!

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Russian Gemstones Encyclopedia

*By Vladimir V. Bukanov, 472 pp.,
illus., publ. by Granit Publishing,
Prague, 2006. € 79*

Russian Gemstones Encyclopedia is a single book, but it includes enough text, photos, and illustrations to have been published as two or more volumes without looking sparse. Much is covered in its eight main chapters, the first of which appears to be unique in a publication such as this: "To the History of Jeweler's Art & Gemology." It is commendable that this chapter was included and that it mentions many important people—not all of whom are Russian—as this is a worldwide history. That being said, some major contributors to the science of gemology are conspicuous by their absence here. This first chapter is followed by two pages characterizing different kinds of materials that are used in jewelry and for other ornamental purposes.

A chapter explaining the structure of the *Encyclopedia*, its chapters, and their topics and subheadings follows, including a list of abbreviations. The third chapter, and probably the most important one, is "Best Known Gemstones," though this also includes lesser-known gems such as scapolite. There are many subtopics for each gem, with the most important gems commanding the most attention. For diamond alone, there are 10 subtopics, such as Compo-

sition and Properties, Deposits, Quality Improvements, Legends, and more. Interestingly, this "gemstone" chapter includes metals such as gold, platinum, palladium, silver, copper, and iron.

Five more chapters follow: "Less Known Gemstones" (e.g., apatite, diopside, and variscite), "Gemstones for Collectors" (e.g., apophyllite, diaspore, and sinhalite), "Minerals and Rocks as Ornamental Stones" (e.g., calcite, the feldspar family, magnesite, and the serpentine group), "Bioorganic-Jewelry-Ornamental Materials" (pearls, amber, ivory, and the like), and "Synthetic Gemstones." Following these chapters is an appendix that covers some two dozen other useful topics (such as unique diamonds, jade, and Russian gem deposits). There is also a useful general index.

This book holds an abundance of information, illustrations, and good-quality photographs, and the paper, binding, and handsome hardcover produce a reference that will last. However, this work is also compact in nature with small, hard-to-read print and relatively small illustrations. The title is also a bit deceptive, as it is not solely about Russian gemstones but is rather a general work with an emphasis on Russian material. Regrettably, some of the information appears outdated (such as equating the values of fancy-colored diamonds to colorless brilliants of the highest quality) or even incorrect (blue diamonds are type IIb, not type Ib). In addition, the translation into English was hard to follow and often resulted in broken syntax. I had to pay close attention in many instances to understand the author's intended meaning.

Despite some drawbacks, I like this book overall. It encompasses a wealth of information that is hard to find in most other texts. I would have enjoyed the volume even more had it limited itself exclusively to Russian gemstones, as the title implies.

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Volodarsk-Volynski: Mineralogy of the Volynian Chamber Pegmatites, Ukraine

*By Vladimir Ivanovich Pavlishin and
Stanislav Alekseevich Dovgyi, Mineralogical Almanac, Vol. 12, 125 pp.,
illus., publ. by Mineralogical Almanac [http://webcenter.ru/~minbooks],
Littleton, CO, 2007. US\$45.00*

A most welcome and long-awaited publication finally made it to press and in English, too. This work reviews the history and mineralogy of one of the most famous and widely studied pegmatite districts in the world, the Volodarsk chamber pegmatites in Ukraine. My first impression was that this issue is just as remarkable as the beryl and topaz the mines have produced.

The Volodarsk pegmatites were known as early as the 1900s, but only in 1931 did the Soviet government begin serious prospecting and mining for piezoelectric quartz. The area eventually became one of the most closely studied gem pegmatite regions in the world: A 22 km long, 1–3 km wide belt of the Korosten Pluton in Ukraine was core-drilled from 100 m down to 600 m in a very tight grid to detect pegmatites containing the large quartz crystals sought by the Soviet military. In its heyday, the mine employed some 1,000 miners and 60 geologists. Topaz and beryl were mere by-products of the mine until the breakup of the Soviet Union. Only 10% or so of the pockets contained topaz, and only 2% held beryl. But the pockets were gigantic, often several meters in size, with each one producing anywhere from a few tons to more than 100 tons of quartz, though usually only a small portion of the quartz crystal terminations were of good piezoelectric quality.

The various studies of the deposit and its geologic-petrographic characteristics are covered in chapter 2, while chapter 3 addresses the position, morphology, and structure of the pegmatites. The gem species and non-gem minerals that occur are well described and richly illustrated in

chapter 4. Cross-sections of individual pegmatites and good geologic maps add to the richness of information. Perhaps the highlight of the book is the detailed description of the conditions of formation (and dissolution) of individual minerals. A comprehensive and well-selected bibliography adds to the value of the volume.

Somewhat weaker are the descriptions of individual finds (year, location in the mine, and depth), but such information is known only to a small handful of people. The book also lacks photographs of the faceted and carved gems and the jewelry made from them, which poured into the European and North American markets for a few years but disappeared as quickly as they arrived. In fact, many large and beautifully colored flawless stones were cut from Volodarsk beryl and topaz.

Since 1995, small-scale exploration and mining has been conducted (sometimes clandestinely) by pumping out huge volumes of water and silt from the old shafts and galleries, at great expense, but production has been very limited and most of the gem-quality material is cut and sold in jewelry in Ukraine. This reviewer was the first foreigner allowed to enter these mines in the post-Soviet era. That was in 1995, just when they were about to be closed. When I last visited the mines in the spring of 2008, only small-scale digging was taking place, in a single open pit just above water level. Some pockets described by geologists in the 1970s as still containing significant amounts of untouched beryl have proved to be unproductive, while other pockets that were once overlooked have shown some beryl mineralization.

This work was undoubtedly written and edited by experts and lovers of this deposit. However, I would have liked to see much more information about the production and discovery of magnificent gem minerals from the 1970s to the 1990s. More importantly,

there was much detailed scientific research by the mine geologists conducted during this period that is not fully reflected in the book. Finally, there are some mistakes in the translation from the excellent Russian version that sometimes make the text unclear or even contradictory. For instance, page 61 (line 12 from the bottom), "presence of strong base solutions" should read "absence of . . ."

Nevertheless, this is truly a marvelous publication deserving much respect, and it should prove extremely valuable for anyone curious about the Volodarsk deposit. It also offers some insight into the tremendous (and very costly) efforts of the former Soviet Union to exploit the pegmatites, as information about the deposit was considered a state secret during the Soviet era and even today is guarded closely. The publication is an absolute must for anyone seriously interested in gemstone deposits, pegmatites, and minerals.

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OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

Laboratory Grown Diamonds, 2nd Ed. By Branko Deljanin and Dusan Simic, 86 pp., illus., publ. by Gemology Headquarters International [www.ghilab.com], Mumbai, 2007, US\$20.00. This is a revised and updated version of *Laboratory Created Diamonds* by Sharrie Woodring and Branko Deljanin (see review in the Summer 2007 *Gems & Gemology*). Sections on standard identification techniques have been expanded, and new information on identifying small synthetic diamonds and synthetic diamond grading has been added.

TWO

Diamond Ring Buying Guide, 7th Ed. By Renee Newman, 156 pp., illus., publ. by International Jewelry Publi-

cations [www.reneenewman.com], Los Angeles, 2007, US\$18.95. This is a revised and updated version of the sixth edition (reviewed in the Summer 2002 *Gems & Gemology*), covering new information on diamond cut grading, diamond treatments, and synthetics. New for this edition is a discussion on the use of palladium in jewelry.

TWO

Tables of Gemstone Identification. By Roger Dedeyne and Ivo Quintens, 309 pp., illus., publ. by Glirico [www.gemmologie.be/GEMMOEN/BooksEN.htm], Ghent, Belgium, 2007, €89. Designed as a reference for laboratory and other working gemologists, this large-format (A4) hardbound book contains detailed lists of commonly used gemological properties. The information is organized in five separate tables sorted by refractive index (transparent and opaque gems), specific gravity, spectrum, and alphabetical order, respectively. Also included are a graph of RI vs. SG for glass, and two tables to assist with identifying garnet group gems and diamond simulants.

TWO

Verdura: The Life and Work of a Master Jeweler. By Patricia Corbett, 224 pp., illus., publ. by Thames & Hudson [thamesandhudsonusa.com], New York, 2008, US\$34.95. This is a paperback edition of the 2002 book chronicling the life and work of Fulco Santostefano della Cerda, Duke of Verdura (1898–1978). An impoverished Sicilian nobleman with a talent for drawing, Verdura caught the eye of Coco Chanel in the 1920s. He came to the United States in 1934, and his jewelry designs quickly became a favorite of Hollywood stars and wealthy Americans. The book is well illustrated with numerous photos of Verdura's signature pieces and the famous clientèle who wore them.

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