

DECEMBER 2023

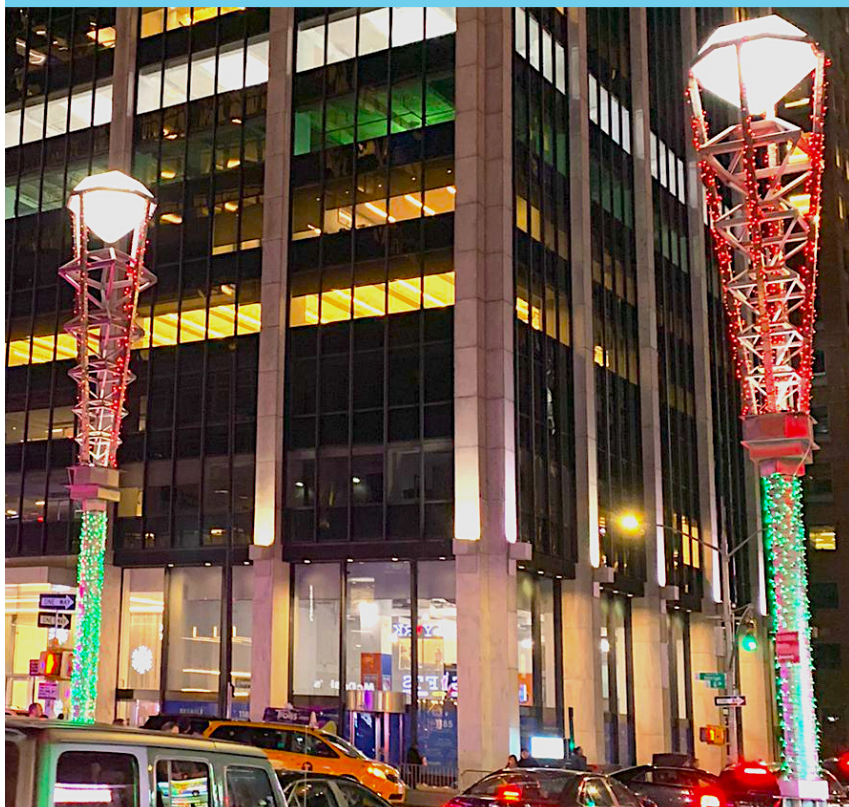
DIAMOND



ND

DISTRICT MONTHLY

VOL. 161



DIAMOND DISTRICT: READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The Diamond District Partnership has been hard at work these past few months preparing the district for the annual arrival of shoppers and pedestrians sweeping through the district between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Among these new preparations is a brand new lighting display from one end of the district to the other and, to keep the district as clean and litter-free as possible, nearly doubling the number of trash cans placed on district sidewalks. Along with these preparations, we pray for each and every one a safe, successful and joyous holiday season for our families and all those we love and hold dear.

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Diamond District Partnership Annual Membership Meeting (via Zoom)

Annual Meeting on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 @ 9:30 AM

To receive a direct video link, please email: zoom@diamonddistrict.org



WHAT'S INSIDE

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friend,

Positive feedback is gratifying. Especially when it comes unexpected.

My letter for the November 2023 edition of Diamond District Monthly was uncharacteristically sharp edged. The letter centered on Israel's military campaign in Gaza and particularly its still-incomprehensible catalyst: Hamas' demonic massacre of more than 1200 peaceful Israeli civilians and subsequent abduction of another 240 innocents. I pulled no punches and wondered who I might offend.

Yet, many readers reached out to say they appreciated and supported my tone and sentiments. Others shared their disgust with the pro-massacre rallies and those orchestrating efforts to deny, diminish, or rationalize the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7th.

Thank you for your comments and for taking time to share them.

Despite the confusion and heartache playing out in the Middle East, the Diamond District is now fully enveloped in the 2023 holiday season. The days on this street now feel endless and the urge to celebrate the season must usually wait until January when anxious questions about sales and profits are answered.

Early market forecasts point to a strong sales season for 2023. If proven accurate, those delayed good feelings will be all the more meaningful.

Another analysis related to good feelings in our district concerns an informal poll I recently conducted. Speaking to a number of district merchants, I discovered an interesting trend—it appears sales of Star of David pendants and rings are going way up.

I feel inspired and encouraged by this trend.

Followers of every creed should be proud and feel free to visibly express their faith. This is their non-negotiable right as Americans. But many Jews, since October 7th, have begun questioning this right upon discovering how prevalent, intense, and blatant anti-Jewish hatred is in our nation. Facing such antipathy, many are choosing to obscure their religious identity.

But the results of my anecdotal sales report demonstrate that while some Jews are laying low, many others are ramping up their visibility as proud Jewish people.

Their renewed embrace of Jewish symbolism is a delightful reminder of the ingrained Jewish tendency to push back when confronted with anti-Jewish sentiment. It also shows that many Americans retain faith in their core American values that we are a people united by a national destiny and shielded by our shared love of freedom and peace.

Standing on the cusp of a brand new year, Americans also share doubt that any of us will get any peace and quiet in 2024. We're already saturated with political intrigue related to November's presidential election. We're already surrounded by the same unavoidable tension and rhetoric associated with numerous present and possibly future conflicts around the globe.

In our little corner of the world, this entirely different set of anxious questions weighing on our minds are compounded by the ceaseless volatility in our industry due to unpredictable price swings and the encroaching but hardly inevitable dominance of lab-grown diamonds. Whatever happens, let's take a moment to breathe, and focus on the hope that we'll all be here in 12 months from now, looking back on yet another wild ride, but still together and no worse for wear.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Fertig'.

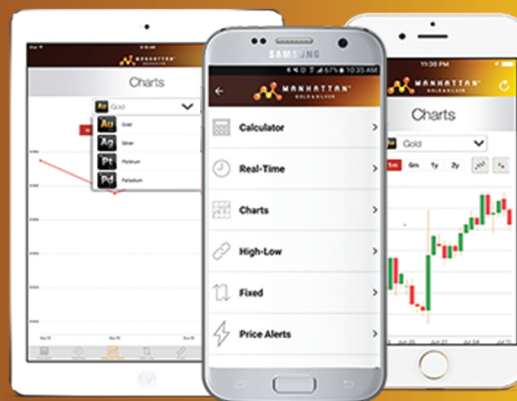
Avi Fertig

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Avi Fertig

IN THE NEWS

Gemological Institute of America Announces Next-Day Service for Holiday Season



To celebrate the holiday season, the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) is excited to offer a special service to its U.S. clients.

Until December 20, 2023, GIA will provide next-day services for qualifying diamond evaluations at no additional cost. This offer is applicable to D-to-Z diamonds, both natural and laboratory-grown, submitted to the GIA's Carlsbad or New York laboratories.

The services eligible for this expedited process include Diamond Grading Report, GIA Diamond Dossier®, Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report, and Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report - Dossier. Streamlining the evaluation process during this busy time of year, GIA ensures any diamonds that are submitted will be processed and ready for return the day after receipt.

Submissions are limited to up to 10 stones per client per day. The service is available until December 19, 2023, for diamonds that are shipped, and until December 20, 2023, for in-person submissions. Clients must use the promo code "HOLIDAY" on their submission memo to take advantage of this offer.

SOURCE: GIA

Tiffany & Co. Unveils Limited Edition Pokémon-Inspired Jewelry Line



Tiffany Pokémon

In a unique blend of classic, luxury fashion and kitschy pop culture, Tiffany & Co. is launching a unique Pokémon-themed jewelry line. This collection marks the LVMH-owned luxury brand's latest collaboration with renowned contemporary artist

Daniel Arsham, following their previous joint efforts, which included reimagined Tiffany Blue boxes and transforming an archival padlock into bronze sculptures.

The new line features nine exclusive jewelry pieces, showcasing six beloved Pokémon characters: Pikachu, Charmander, Squirtle, Jigglypuff, Cubone, and Mew. These designs are meticulously crafted in oxidized sterling silver, enhanced with sparkling diamond accents

for an extra touch of elegance.

Paying homage to Pikachu's iconic electric yellow hue, Tiffany & Co. offers this character in both small and large pendants made of 18-karat yellow gold, also adorned with diamond accents.

In a unique packaging twist, the oxidized sterling silver pieces come in a special Tiffany & Arsham Studio & Pokémon Blue Box, while the golden Pikachu pendants are presented in a custom Tiffany Blue Poké Ball.

The Pokémon franchise, which originates in Japan as a video game, has evolved into a global phenomenon encompassing manga, a trading card game, anime series, films, and the massively popular augmented reality game "Pokémon Go."

Its enduring catchphrase, "Gotta Catch 'Em All," resonates with the spirit of Pokémon Trainers in the games, aiming to complete their Pokédex, a digital encyclopedia of Pokémon.

This enduring popularity and the trend of collecting Pokémon memorabilia are captured in the collection's most special piece: a necklace featuring all six highlighted Pokémon in oxidized sterling silver with diamond accents.

Daniel Arsham's "Future Relics" design approach shapes the aesthetic of the collection. This style envisions everyday items as archaeological finds from a future world, a theme that Arsham explored in his Tokyo exhibit "A Ripple in Time," showcasing various Pokémon-themed art installations.

Tiffany & Co. emphasizes that this collection "reinforces the house's longstanding connection to contemporary art and iconic pop culture." Arsham himself commented on the collaboration, saying, "With my latest project with Tiffany, we've recontextualized Pokémon—a nod to my 2022 'A Ripple in Time' project in Tokyo—to orchestrate a new narrative." He added, "With Pokémon and Tiffany, itself, there's a sense of cultural permanence about each."

This exclusive collection, as reported by WWD, ranges in price from \$1,290 to \$29,000. However, the opportunity to acquire these pieces is limited. They will be available online in North America and Japan from Nov. 29 at 9 a.m. EST until Nov. 30 at 9 p.m. EST. During this window, potential buyers can register for a chance to purchase the jewelry.

Following the registration period, starting Dec. 1, Tiffany & Co. will notify registrants about the status of their enrollment and order confirmation. Confirmed orders are scheduled for shipment beginning Dec. 9.

In addition to the online availability, the capsule collection will also be featured at Tiffany & Co.'s

Landmark store in New York City, the Omotesando store in Tokyo, and on Tiffany.com for North American and Japanese shoppers.

SOURCE: Lenore Fedow for National Jeweler

'Bleu Royal' Diamond Shines Bright at Christie's Geneva Auction



17.61-carat fancy vivid blue Bleu Royal diamond. Image by Christie's

A stunning display of luxury and rarity this past November featured a 17.61-carat fancy vivid blue diamond named 'Bleu Royal' that sold for a staggering \$44 million at Christie's Geneva jewelry auction. The sale set the record for the most expensive jewel auctioned in 2023.

The auction saw the 'Bleu Royal' emerge as the centerpiece, fetching \$44 million, or \$2.5 million per carat. This remarkable price fell within its pre-auction estimate of \$35 million to \$50 million. The diamond,

notable for its vivid hue and internal flawlessess, captivated the bidders, with the auction house noting that the bidding process lasted seven minutes.

The identity of the buyer remains undisclosed, adding an air of mystery to this significant sale. The 'Bleu Royal' diamond, which had remained in a private collection for half a century and before its first auction appearance is now set in a platinum ring, accompanied by two D, IF pear brilliant-cut diamonds, each weighing 3.12 carats and 3.07 carats.

This pear-shaped blue diamond has set a record, being the largest IF fancy vivid blue diamond ever to be presented at an auction. It also stands as one of only three fancy vivid blue diamonds over 10 carats to have graced a Christie's sale.

The 'Bleu Royal' was the highlight of Christie's "Magnificent Jewels" auction, contributing significantly to the 93 percent sale completion rate by lot.

SOURCE: Michelle Graffis for National Jeweler

Article continued on page 14



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Bankruptcy and Rebirth for WD Lab Grown



News of the formation of WD Advanced Materials (WDAM) a new company standing on the ashes of WD Lab Grown Diamonds, once at the forefront of the synthetic gem industry before collapsing into liquidation in October, seems to be the start of a classically American tale of glorious second acts.

WD's downfall is the result of unsustainably falling prices in lab-grown diamond prices. By the time of the bankruptcy announcement production costs far exceeded sales.

"WD was a very profitable business early on," explained former CEO of WD, Mike Grunza, during the company's bankruptcy proceeding in Delaware this past November. "In one year alone, it dropped about 83%. The year before that, it dropped about the same amount. We could not keep up with the rate that the market was declining."

Compounding these challenges was the natural diamond industry's ultimate success at contrasting the relevance of their products from lab-grown alternatives. "They did a really great job of differentiating...things that came out of the ground from what we were producing," said Grunza.

When the company's yearlong effort to find a buyer proved unfruitful, their main lender, Tree Line Capital Partners, foreclosed on its original loan of \$66 million, holding \$30 million in unpaid debt.

Almost immediately following the bankruptcy announcement, several former principals of WD Lab Grown announced the formation of a new entity, WD Advanced Materials (WDAM), which the press announcement says will work solely on using diamonds in tech applications.

"WDAM is a new entity focused on technical diamond applications and was formed following the transition from its predecessor gemstone manufacturing entity," said a corporate statement.

Tree Line Capital Partners is a majority stakeholder of the new company after taking control of WD's assets prior to its liquidation. Tom Quimby, managing partner of Tree Line, said in the statement that "WD Advanced Materials... builds on the company's legacy of disruption and technological discovery."

Mike Grunza is acting CEO of WDAM. John Citaldo and Brittany Lewis, former WD Lab Grown chief technology officer and chief commercial officer, respectively, will fill the same roles in the new company. Based on the corporate statement, it appears Huron Capital, WD's former owner, has no part of the new entity.

In February, 46.6% of loose diamonds set by specialty jewelers were lab-grown, a substantial increase from 13.7% in 2020. However, the overall diamond market faced price fluctuations, with natural diamonds seeing a 15.1% price drop since the start of the year and 16.5% over the last 12 months.

Despite this, lab-grown diamonds showed a 59% year-over-year unit sales increase in February and were described as the "fast-growing category" in Signet Jeweler's portfolio by Chief Executive Virginia Drosos.

WDAM, now led by Grunza and his team, looks to leverage its technological capabilities for various applications, moving beyond the jewelry industry. Grunza said, "We do intend to use the chambers to make stuff for whoever wants them. Jewelry is not the purpose of the business, though we may sell gems in the interim for cash flow. It is not where the business can afford to be in the future."

SOURCE: Rob Bates for JCK Online; The Messenger

GIA Global Research Team Convenes in Carlsbad



Participants of the annual GIA Global Research Meeting

The more than 60 scientists, engineers, gemologists and technicians of GIA's global research team met November 1-3 at the Institute's world headquarters in Carlsbad, CA. Joined by members of the GIA Board of Governors and several prominent consulting scientists, the participants discussed and reviewed recent extensive discoveries that underpin GIA's education programs, laboratory services and instrument development.

"Rigorous independent research is at the center of GIA's activities and is vital to our consumer protection mission and our services for the trade," said Tom Moses, GIA Executive Vice President and Chief Laboratory and Research Officer. "As the focus of our

efforts has progressed from gemological discoveries and investigative techniques to incorporate ever-more advanced technologies, the scope of this meeting has expanded to include artificial intelligence, advanced statistical modeling, new custom and proprietary instruments, and advancements in automation."

Participants in the three-day conference discussed the latest research advancements in natural and laboratory-grown diamonds, colored stones, pearls and instrumentation.

The discussion of natural and laboratory-grown diamonds included observations of the unique inclusions in diamonds, fluorescence and color-zoning in some colored diamonds, advancements in laboratory-grown diamonds and the continuing challenges of research into diamond origin determination.

Regarding colored stones, the researchers delved into the geochemistry of various species, the use of advanced techniques to detect diffusion treatments and the gemological characterization of emeralds from North Carolina, United States. Pearl topics included the challenges in identifying unusual, cultured pearls and using trace-elemental analysis and machine learning to support pearl origin identification.

The discussion of technology included advanced imaging systems to support the grading of high-clarity diamonds and the development of a fancy shape cut grading system, and advancements in GIA's efforts to develop an automated instrument-based diamond grading system for many categories of diamonds.

For more than 60 years, research has been central to GIA's important consumer protection mission. From the development of the GIA International Diamond Grading System in the 1950s and the first observations of laboratory-grown diamonds in the 1970s to pioneering discoveries about colored stone origin based on the Institute's unique field gemology program and the development of advanced instrumentation to detect gemstone treatments, GIA's world-class efforts have helped to ensure the public trust in gems and jewelry.

GIA shares its findings with the public, the gem and jewelry trade and the scientific community through GIA's professional journal *Gems & Gemology*, papers published in other scientific journals – including *Science* and *Nature* – and participation by GIA scientists in academic and trade conferences.

While much of the research discussed at the November conference is early stage or proprietary, some will appear in later issues of *Gems & Gemology*. Every issue of the journal, from 1934 to today, is freely available at <https://www.gia.edu/gems-gemology>.

SOURCE: GIA

Botswana's Renewed Effort to Polish National Image



Botswanamar mark diamond with laser inscribed Provenance ID

According to a recent news report by Rob Bates of JCK Online, diamond miners in Botswana are stepping up to combat concerns about public perception of the Botswana diamond industry.

The effort is being led by former De Beers executive Nicholas Moltke, who expressed his frustrations with the image problems shared across the vast diamond producing industry. In his discussion with Bates, Moltke describes how, “When I say I work in the diamond business, a majority of the time people have really negative connotations about what our business represents and its legacy,” adding, “They generally have a very specific perception of mining conditions. They don’t know the business has changed.”

These changes mostly involve the considerable benefits local diamond mining operations have on populations and communities living within a wide proximity of a diamond

retrieval site. Referring to his past five years living in Botswana, Moltke is familiar with these impacts, “I saw how diamonds can do good and support local communities.”

Despite these benefits, Moltke acknowledges that considerable barriers exist when it comes to educating consumers about these benefits to these specific locales and establishing a means of assurance that diamonds presented for sale are the authentic product of those locales.

Following the example of other diamond producers who recognize the essential value of investing in branding as a means of ensuring provenance, specifically Canadamark and Forevermark, Moltke has established Botswanamar mark, a line of branded gems centered on conveying how the process of unearthing diamonds contributes to the economic development of site where they are produced.

According to the JCK news story, Botswanamar mark gems’ first market appearance will be in three stores of the International Diamond Center’s (IDC) a 12-store chain in Clearwater, Florida. “[Botswanamar mark is] a strong opportunity to develop something that is focused on Botswana and allows retailers to tell this very important story,” says Moltke.

JCK also spoke to Brian Stamey, IDC’s vice president of marketing and operations, who said he was inspired to support a certified-origin brand during a trip to Africa where he witnessed the impact of diamonds production on communities across the adjacent regions. He also views Botswanamar mark as a direct response to the current market dynamics. “With Russian supply being closed off to this market, it allows us to have a direct source,” he explains.

Acknowledging the challenges, specifically the many negative messages spoon-fed to American consumers over the past several decades, and the fact that most of those consumers further lack the knowledge to distinguish one African country from another, Stamey remains optimistic that a concerted commitment to grow Botswanamar mark will affect positive change. “At first, consumers didn’t know what Forevermark meant,” Stamey recalls. “But it was a great story, a way to differentiate ourselves. I’m excited to build this from the ground up.”

Key features of Botswanamar mark are centered on traceability, responsible sourcing, provenance based on blockchain, and an enduring commitment to environmental and wildlife conservation and responsibility.

Botswanamar mark champions responsible sourcing by ensuring diamonds are mined with respect for people and the planet. The brand sources exclusively from ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certified miners in Botswana. Diamonds begin their journey from the Jwaneng, Orapa, or Letlhakane mines, verified through rigorous due diligence, including on-site visits.

To affirm the origin of each Botswanamark diamond, a unique Provenance ID is laser-inscribed on the girdle of each stone. This inscription, visible only under magnification, does not affect the clarity grade, ensuring authenticity without compromising quality. All Botswanamark diamonds above + 0.20 carats are GIA certified, further guaranteeing their Botswana origin.

The Botswana mining companies adhere to international environmental standards, as evidenced by their ISO14001 certifications. They have also established wildlife conservation parks around Jwaneng and Orapa mines, spanning over 29,885 hectares, to protect local fauna from threats like encroachment and poaching.

A key feature of Botswanamark is its commitment to environmental responsibility. The diamonds are certified carbon-neutral, a temporary measure until Debswana's mines achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. "That isn't ideal," Moltke admits, but necessary for the brand's current operations.

To advance social responsibility, Botswanamark pledges to contribute 1% of its profits to local charities including Ecoexist Trust, Learn to Play, and Hippo Rollers.

Despite the added costs of tracking, carbon credits, and charitable donations, Botswanamark diamonds are currently priced without a premium. However, this may evolve. "I think the consumer will ultimately be the driver of that," Stamey notes. "If we do our job well and build value in the name, we should be able to get a premium."

Moltke, now CEO of Botswanamark, emphasizes the need for a new narrative in the diamond industry. "Natural diamonds have to evolve their consumer proposition," he says in his interview with JCK. "If we as an industry are not able to tell the Botswana story, then what are we telling our consumers? We are telling them the same story that we've told them for 100 years, that diamonds are a product which stands for love and that they keep their value. We are in front of a consumer that demands more and expects more from the industry. We have to connect them with this new narrative."

SOURCE: Rob Bates for JCK Online

Article continued on page 13

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The advertisement features a world map with orange landmasses and dark blue oceans. In the bottom left corner, there is a pile of gold jewelry, including a watch with a white face and a red leather strap, a gold ring, and various gold chains and pendants. The Roanoke logo, consisting of a stylized globe icon and the word "ROANOKE", is in the top left. The ATA Carnet logo, which includes the text "ATA" in large blue letters and "carnet" in smaller blue letters below it, is in the top right. The main text is centered over the map, and the contact information is in the bottom right.

JANUARY 2023

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

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SPECIAL CRIME ALERT: JEWELERS UNITE TO COMBAT RISING STORE CRIME

"Armed robberies, smash-and-run, grab-and-run, after-hours out-of-safe losses. Crimes against jewelry businesses are surging to heights unseen in over 20-30 years, and security experts are asking jewelers who are potential targets for robberies and smash-and-grabs to review and update their safety measures to protect themselves this holiday season and beyond. Learn more inside about what you can do to protect your business.

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Diamond District Partnership Annual Membership Meeting (via Zoom)

Wednesday, January 18th, 2023 at 9:30 AM

To receive a direct video link, please email: zoom@diamonddistrict.org

It's a brand new year and the best time to become a Diamond District Partnership member.

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FEBRUARY 2023

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

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DIAMOND DISTRICT HOTEL FOUNDATION REACHES THE GROUND FLOOR

The foundation walls of the 31-story Extell is constructing on the footprint of the old arcade site between 25 W 47th and 32 West 48th Streets are just starting to peek above the surface. But their days in the sun are numbered. Soon, they'll be buried beneath the 534 room, 213,158 square foot hotel set to rise 456 feet above the sidewalk.

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SWEETHEART DEAL FOR DIAMOND DISTRICT FIREBOMB TERRORIST

The Diamond District's day of infamy was May 20th, 2021. It began with a group of pro-Palestinian thugs driving through the Diamond District, shouting anti-Jewish threats and taunts at pedestrians—of whom, many were clearly Jewish—culminating with the detonation of an explosive device tossed at a group of sidewalk pedestrians. Among the mob of attackers was Wassem Awawdeh, who was seen on surveillance footage as a particularly active participant in the mob. For alleged his role in these terroristic activities, he was originally facing a 10 year sentence. Now we learn that Awawdeh has been given a plea deal that might amount to just short of nothing.

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MARCH 2023

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

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NEW DIAMOND DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP WEBSITE DEBUTS ON MARCH 1, 2023

Diamond District Partnership is thrilled to announce the launch of its long awaited website. Check it out now at www.diamonddistrict.org. Our new website replaces the familiar website the Diamond District Partnership has hosted for over a decade. While our previous website was once considered attractive and useful, as time and technology advanced users reported that it was difficult to navigate and contained content was far too wordy for practical use. The new site is packed with features that will provide instant value to both shoppers, tourists, and district merchants. We are confident that our new website will be an entirely new experience for every visitor.

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NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION ANNOUNCES CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL SIDEWALK SIGNS IN THE DIAMOND DISTRICT

Officials from the New York City Department of Sanitation recently reached out to the Diamond District Partnership to inform us about a pending citywide crackdown on illegal sidewalk signs. These signs are an all-too-familiar presence on sidewalks in our district and throughout New York City. The purpose of the Department of Sanitation crackdown is to address what they view as a source of blight and potential danger to pedestrians. This crackdown will apply to many other areas of the city where the number of illegal sidewalk signs are spiraling out of control.

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2023: A YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY 2023

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JSA ANNUAL CRIME REPORT REVEALS ALARMING RISE IN JEWELRY INDUSTRY LOSSES

In a year marked by unprecedented challenges, the jewelry industry has faced a significant increase in crime, according to the recently released Jewelers' Security Alliance (JSA) 2022 Annual Crime Report. The report, which provides a comprehensive analysis of on and off-premises crime, dollar losses, and state-specific data, paints a concerning picture of the current state of the industry.

Foremost, the JSA report reveals that the total dollar losses from crimes against U.S. jewelry firms in 2022 skyrocketed to \$129.4 million, an alarming 54.6% increase from the previous year's \$70.1 million. This surge in losses is the highest ever recorded by the JSA and indicative of a growing threat to the jewelry industry.

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NYC RETAILERS SHARE MIXED REACTIONS TO MAYOR'S ANTI-THEFT PLAN

New York City Mayor Eric Adams seemed serious when he unveiled his "comprehensive plan to combat retail theft across New York City's five boroughs" in late May. But many New Yorkers still aren't sure whether his comprehensive plan to combat dramatically rising crime in New York City is an actual plan or a total parody.

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AUGUST 2023

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PERSONAL LUXURY GOODS MARKET POISED FOR GROWTH DESPITE ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTIES

The global luxury goods market, on a promising growth trajectory after a stellar 2022, is poised for further expansion, despite potential economic hurdles, according to the 2023 Spring Luxury Study by Bain & Company and Altagamma. The report reveals the personal luxury goods market is expected to expand by 5-12% this year, potentially amassing around \$600-\$644 billion by 2030, more than double its value in 2020.

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SEPTEMBER 2023

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MAYOR ADAMS' 'GET SHEDS DOWN' INITIATIVE TAKES AIM AT CITYWIDE EYESORE

New York City is a global destination famed for its unique energy, culture, and architecture. Two out of three ain't bad, because New York's most familiar vertical construction of recent vintage is less the gleaming skyscrapers that never cease to rise, and more the grungy green sidewalk sheds or scaffolds that block building facades, hide the sky, and cloak the city in skeletal gloom.

No longer, said Mayor Adams this past July, when he informed New Yorkers that after decades of invasive growth, those oppressive miles of pipes and plywood were finally approaching the end of the road.

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APRIL 2023

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DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

DIAMOND DISTRICT EXTENDS WARM WELCOME TO SBS COMMISSIONER KEVIN D. KIM

On this winter's sole snowy morning in late February, the Diamond District Partnership extended a warm welcome to NYC Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin D. Kim. Before a short tour of the district, Commissioner Kim sat down with a small group of district property- and business-owners to discuss a range of weighty issues pressing on New York City's real estate and small business communities.

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POLITICAL ACTION ON SCAFFOLDING REFORM FINALLY GOES MAINSTREAM

Sidewalk scaffolds, also known as street sheds, are ubiquitous, unsightly, and by now, mostly invisible to most New Yorkers. But those who notice them, such as our BID, despite them, frankly, there's little to love about the city's endless vertical maze of metal poles, wooden planks, and dim lighting. Their multiple uses include reducing street visibility, creating pedestrian sidewalk bottlenecks, breeding crime, and, equally unforgivable, they're just plain ugly. The Diamond District Partnership has been a vocal champion for scaffolding reform for many years. This past March, fed up with the worsening business and aesthetic longevity of NYC's scaffolds, New York City Council Member Keith Powers and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, our representatives in local government and members of our Board of Directors, at long last, thrust the issue of scaffolding reform into the mainstream.

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MAY 2023

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DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS MONTH COMES TO THE DIAMOND DISTRICT

NYC Dept of Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin Kim launches National Small Business Month in the crown jewel of the New York City retail universe with an important editorial detailing the small business landscape of New York City and how it affects the thousands of small businesses that make up the core of the 47th Street Diamond District.

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JUNE 2023

VOL. 155

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

47TH STREET WAITS FOR NEWS ABOUT EXTELL'S "URBAN PRAIRIE." AND WAITS... AND WAITS...

There's a hole in the heart of the Diamond District. Where 2-10W/47th once soared heavenward is now as empty and flat as an urban prairie. The footprint of the row of demolished buildings is just one part of a vast parcel of empty land extending from West 46th to West 47th Streets and nearly covering the entire length of Fifth Avenue between West 46th and 47th. Laying silently behind a crab green plywood wall that blocks the yawning moonscape from view, one could sense the expense trembling with potential. But right now, whatever comes next is anyone's guess.

Continued on page 10

GIA RETURNS TO PRINTING DIAMOND DOSSIER REPORTS

Acting on the concerns of a broad range of its clients, GIA has reversed course away from its next generation digital reports with a return to its decidedly last-century printed GIA Diamond Dossier reports. The reversal began on April 9th, after which all diamonds in GIA laboratories for the Diamond Dossier service will now be returned with a printed GIA Diamond Dossier report.

Article continued on page 4

FLOWERS AND FLAGS FLY AS THE DIAMOND DISTRICT READIES FOR SUMMER

You know summer is upon us when flowers and flags appear from one end of the Diamond district to the other. As you walk the street, take a moment to look up and look around. Make time to soak in the sunlight and the sights. Here's to a safe and successful summer!

Article continued on page 2

Well, that was quick. It seems like just yesterday we were producing last year's "Year in Review." And here we are again, looking back to celebrate and reflect on another year gone by. If 2022 was the year we got to appreciate life after COVID, then 2023 was the year we enjoyed the luxury of forgetting about it altogether. This past year may not have been typical. Yet returning to a life where the surreal irregularities of a pandemic seem more abstract than an unpleasant memory is quite a pleasant place to be.

OCTOBER 2023

VOL. 158

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

NEW REPORT OFFERS FRESH INSIGHTS INTO AFFLUENT AFRICAN AMERICAN JEWELRY CONSUMERS

THE MVEye, an analytics firm specializing in the gem, jewelry, and watch sectors, in partnership with The Magazine, has released a report titled "Crafting Unity: Adorning Diversity: Engaging Affluent African American Consumers in the Luxury Jewelry Domain." This study focuses on individuals in the USA, aged between 20 to 59, who self-identify as Black/African American with an annual household income exceeding \$100K. The report findings offer valuable guidance and perspective to retailers seeking to grow their outreach and relationships with the base of African American jewelry consumers.

Continued on page 8

NOVEMBER 2023

VOL. 160

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

HAMAS TERROR SUPPORTERS PROMPT FURTHER HEIGHTENED SECURITY IN THE DIAMOND DISTRICT

Between the constant attention of NYPD and various other law enforcement agencies, together with supplemental security provided by the BID, the level of security in the Diamond District is typically quite sufficient. With tensions running high due to the murderous rampage perpetrated in southern Israel by Hamas terrorists on October 7th, the level of security on 47th Street has been increased overall, and even further when circumstances dictate. Every effort is made to ensure the overarching safety of those who work and shop in the district. Recently protests that past October 8th necessitated the decision to close the district to vehicular traffic. We are very appreciative of the outstanding responsiveness and communication of those who serve to protect our city and nation.

DECEMBER 2023

VOL. 161

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY

DIAMOND DISTRICT: READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The Diamond District Partnership has been hard at work these past few months preparing the district for the annual eruption of shopping and pedestrian activity that reliably sweeps through the district from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day nearly every year. Some new preparations for this season new lighting displays along the district sidewalks, and nearly doubling the number of trash cans on the street to keep the district a clean and litter-free as possible. We pray for a safe, successful and joyous holiday season that proves good to our bottom lines and even better to our families and those we love and hold dear.

Continued on page 10

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SUBSCRIBE

ARE YOU A "FIRST LOOK" SUBSCRIBER?

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Diamond District Partnership Annual Membership Meeting (via Zoom)

Annual Meeting on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 @ 9:30 AM

To receive a direct video link, please email: zoom@diamonddistrict.org



580 Fifth Avenue, Suite 323
New York, NY 10036
(212) 302-5739
www.diamonddistrict.org

2024 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Diamond District Partnership / 47th Street Business Improvement District (BID) is a non-profit organization established to provide important supplemental services to elevate the commercial viability of the Diamond District.

All property owners, commercial tenants, and residents of W. 47th Street between 5th & 6th Ave.
(*Excluding 580 Fifth Avenue & 576/578 Fifth Avenues*) are eligible to become a registered member.

**** PLEASE NOTE: There is no cost or fee to become a Registered Member. ****

Membership entitles you to vote for various issues related to BID operations at our annual meetings, serve on the board, and receive timely information related to the Diamond District, and a special “FIRST LOOK” at our official publication—Diamond District Monthly.

IT'S EASY TO APPLY:

(1) Fill out application (2) Take a picture of it (3) Email to: signup@diamonddistrict.org

Please check one:

- ☐ Property Owner (You own property located on 47th Street)
- ☐ Commercial Tenant (You own a business, but not property, on 47th Street—excluding 580/576/578 Fifth Ave)
- ☐ Residential Tenant (You reside on 47th Street)

Name: _____ Title: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Property/properties owned within the 47th Street Diamond District: _____

District Business Address: _____

Mailing Address (if not same): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section continued from page 9

NRF Survey Forecasts New Heights for Winter Holiday Spending



As the winter holidays draw nearer, American consumers are gearing up to spend more than ever on festive celebrations according to a recent survey by the National Retail Federation (NRF), conducted in collaboration with Prosper Insights & Analytics. NRF is a leading resource for valuable insights and trends forecasting related to retail markets.

The 2023 holiday spending survey projects average spending for the 2023 winter holidays of \$875 per U.S. consumer—a \$42 increase from the 2022 holiday season, which aligns with the average holiday budget over the past five years.

NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay highlighted the significance of the winter holidays in American culture, noting that “The winter holidays are an important tradition to many American families, and shoppers are prioritizing their holiday purchases for the people most important to them.” Shay also pointed out that retailers have been preparing extensively to meet this demand, offering various shopping events and discounts throughout the extended holiday season.

Breaking down the anticipated spending, approximately \$620 is earmarked for gifts, while another \$255 is allocated for seasonal items like decorations and food. This year, nearly all U.S. adults (92%) are planning to celebrate events such as Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, consistent with last year’s data.

Interestingly, 43% of holiday shoppers begin their shopping spree before November to manage their budget better, avoid last-minute stress, and steer clear of crowds. However, most shoppers (62%) are expected to wrap up their shopping only in December.

Prosper Executive Vice President of Strategy Phil Rist suggests that early sales might prompt consumers to start their holiday shopping sooner, with seven in 10 holiday shoppers considering taking advantage of October sales events.

In terms of shopping destinations, 58% of consumers plan to shop online, followed by department stores (49%), discount stores (48%), and grocery stores (44%). Gift cards remain the most sought-after gift item, followed by clothing or accessories, books, video games, and personal care or beauty items.

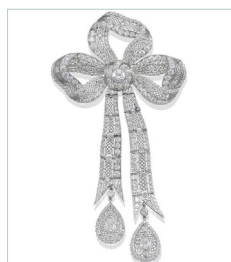
An emerging trend is the gifting of experiences, with 23% of shoppers planning to give such gifts, aligning with last year’s trend and showing an increase from 19% in 2021. Despite the higher spending budget, consumers are actively seeking sales and promotions, with 62% stating that these factors are more critical this year than in the previous year.

The survey, which provides valuable insights into consumer behavior and spending during key periods like the holidays, was conducted with 8,103 adult participants between October 2 and 9, 2023, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.1 percentage points.

SOURCE: Lottie Watts for National Retail Federation (NRF)

Article continued from page 5

Barbara Walter's Jewelry Collection Auction at Bonhams Honors Legendary Journalist's Legacy



1910 diamond bow brooch from the Barbara Walters collection. Image from Bonhams

At a recent auction in New York, Bonhams presented an exclusive collection of fine jewelry from the estate of the legendary journalist Barbara Walters, with all 94 pieces successfully sold. Among these, a circa 1910 diamond bow brooch that Walters wore to Sir Elton John's 60th birthday party in 2007 fetched \$35,840.

The auction, titled "Barbara Walters: American Icon," featured a diverse array of Walters' jewelry, including her 13.84-carat, D-color, VVS2-clarity Harry Winston engagement ring from her third husband, Merv Adelson. This piece, a focal point of the auction, sold for \$699,000, aligning with its pre-sale estimate of \$600,000 to \$900,000.

Notably, a pair of "Gemset" earrings designed by Joel Arthur Rosenthal, famously known as JAR, adorned with spessartite garnets and rubellites, garnered \$229,100, slightly exceeding the lower end of its estimated range of \$200,000 to \$300,000. Walters, known for her bold personality, owned several pieces by JAR, known for his "bold and audacious designs."

Another highlight was a pair of JAR earrings, featuring tourmaline, yellow sapphire, and diamonds, made specifically for Walters. These earrings achieved a sale price of \$229,100, near their estimated top range of \$150,000 to \$250,000. Additionally, her JAR paisley-shaped earrings set with peridot, tourmaline, sapphire, and diamonds sold for \$203,700, within their estimated range of \$180,000 to \$250,000.

Antique pieces from Walters' collection also performed impressively. Her Cartier Art Deco watch, set with diamonds and gemstones, realized \$32,000, surpassing its highest pre-sale estimate of \$7,000 by nearly five times. The Belle Epoque diamond bow brooch achieved \$35,840, exceeding its \$20,000 high estimate. Furthermore, her custom Harry Winston "BW" diamond necklace doubled its highest pre-sale estimate of \$7,000, selling for \$14,080.

The "Barbara Walters: American Icon" sale also included furniture, artwork, and personal items from Walters' Manhattan residence, contributing to the auctioning of

items from her \$8 million estate.

Barbara Walters, who passed away in December 2022 at the age of 93, was a pioneering figure in journalism. She was the first female co-host on NBC's "Today" show and the first woman anchor of a network evening news program, ABC Evening News. Her tenure on ABC's "20/20" and her role in creating "The View" further cemented her status as an influential media icon.

Throughout her career, Walters earned 11 Emmy Awards, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and induction into the Television Academy Hall of Fame.

SOURCE: Michelle Graffis for National Jeweler

De Beers Responds to Retail Demand for Compact Lab-Grown Diamond Detectors



The rising need for lab-grown diamond detection in retail settings is driving the development of more compact screening devices, according to De Beers' innovation division. This update was shared during a LinkedIn Live session this past November by De Beers Group Ignite.

Retailers increasingly rely on such detection instruments for back office or sales floor use as a quick means to reassure jewelers and customers in the integrity of their transactions. Danie Kruger, head of commercial products and services at De Beers Group Ignite, emphasized this demand during the discussion. "We've definitely seen overall in the industry that instruments are getting smaller," he remarked. "From a retailing point of view, it's become the ask, just because of front-of-store [demand]."

Another participant in session, Samantha Sibley, De Beers Group Ignite's technical educator, and Joshua Freedman, Rapaport News Editor, each noted that this trend is more prominent at the retail level than further up the supply chain.

The industry is also adapting to the increased need for screening finished jewelry, which presents new challenges for equipment manufacturers. Sibley observed a shift from predominantly lab-based or wholesale-level screening a decade ago to a higher

demand in retail settings.

“[There’s] definitely more demand in that retail environment,” Sibley explained. “And then of course it’s all dependent on the finished piece. So, measuring a single solitaire ring is a lot easier than a very intricate design with diamonds all around and underneath.”

Amid these developments, De Beers is gearing up for the launch of its AMS Micro device, which uses robotic technology to screen melee diamonds as small as 0.001 carats. An existing device, the AMS2 from the Automated Melee Screening (AMS) range, is suitable only for stones of 0.0032 carats and larger.

The AMS Micro, though originally scheduled for delivery in early 2023, is now estimated to arrive on the market within the next several months. According to Kruger, De Beers anticipates selling at least 15 of these machines in 2024, reflecting the growing market need for advanced, compact diamond screening technology in the retail sector.

SOURCE: Joshua Freedman for Rapaport

Fashion and Beauty Industries Unite Against Anti-Semitism



In a powerful move, over 1,000 individuals from the fashion and beauty industries have come together to sign an open letter calling for a unified stand against the growing concerns

of anti-Semitism and racism. This group consists of a diverse group of creative professionals, encompassing writers, designers, publicists, agents, influencers, casting directors, hair and makeup artists, buyers, chief marketing officers, and chief executive officers.

Among the signers are fashion icons Nicky Hilton Rothschild, Donna Karan, Christopher Kane, Rachel Zoe; top models Bar Refaeli, Daisy Lowe, and Erin O’Connor; cosmetics mogul Bobbi Brown; and Caroline Rush, CEO of the British Fashion Council. Support from the jewelry sector, includes Eddie Levian, CEO of Le Vian, and designer Dana Levy.

The letter states that “Anti-Semitism, in any form, has no place in our society, let alone within an industry that prides itself on creativity and acceptance,” and advocates for mandatory diversity and sensitivity training for all employees in the fashion sector to foster a deeper understanding of various cultures and religions, including Judaism.

The letter also underscores the need for transparency in addressing and combating anti-Semitism and racism, urging fashion companies to denounce acts of anti-Semitism and to take prompt and decisive measures against individuals or brands engaging in such.

The initiative was spearheaded by Deborah Lyons, creative director of Maison Lyons. “Fashion has always had the power to celebrate diversity and inclusivity, but it is disheartening to witness acts of discrimination and anti-Semitism within our industry,” said Lyons. “We must take a stand.”

The recent conflict between Israel and Hamas began October 7 with the horrific, sadistic and unprovoked massacre of over 1200 Israeli men, woman, and children, ranging in age from newborns to holocaust survivors in their 90s, by Hamas terrorists who invaded southern Israel on a quiet Saturday morning during the Sukkot holiday.

Rather than garner support and sympathy, the demonic attack and justified Israeli response to dislodge the Hamas dictatorship stranglehold on Gaza for nearly two decades, sparked a meteoric increase in anti-Semitic incidents globally.

The US alone has seen a 388% rise in anti-Jewish attacks from October 7 to 23, as reported by the Anti-Defamation League. In the UK, the Community Security Trust recorded at least 805 anti-Semitic incidents between October 7 and 27, a significant jump from the 102 incidents during the same period in 2022. Heightened security measures have been implemented around Jewish-owned businesses, kosher restaurants, and Jewish schools.

Lyons shared her personal experiences with anti-Semitism, noting, “Within three days of the October 7 terror attack, I lost 1,000 followers because I posted about releasing hostages and calling for peace. But it did not stop there. I have received messages saying I should go back to Germany and be killed. I, like so many people in the Jewish community, know people in Israel affected by the Hamas attack, including people who have had to leave their homes because of rocket attacks, or whole families that have been wiped out. It’s heartbreaking.”

SOURCE: Anthony DeMarco for Rapaport

DIAMOND DISTRICT: READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Diamond District Partnership Executive Director, Avi Fertig, proudly posing with one of the district's seven new garbage bins



Shimmering holiday lighting welcomes holiday shoppers to the West 47th Street Diamond District

The Diamond District Partnership has been hard at work these past few months preparing the district for the annual arrival of shoppers and pedestrians sweeping through the district between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Among these new preparations is a brand new lighting display from one end of the district to the other and, keep the district as clean and litter-free as possible, nearly doubling the number of trash cans placed on district sidewalks. Along with these preparations, we pray for each and every one a safe, successful and joyous holiday season for our families and all those we love and hold dear.

DIAMOND DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON JANUARY 17, 2024

Make sure to mark your calendar for the Diamond District Partnership Annual Meeting of the Membership scheduled for Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 9:30 AM. This important membership meeting is an opportunity for all BID members to participate in the issues that affect our district over the course of the coming year. Every member has a voice and a vote. To become a member, make sure to sign up on the BID (www.diamonddistrict.org) or fill out the membership form on page 12. **Membership is free to all eligible applicants.**

Surge in Off-Site Jewelry Robberies

The high-end jewelry industry has been rocked in recent months by a dramatic spike in thefts and robberies of traveling salespersons and retailers transporting merchandise. These crimes occurred on highways and streets, in parking lots, outside hotels and retail stores, and even at a gas station.

These robberies are frequently violent and perpetrated in a manner that the victim is taken completely by surprise. Here are a few known examples of such incidents:

Los Angeles, California; October 24, 2023:

Four gang members deliberately crashed their car into a salesperson visiting from Hong Kong traveling on the I-10 Freeway. The thieves swarmed the disabled car, forced the salesperson to exit his car and sit on his knees with arms raised, then ransacked the car. After removing a considerable quantity of merchandise, the thieves escaped into a waiting getaway vehicle.

Miami, Florida; October 17, 2023:

While filling up his vehicle at a gas station, a jeweler was distracted by a female motorist asking for assistance pumping gas. As the victim was providing this assistance, a group of suspects snuck behind the jeweler's vehicle, opened the trunk of the car, and removed a substantial quantity of merchandise stored inside.

Rutherford, New Jersey; October 29, 2023:

An exhibitor loading merchandise into his car outside the hotel in the Meadowlands after a jewelry show was accosted and robbed by four thieves.

Providence, Rhode Island; November 1, 2023:

A traveling salesperson parked in a retail store parking lot. When the victim went inside the store to make a purchase, suspects drove up to his unattended car,

cut the trunk lock and removed a large quantity of merchandise stored inside.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; November 14, 2023:

A salesperson from New York experienced a sudden flat tire. While the salesperson was sitting in his car on the side of the road calling road service, a group of suspects surrounded his vehicle, opened the passenger door, and grabbed a bag containing merchandise.

Los Angeles, California; November 14, 2023:

A diamond dealer walking to his car was robbed of his merchandise in a parking lot by an armed assailant.

Huntington Beach, California; November 16, 2023:

A team of suspects violently crashed their cars into a vehicle being driven by a jewelry store employee on the I-405 Freeway. After forcing the employee from the vehicle, they grabbed a bag of merchandise stored in the trunk of the vehicle then sped away in a waiting, white Ford Explorer.

Queens, New York; October 16, 2023:

A jeweler walking on a New York City sidewalk was followed by a thief traveling on a motorized scooter. The thief grabbed his bag of merchandise and sped off.

Please Note the Following Recommendations from the Jewelers' Security Alliance to Prevent Becoming an Off-Site Robbery Victim

When leaving sales calls or any jewelry premise, whether in a car or on foot, as a rule, jewelers should always assume they are being followed and take evasive action such as driving or walking in opposite directions, making U-turns or other abrupt changes in direction and movements to see if they can detect the presence of a possible perpetrator.

When carrying merchandise, jewelers must be skeptical of all strangers who talk to them and consider such interactions as a deliberate attempt to distract their attention.

Jewelers should NEVER leave jewelry merchandise in an unattended vehicle. Merchandise is very frequently stolen from parked cars and it's important to note that insurance policies ordinarily do not cover such losses.

If any mechanical issues occur while traveling in a vehicle, like a flat tire or overheating engine, a jeweler's immediate mindset must be that they are being targeted for a crime. They should quickly move to a safe location, rather than stopping or waiting for help on-site.

When leaving trade shows, it is best to ship merchandise if it is feasible. Robberies often occur outside the venue, sometimes as long as the next day after the event.

Deliberate Crash Disables Diamond Dealer's Car in Frightening Freeway Holdup



Freeway car crash robbery

The robbery took place in broad daylight on the I-10 Freeway in the Mid-City area of Los Angeles and was captured in viral videos taken by passing motorists.

According to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), the incident occurred around 1:30 p.m. on October 24, when four men in black ski masks deliberately crashed a black Dodge Caravan, into a black Alfa Romeo heading eastbound on the I-10 Freeway.

In the video, a swarm of masked men are first seen surrounding the wrecked and smoking Alfa Romeo. They force the driver, later identified as a jewelry dealer visiting from Hong Kong, to kneel on the roadway with his hands in the air as they ransacked the cabin of his vehicle and trunk.

The thieves then fled in a waiting Chevrolet Malibu. The jewelry dealer was reported to be deeply shaken by the ordeal and left the U.S. the day following the robbery.

Los Angeles law enforcement officials say the dealer was likely targeted by a well-organized group of thieves who followed him from his business location. They believe this incident is connected to a series of similar targeted jewelry robberies across Southern California in recent months.

SOURCE: Summer Lin for Los Angeles Times; NBC4 I-Team

Ex-Con Pleads Guilty to 'Bling Bishop' Lamor Whitehead Livestream Stickup



Brooklyn's Bishop Lamor Whitehead. Image from YouTube

Say-Quan Pollack, a 25-year-old former convict from Brooklyn, entered a guilty plea for the high-profile robbery of Lamor Whitehead, known as the 'Bling Bishop', while Whitehead was live-streaming sermon at his Canarsie-based church in 2022.

Pleading to Judge William Kuntz in Brooklyn federal court, Pollack admitted his role in the crime, saying, "On July 24 of 2022

in Brooklyn, I participated in a robbery and took another

person's property with a threat." While the maximum sentence for the robbery is 20 years, Pollack's plea agreement allows him to appeal if the judge hands down any sentence above 7¼ years.

This is Pollack's second plea agreement. The first was rescinded in September 2023, when he refused to follow through on the terms of the deal, resulting in a stern reprimand from the judge who reminded Pollack that, "This is real life. We are not playing around here. You want to go to trial, we'll see you at trial."

Pollack's criminal history includes a 2016 armed robbery conviction, resulting in a five-year prison term, as per court documents.

Pastor Whitehead, who was present at the courtroom hearing, told reporters outside that he wanted to see Pollack receive the maximum penalty citing the traumatic event he and his family were subjected to, saying, "These guys came into a house of worship, a house of worship, with guns, right? It don't get no worse than that." He described the fear and trauma he and his wife experienced during the robbery, specifically having a gun in his face just steps away from his 8-month-old daughter.

The robbery unfolded at Leaders of Tomorrow International church in Canarsie, where armed intruders interrupted Whitehead's sermon, stealing over \$1 million worth of jewelry from him and his wife, who was holding their infant daughter at the time. There was initial speculation that Whitehead, himself, had staged the robbery. No motive for doing so was ever specified and these suspicions were forgotten after the arrest of Pollack and his accomplice, Juwan Anderson.

SOURCE: John Annese for the New York Daily News

Manhunt Continues for Jewelry Store "Construction Worker" Robbery Suspect



Construction worker jewelry stickup. Image from Monterey County Sheriff

The Sheriff's Office in Monterey County, which is located on the central cost of California, is seeking suspect involved in the armed robbery of a jewelry store in the Prune Tree Shopping Center. The incident occurred in the middle of the day and has since been the source of considerable alarm among local business owners and residents.

Dressed as a construction worker, the suspect entered the Country Jeweler, located in the Prune Tree Shopping Center. He was wearing an orange helmet, an orange vest, a bright yellow shirt, and was carrying a pink

Ace Hardware bucket.

According to the Sheriff's deputies, once inside the store, the thief produced a large silver handgun from the bucket.

Stevie Tapia, owner of Stevie's Family Restaurant across from the jewelry store, expressed his shock when interviewed by local television news reporter, saying, "It's crazy, nobody would ever imagine that something like that would happen here." He added, "That's definitely very scary for the rest of us here in the shopping center. It's definitely not a situation that anybody would like to go through."

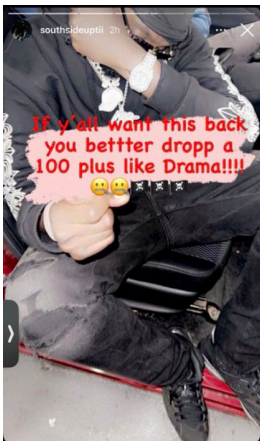
The deputies revealed that the suspect had previously entered the jewelry store, asking for directions in a manner that seemed suspicious, prompting the employees to ask him to leave.

Jason Smith, a spokesman for the Monterey County Sheriff's Office described this interaction, saying, "He [asked] for directions, however, the directions and the questions he was asking just didn't seem to make sense and didn't resonate, just seemed really odd, which set off the red flag and prompting [store employees] to ask him to leave."

The man returned shortly after in the construction worker disguise shortly and robbed the store of approximately \$50,000 worth of custom jewelry. During the robbery, one of the two employees in the store reportedly fell and sustained an injury while attempting to chase the perpetrator across the shopping center parking lot.

SOURCE: Felix Cortez for KSBW

Twitch streamer "Annoying" Robbed at Gunpoint for \$100,000 Diamond Chain



\$100,000 ransom demand for online streamer's stolen diamond chain. Image from X.com

A Twitch streamer who goes by the screen name, "Annoying," was robbed of a diamond chain valued at \$100,000 by a gun-toting thief while live-streaming on the popular online gaming platform with a group of friends. Later that day, the robber posted an offer on social media to return the chain for a \$100,000 payment.

The robbery during took place on October 7th while "Annoying" could be seen sitting in a vehicle listening to music and chatting with his friends during a visit to Toronto.

In the live stream, the group is laughing and joking together next to an open car door when a figure suddenly appears dressed in all grey wearing a hood and hiding his face with a mask pointing a gun straight at fellow streamer, "Cap."

The thief can be seen entering the car and heard saying, "Let's go, give me everything," demanding the diamond chain be handed over.

Just as the screen turns black, one of the group members can be heard, saying: "Close the door, close the f***ing door," and another responding, "Chill bro, chill."

No one was reported hurt in the robbery. The thief later that day posted an offer on social media to return the chain in exchange for a \$100,000 ransom. There is no word yet if this transaction took place.

SOURCE: Dexerto.com

Do Over Diamond Theft at Roosevelt Field Mall



Roosevelt Field Mall

In a repeat of a similar robbery just this past August, a masked thief targeted the Macy's at Roosevelt Field Mall, escaping with diamond necklaces valued at approximately \$30,000.

According to Nassau County police, the mid-November heist involved a perpetrator dressed entirely in black attire aside from a pair of white gloves shattered the glass countertop at the jewelry display from which he removed three diamond necklaces valued at approximately \$30,000 and fled on foot.

This latest robbery mirrors an August 26th incident at the same Macy's store, during which 25-year-old Hempstead resident, Joshua Wilson, allegedly used a baseball bat to smash a display case and stole jewelry worth more than \$370,000.

Wilson was apprehended less than an hour later and charged with attempted robbery, attempted grand larceny, and criminal possession of a weapon. As for the latest Roosevelt Field robbery, no suspect has yet been found and police are still searching for leads.

SOURCE: John Valentijohn for Newsday

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