

DIAMOND DISTRICT MONTHLY



BE THE FUTURE OF THE 47TH STREET DIAMOND DISTRICT

In case you haven't noticed the banner just below this paragraph, the Annual Membership Meeting of the Diamond District Partnership is scheduled for 9:30 AM on Wednesday, January 17th, 2024. Our annual meeting is an opportunity for all BID members to learn how our district is doing and what our BID is doing to keep it that way. Eligible members who attend get to vote on various items essential for the coming year. Becoming a member is easy for eligible business and property owners. Eligibility to become a voting member requires one to either a business or property, or be a resident, of West 47th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues. To become a member, head to page 12 of this magazine and follow the instructions. Or simply visit diamonddistrict.org/about-us and scroll down to the online membership application. We look forward to greeting all our members on January 17th.

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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diamonddistrict.org

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friend,

“December is about looking back. In January, we look forward. And there’s a lot to look forward to in the coming year.”

The jolly rainbows and gumdrops observation above is mine, the first sentence of my Diamond District Monthly letter in January 2020. The letter continues on with an ambitious to-do list for an anticipated twelve months of clear skies and smooth sailing.

Do you need a hint for what happened next? It starts with a “C.”

I’ve become more cautious before making large January pronouncements of future goals. Lately, I keep ambitious goals for the future closer to the chest. You never know. But there’s still one pronouncement I have no trouble saying loud and clear:

Join the BID and you’ll be glad you did.

What’s so great about joining? A whole lot. The Diamond District Partnership is the nucleus of the Diamond District. The work we do touches every inch of 47th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues.

Whether it has to do with keeping the street clean, keeping it safe, keeping it festive, keeping it lit, and keeping it a priority among city officials who look out for our needs, and help us find solutions to issues whenever they materialize. The BID is at the forefront of these and other efforts to ensure the Diamond District continues to be the best it can be.

The more people who join the BID the better opportunity we have to represent the street and the needs of every stakeholder who considers the district an important place in their lives.

They say ‘you gotta’ be in it to win it.’ I don’t know who the original “they” was, but I’m more than happy to use the expression when I urge all eligible members of the Diamond District to join the BID and participate in our annual membership meeting advertised on the front and back covers of this issue of Diamond District Monthly.

We make it very easy to join: Go to page 12 and follow the instructions or visit our website at www.diamonddistrict.org/about-us and scroll down to the membership application.

So, now that you’re in it, how do you win it? I’ll leave you with the closing paragraph of my forgotten January 2020 letter:

“The Diamond District Partnership is one of 76 Business Improvement Districts in the five boroughs of New York City ... [but] out of 76 BIDs, only one is your home. And with each passing day, you will see the Diamond District become a home you are proud to call yours, more than ever before.”

It was true then and it’s true now.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Avi Fertig'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Avi Fertig

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Avi Fertig

IN THE NEWS

Relief after Ritz Paris Cleanup Results in \$800,000 Diamond Ring Recovery



Instead of being cleaned by thieves, a guest at the world-famous hotel was delighted to learn that her \$800,000 diamond ring went missing due to conscientious housekeeping.

In an amusing turn of events at the famed Ritz Hotel in Paris, a missing diamond ring valued at \$800,000 was discovered inside a vacuum cleaner bag by the hotel's security team. The ring's owner, a wealthy Malaysian businesswoman, discovered that her ring had vanished from her hotel room while she was out shopping in the city.

Hotel security personnel theorized that the woman may have dropped her ring in her hotel room, where it was unintentionally vacuumed up by housekeeping staffers. A meticulous search through a number of hotel vacuum cleaners site proved them correct.

Initially suspecting theft by a hotel employee, the guest reported the loss to the Parisian police. The ring was found two days later. The hotel's management had maintained throughout the investigation that there had been no theft.

The Ritz, renowned for its luxury and esteemed clientele, has had several high-profile incidents involving missing jewelry. In 2018, a Saudi royal family member claimed the loss of around \$900,000 worth of jewelry from her suite, and in another incident, a guest was targeted in her room by several masked men with axes and knives who got away with millions of dollars of jewels.

Following the ring's recovery, the hotel management expressed gratitude towards their staff for their integrity and professionalism in handling the situation. They also extended a complimentary three-night stay to the guest, who had since traveled to London. It remains uncertain whether the businesswoman will accept this offer. The ring is currently in police custody, awaiting collection by its owner.

SOURCE: Forbes; UPI; CBS News

Ruby Filled with Zinc Glass is a First for GIA



3.53 ct lead-glass filling lab-grown ruby. Photo from GIA

The Gemological Institute of America (GIA) recently encountered a unique zinc glass-filled ruby, a treatment previously undocumented in the gemology field. The 8.57-carat heart-shaped ruby, submitted for identification, displayed characteristics typical of a ruby, but with peculiarities in its fractures. GIA's research, detailed in the fall 2023 edition of "Gems & Gemology," marks a first in the study of gemstone treatments.

Standard gemological tests initially suggested a routine ruby, but closer examination revealed fractures containing a whitish filler and air pockets. This unusual filler differed from the commonly used lead glass, lacking the "blue flash effect" associated with lead glass-filled rubies.

Shane McClure, GIA's global director of colored stones services, shared insights with National Jeweler, explaining the lab's investigative process. "If there was lead in [the stone], which is what they suspected to start with, it's easily detectable by that method," McClure said regarding the initial EDXRF test, which surprisingly detected zinc instead of the anticipated lead.

Further analysis using laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) revealed the filler to be a silica-based glass with zinc, an unprecedented discovery in gem treatment. "Zinc had not been documented, as far as we know, as an element in one of these glasses they use to fill rubies," McClure stated.

Glass filling, a method to enhance clarity and durability of rubies, has evolved since the 1980s. Lead glass, discovered in early 2004, improved clarity but lacked the durability of its silica-based predecessor. The zinc glass in this ruby seemed to enhance durability but not clarity. "In this particular case, [the filler] wasn't doing much to improve the clarity for whatever reason. It could've been poorly filled or damaged subsequently. There's a number of reasons that might be the case," McClure added.

McClure speculated that the exploration of new metals like zinc in glass fillers might be driven by consumer concerns about lead, leading to innovations in gemstone treatment techniques.

SOURCE: GIA; Lauren McLemore for National Jeweler

Unique Designs Suit Cites Signet for Excessive Customer Refunds



The self-described “largest wholesale supplier of fine jewelry in the United States,” Unique Designs, filed a lawsuit this past November in the U.S. District Court in Ohio against jewelry giant

Signet. As per a report by Rob Bates from JCK online, the suit stems from 2020 when Signet discovered jewelry items mass-produced for Unique by a third-party supplier contained glass stones instead of the specified lab-created nanocrystal.

In response, Signet offered full refunds to customers who had purchased the affected jewelry, along with a \$100 Signet gift card and allowed them to keep the pieces. Signet, which incurred a \$1.6 million loss due to these actions subsequently charged the cost to Unique.

Unique Designs, which was not party to the customer

remuneration decision, argues that more cost-effective solutions were available, specifically offering customers replacement items with the correct lab-created gems. Unique Designs estimates that the cost of this remedy would have been around \$200,000.

The complaint alleges that Signet’s decision to refund and compensate customers violated the terms of their Master Supply Agreement. According to this agreement, Signet was required to either reject and return the items at its expense or pay for the items sold.

The lawsuit claims Signet owes Unique Designs a total of \$2.2 million, which includes \$1.8 million for “unauthorized chargebacks,” \$350,000 for unreturned jewelry samples and consignment items, and \$40,000 in open receivables. The complaint states, “It would be unjust for Signet not to return the items or pay for [them].”

Unique Designs is further charging Signet with breach of contract and owed money, among other counts, and is seeking a minimum of \$2.2 million in damages.

SOURCE: Rob Bates for JCK Online

Section continued on page 14



Exclusive Discount!

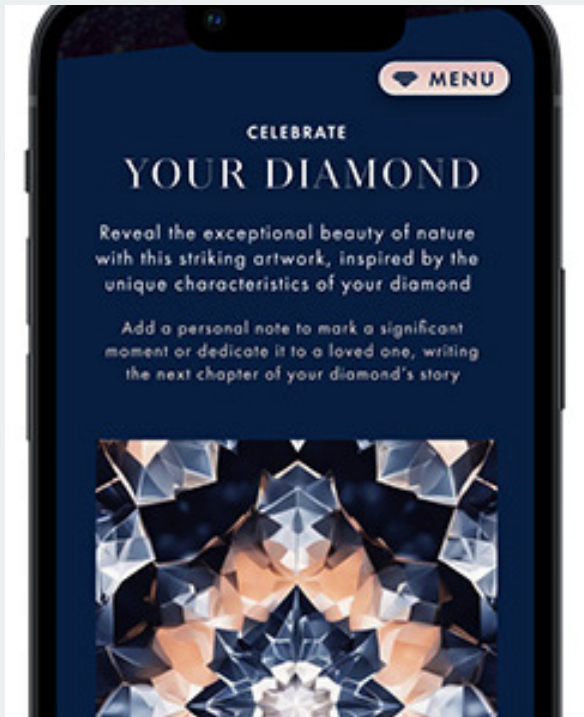
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De Beers' "Origin Stories" Lets Consumers Get to Know Their Diamond



De Beers has launched a new initiative to enhance the diamond buying experience by providing customers with unique "origin stories" for their diamonds. This pilot program, currently being tested in 65 stores across the United States, includes select retailers like Ben Bridge, Lugaro Jewellers, Diamonds International, and Tara Fine Jewelry, according to a news report by Rob Bates of JCK Online.

Each diamond sold under this program is accompanied by a QR code, which, when scanned, reveals detailed information about the specific diamond. David Prager, De Beers' chief brand officer and executive vice president, explains the concept: "It's not about all diamonds, but it's about the consumer's particular diamond."

To be eligible for this program, diamonds must meet certain criteria: they must be at least 0.8 carats, sourced from a De Beers mine, tracked on the De Beers' Tracr platform, graded by the De Beers' Institute of Diamonds, and sold through a De Beers sightholder.

The QR code reveals several unique aspects of the diamond, including its rough form, a rarity score comparing its quality characteristics with others in De Beers' annual production, and information on its 'birthmarks', a new term De Beers uses for inclusions. "We want to showcase why inclusions are not imperfections but they're unique stories that give the diamond its character," says Prager.

Additionally, the program features artificial intelligence-generated art derived from the diamond's internal features and a timeline highlighting that diamonds were formed before the existence of dinosaurs. "We want people to look at their fingers and say, 'My God, that's a billion years old,' and stop and think about that," Prager adds.

Prager anticipates that this unique content will encourage social media sharing, much like how engagement news is shared. He says, "In the same way people go on Instagram now and share information about their engagement, we think people will share their story about their diamonds with their close circle of friends, and possibly even the impact their diamond has made."

Unlike De Beers' Forevermark, which is limited to diamonds of certain color and clarity, the "origin story" diamonds do not have such quality restrictions, as De Beers aims to keep entry barriers low. Currently, there is no premium charged for these diamonds, but this aspect and others will be evaluated during the test run.

Prager notes the increasing importance of provenance information, especially with impending G7 sanctions on Russian diamonds. "Our view is understanding the provenance of the diamond can connect the consumer better to the diamond," he concludes.

SOURCE: Rob Bates for JCK Online

WWF Report to Jewelry and Watch Makers: It's Time for More Transparency



The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) says the time for more sustainability and transparency in the jewelry and watch industry is now. In their report titled "Time for Change," the WWF critically assessed the environmental performance of 21 renowned luxury watch and jewelry brands. The study highlighted that while progress has been made, the industry still falls short in several key areas.

The report found that traceability and transparency in the industry are not as advanced as they should be. Larger luxury groups' subsidiaries tend to perform better than private labels in terms of sustainability. However, the WWF observed, "Most companies are not yet engaging their suppliers, employees, and consumers in a targeted and comprehensive way in their sustainability efforts." This indicates a gap between policy and practice in engaging various stakeholders in sustainable practices.

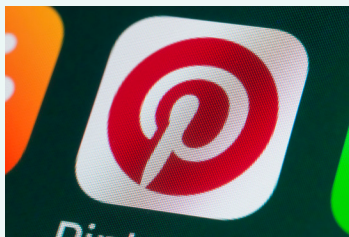
According to the WWF, many brands are only beginning to address crucial issues. The report states, "Many are still at the very beginning in the areas of water, biodiversity, human rights stewardship, as well as the implementation of circular approaches." This suggests a need for a more holistic and aggressive approach towards sustainability in the industry.

In terms of individual performances, the subsidiaries of larger businesses seem to benefit from broader group-level sustainability initiatives. Pomellato, owned by Kering, received the highest score in the industry. Other brands classified as "ambitious" include LVMH's Tiffany & Co. and Bulgari, and Richemont's IWC Schaffhausen, Cartier, and Panerai, as well as Kering's Boucheron.

The report acknowledges that while the sector's overall sustainability performance is subpar, there are brands making significant efforts. It states, "There are individual brands that are already thoroughly engaged with sustainability issues and have developed approaches and measures that can serve as examples for other industry stakeholders."

SOURCE: Joshua Freedman for Rapaport

Pinterest-Sponsored Study Points to Pinterest as the Platform Most Perfectly Positioned to Pursue Luxury Consumers



A new study sponsored by Pinterest has concluded that the Pinterest platform is social media's most engaging source for luxury consumers.

As self-serving as the study is, the study and the statement the company released about the study findings do make for interesting, if not compelling, reading, starting with "Three out of five luxury shoppers say they use Pinterest to research luxury brands and products," the statement declares. "Pinterest is the No. 1 destination for inspiration when shopping for luxury."

The report, highlighting Pinterest's unique appeal, reveals that 60% of luxury shoppers use the platform for researching high-end brands and products. "Three out of five luxury shoppers say they use Pinterest to research luxury brands and products," the company stated, affirming its status as the leading source of inspiration for luxury shopping.

With 482 million monthly active users, Pinterest differentiates itself by maintaining an environment relatively free of the toxic content that plagues other social networks. The study, carried out by PA Consulting, showcases that a significant portion of Pinterest's luxury audience, 70%, is under 35 years old. This demographic insight aligns with predictions from Bain & Company and Altagamma, forecasting the luxury goods market's likely doubling by 2030, driven by Gen Z's growing spending power.

Further insights from Pinterest reveal that its luxury shoppers spend 87% more on high-end goods than those on other platforms, with a majority being women and a substantial portion earning over \$100,000 annually. Pinterest emphasized the intentional nature of its users: "People go to Pinterest with a purpose," and "Every day, millions of users visit the platform with an intention: Find the right content that will help them take action on it."

Notably, more than two in five luxury shoppers on Pinterest have made purchases in categories like luxury watches and jewelry, making them 75% more likely to make such purchases compared to shoppers on other social media sites.

Highlighting the success of luxury brands on Pinterest, Kelly Emanuelli, the platform's head of luxury, stated, "Luxury brands around the world have been connecting with their ideal audience on Pinterest—one that is coming to the platform with intent, looking for inspiration to curate ideas and refine their taste for which luxury brands to invest in."

Jewelry retailers on Pinterest face choices in strategy. Beyond engaging with existing followers and updating content, investing in targeted marketing campaigns on Pinterest could be a wise move, potentially reaching a more engaged and purchase-ready audience than on other platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

SOURCE: Pinterest

Bain Report Foresees Global Luxury Spending Boost Fueled by Tourism Recovery



Bain & Company's latest report forecasts a promising growth in the personal luxury goods market, projecting an increase to \$396.47 billion this year, a 4% rise fueled by the resurgence of travel and spending. The report, co-authored with Altagamma, the Italian luxury goods industry association, indicates that global luxury tourist purchases are nearing pre-pandemic levels, with significant untapped potential in many areas.

The overall global luxury market is also expected to see substantial expansion, with projections suggesting growth of 8% to 10%, reaching an unprecedented total of \$1.64 trillion for the year. The jewelry sector, in particular, is anticipated to reach a market value of \$32.86 billion in 2023. Bain highlights fine jewelry as a key investment area amid current uncertainties.

Despite the optimistic outlook, Bain warns of potential challenges later in the year. These include diminishing consumer confidence and macroeconomic tensions in China, as well as a slower recovery in the US market, which might affect growth. The firm anticipates a more modest increase in personal luxury goods in 2024, with growth rates potentially dropping to low- to mid-single digits.

Looking forward, Mainland China is seen as an emerging dominant player in the luxury goods industry. By 2030, Chinese customers are expected to constitute 35% to 40% of the personal luxury goods market, while Europeans and Americans will collectively account for 40% of this market. Additionally, online and mono-brand channels are predicted to dominate two-thirds of the entire market within the next seven years.

In the view of Claudia D'Arpizio, a partner at Bain & Company, the report underscores the importance of resilience, relevance, and renewal for luxury brands in navigating market turbulence. "The luxury market is generating positive growth for 65-70% of brands in 2023, compared to 95% in 2022," says D'Arpizio. "To stay in the game, it will be crucial for brands to take bold decisions on behalf of their customers."

Federica Levato, another partner at Bain, emphasized the long-term growth prospects: "The market is set for long-term growth, rooted on strong fundamentals."

SOURCE: Bain & Company; Leah Meirovich for Rapaport

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The advertisement features a world map with orange and blue continents. In the foreground, there is a pile of jewelry including a diamond ring, a watch, and a bracelet. The logos for Roanoke and ATA Carnet are prominently displayed.

WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORT ON THE WHOS, WHATS AND WHYS OF JEWELRY INSURANCE



A recent market report by The Wall Street Journal covered a broad swath of knowledge about the topic of Jewelry insurance—a niche yet crucially significant segment in the insurance market. Drawing on the valuable reporting of the Wall Street Journal article, the following is a comprehensive education and analysis of jewelry insurance as an industry and a product.

How jewelry insurance works:

Foremost, jewelry insurance should not be viewed as a luxury. Standard homeowners or renters' insurance policies typically include some coverage for jewelry. However, these policies often fall short in terms of coverage limits, generally capping at around \$1,500. This amount is usually inadequate for high-value items, leaving owners vulnerable in cases of theft, loss, or damage.

Jewelry insurance safeguards your valuable items against damage, loss, or theft. Getting coverage might require an appraisal, which costs between \$50 and \$150 per hour, depending on the jewelry's complexity. Unlike home and auto insurance, which offer depreciated value, jewelry insurance usually provides replacement value.

Whether jewelry insurance is worthwhile depends on several factors. Homeowners or renter's policies often include limited jewelry coverage, insufficient for expensive items. A dedicated jewelry insurance policy offers more comprehensive protection, especially when existing policies are inadequate or don't cover replacement value.

The cost for standalone jewelry insurance varies. Insuring a \$10,000 ring may cost between \$100 and \$200 yearly, influenced by factors like location and deductible. The decision to purchase depends on the jewelry's value, required coverage, and the policy's cost compared to potential risks.

Jeweler warranties or service plans, typically covering wear and tear, don't usually protect against accidental damage, loss, or theft, areas where jewelry insurance is essential. Coverage limits vary, but most insurers offer up to \$50,000 for single items and \$150,000 for total collections.

Getting Started:

To insure one's jewelry, the policyholder must provide detailed information to the insurer. This includes an appraisal report from a qualified jewelry professional, which is crucial for older or inherited pieces without sales receipts. The appraisal should describe the item and estimate its value or the cost to recreate it.

For recently purchased jewelry, a sales receipt is necessary to confirm its value at the time of purchase. Additionally, some items may need a lab report detailing the chemical and physical properties of the gemstones and

metals, including aspects like cut, carat weight, color, and clarity grades. Finally, multiple photographs of the jewelry item are also required for the insurance process.

Key Aspects of Jewelry Insurance:

Firstly, standalone jewelry insurance policies often require a deductible, the out-of-pocket cost before insurance coverage applies to a claim for damaged or stolen jewelry. This deductible varies by insurer, usually ranging from \$0 to \$1,000, and can be chosen based on individual needs.

Secondly, unlike standard homeowners or renter's insurance, standalone jewelry insurance policies typically cover lost jewelry. This means if a piece of jewelry is misplaced in various scenarios, like being left on a bathroom counter or lost at an airport, the insurance policy should cover this loss.

Additionally, if you find your jewelry after filing a claim, it's crucial to notify the insurance company immediately. The usual process involves either repaying the claim amount or returning the replacement item. The insurance company then takes steps to mitigate its losses, often by selling the recovered jewelry piece.

Typical Jewelry Insurance Coverage Exclusion:

This includes voluntary parting, where losses incurred from a sale gone wrong, like a bounced check, are not covered. Damage to delicate or antique pieces due to pre-existing conditions or deterioration is also not included. Claims related to deliberate actions causing loss or damage to the jewelry are rejected.

Furthermore, damage caused by pests, such as vermin or insects, particularly in storage areas like attics or basements, is not covered. Insurance does not include items seized by civil authorities during law enforcement activities. Additionally, maintenance costs for routine upkeep, including cleaning, inspections, and resizing, are not part of jewelry insurance policies.

Making an Informed Choice:

Selecting the appropriate jewelry insurance policy involves considering various factors in balance. It's crucial to compare the cost of premiums, typically 1% to 2% of the item's value annually, against the extent of coverage, which varies with the insurer and item's location.

Understanding the policy's maximum payout, especially for high-value items, is key. The need for current appraisals differs among insurers, with some demanding frequent updates for expensive pieces. Additionally, extra benefits such as discounts for security measures or options for flexible deductibles may influence the choice of insurer.

Knowing the Providers:

The Wall Street Journal report devoted considerable attention to identifying the most prominent and practical jewelry insurance providers. The goal of their analysis was to help consumers find a jewelry policy best suited to their unique needs, and to help retailers provide guidance to their customers, again, depending on their unique needs. Among the several dozen insurers the Wall Street Journal researched, the following companies materialized as the best of the bunch, though for different reasons.

- **Best Overall:** Jewelers Mutual, endorsed by the American Gem Society and Jewelers of America, is a prominent player in the jewelry insurance industry with a history spanning over a century. This policyholder-owned mutual company offers flexible deductibles from \$0 to \$2,500 and premiums typically at 1% to 2% of the item's value. It provides discounts for security measures and inscribed items. While initial coverage doesn't require an appraisal, filing a claim does, with coverage at 100% of the item's documented value. Jewelers Mutual stands out for its strong financial rating and low complaint index but requires regular appraisals for appreciation and doesn't offer automatic coverage increases or in-house appraisals like some competitors.

- **Lowest Premiums:** BriteCo stands out for its low jewelry insurance rates, typically 0.5% to 1.5% of an item's value annually, offering substantial savings compared to standard rates. For example, insuring a \$6,000 engagement ring could cost as little as \$30 per year. BriteCo's coverage includes 125% of an item's replacement value without deductibles for most items, with a high coverage cap of \$150,000 per item. Partnering with Glencar Insurance Company, BriteCo provides easy policy acquisition and quotes. However, it requires appraisals for all insured items and offers more limited coverage for unique or high-value pieces under an "Agreed Value" policy.

- **Best for Engagement Rings:** GemShield offers a hassle-free insurance process, exempting lower-valued items (under \$5,000) from appraisals, making it a preferred choice for engaged couples. Coverage limits are set at \$35,000 per item and \$100,000 for collections, suitable for typical engagement rings but potentially insufficient for pricier collections.

With premiums falling within the standard 1% to 2% range and a low \$20 minimum annual premium, GemShield is cost-effective for less valuable jewelry. Deductibles range from \$0 to \$1,000, providing flexibility. Policies are underwritten by StarNet Insurance Company, holding an A-plus AM Best rating with minimal complaints. However, GemShield lacks discounts for secure storage or in-house appraisals, covering items up to 100% of their replacement value.

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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)

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Company (if applicable): _____

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

District Business Address: _____

Mailing Address (if not same): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Report Details Considerable Growth for Diamond Jewelry Industry Through 2030



The global jewelry market, with a specific focus on diamond jewelry, is witnessing a period of significant transformation and growth. According to the latest report by IndexBox, Inc., the industry remained stable in 2022, showing resilience amidst various global economic fluctuations. However, deeper analysis reveals a nuanced landscape with dynamic shifts in production, consumption, and trade.

Production and Consumption Insights

In 2022, the production of jewelry, including diamond pieces, saw a slight decline, continuing a trend observed since its peak in 2019. Despite this downturn, the industry had experienced a

notable growth of 40% in 2018, indicating its potential for rapid expansion under favorable market conditions.

On the consumption front, Thailand emerged as the largest jewelry consuming country, significantly outpacing China and India. This dominance in consumption is particularly notable in the diamond sector, reflecting Thailand's robust market demand.

Export and Import Dynamics

The export market for jewelry, including diamonds, surged remarkably in 2022, growing by 59% from the previous year. Thailand led this growth, accounting for a significant portion of the global exports, followed by key players like Italy and China.

Conversely, imports of jewelry also showed a substantial increase, with Thailand again taking the lead. This growth in imports and exports signals a vibrant global trade in diamond jewelry, underscoring the industry's expanding reach and influence.

Price Trends and Market Fluctuations

The report highlights fluctuations in export and import prices, with a noted decrease in 2022. This decline in prices could be attributed to various factors including market demand, availability of raw materials, and global economic conditions. Despite these fluctuations, the diamond jewelry market continues to attract substantial interest globally.

Global Leaders and Market Dominance

China, India, and Italy were identified as the top exporting countries in value terms, jointly holding a significant share of the global market. In terms of imports, Hong Kong SAR, the United States, and France were the leading countries, together accounting for a substantial portion of global imports.

Future Market Projections

Looking forward to 2030, the diamond jewelry market is poised for considerable growth. Key factors driving this growth include the increasing popularity of luxury goods in emerging economies, a surge in personalized and custom-made jewelry, and the expansion of the online retail sector.

The influence of global fashion trends, the impact of social media, and the growing purchasing power in developing nations are also expected to play crucial roles in shaping the future of the diamond jewelry market.

SOURCE: IndexBox

Section continued from page 5

NFCC Reports American Family Debt Stabilized for 2023 Holiday Season



At the start of the prime holiday shopping season, millions of Americans struggling with higher prices and debt obligations found a glimmer of hope according to a report by the National

Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC).

The NFCC, which was established in 1951 and the nation's oldest nonprofit focused on enhancing financial well-being, uses various proprietary metrics to gauge how comfortable average Americans are with their level of unsecured debt. The NFCC Consumer Debt ScoreSM scale showed a moderate decline to 64 during the third quarter of 2023, a sign that more Americans have been able to both create a budget and live within it.

Mike Croxson, CEO of the NFCC, highlighted a positive shift in consumer financial health. "For only the second time since pandemic-related stimulus payments allowed many families to pay down existing debt, we saw a small but notable decline in consumer financial distress," he said.

Croxson urged families to maintain financial discipline during the holiday season, advising, "stick within their budgets and not take on debt that will create anxiety and stress in the new year. And if you are struggling to pay debts, seek help now from an NFCC-certified credit counselor."

The NFCC Consumer Debt ScoreSM, with a baseline of 50 indicating medium distress, shows that consumer financial distress has risen by 67% since its low in the second quarter of 2021. This increase reflects changing consumer behaviors like shopping, dining out, and travel, alongside inflationary pressures on everyday expenses.

Americans currently hold over \$1 trillion in credit card debt, a substantial figure reported by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Center for Microeconomic Data. Croxson finds hope in the slight decrease in the score, viewing it as a sign of improved budgeting and reduced financial stress among families.

The NFCC Consumer Debt ScoreSM provides a quarterly overview of Americans' financial health and debt repayment capabilities. Funded by JP Morgan Chase and utilizing data since the first quarter of 2018, this tool predicts potential unsecured debt defaults and their impact on lending metrics.

Croxson emphasizes the importance of seeking help, noting, "The people who seek help from a credit counselor know they are losing their ability to make ends meet. But we know for every person who seeks help, there are more who are either uncomfortable seeking the help they need or who don't realize they need help until it's too late." He believes the NFCC's data can forecast families' financial management abilities in the upcoming months.

SOURCE: National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC)

\$10.8 Million Pink Supreme Sale Wows Bidders at Christie's Hong Kong Auction



Pink Supreme ring featuring a 15.48-carat diamond

At the Christie's jewelry auction in Hong Kong this past November, the Pink Supreme, a ring featuring a 15.48-carat diamond, stole the show by fetching approximately \$10.8 million.

This cushion brilliant-cut, fancy-intense-pink, internally flawless diamond achieved a sale price that fell within its expected range of \$9 million to \$12.8 million. The auction, part of Christie's Magnificent Jewels sale amassed a total of approximately \$63.1 million.

Accompanying the Pink Supreme were other notable colored diamonds. A ring set with a pear modified brilliant-cut, 3.51-carat, fancy-vivid-blue, VS2-clarity diamond, surrounded by round diamonds, achieved approximately \$6.4 million, meeting its estimated value. Another ring, adorned with two blue diamonds—a 2.01-carat, fancy-vivid-blue stone and a 2-carat, fancy-intense-blue diamond—along with a 2-carat, fancy-vivid pink and a 1.01-carat, fancy-intense-purple-pink diamond, sold for approximately \$4.7 million, within its presale price range.

The auction also featured a necklace with a modified pear brilliant-cut, 40.05-carat, D-color, internally flawless diamond pendant, enhanced with pear and round pink diamonds, as well as marquise and briolette-cut diamonds on the chain. This item brought in approximately \$4.6 million, just under its highest estimate. Additionally, an unmounted round-brilliant-cut, 38.88-carat, D-flawless diamond realized approximately \$3.9 million, hitting the middle of its presale price range.

SOURCE: Gidon Ben-Zvi for Rapaport

Gold Market Analysts Cross-Eyed Over Recent Shifts in Precious Metal Pricing



As the year came to a close, the fluctuating pricing dynamics for gold held the attention of investors and strategists. Gold's upward trend, surpassing \$2,000 per ounce, has

prompted speculation about a potential rally to new record highs. Futures were recently 0.5% higher, just above \$2,013 per ounce, reaching six-month highs and marking two consecutive weeks of price increases.

Mark Newton, head of technical strategy at Fundstrat, expressed confidence in gold's trajectory, stating, "Gold [is] showing additional proof that a rally back to new all-time Highs is underway."

Newton sees the breakout level for momentum at around \$2,050, setting a technical target for gold at \$2,500 per ounce. Michele Schneider from MarketGauge.com even suggested the possibility of gold hitting \$3,000, observing that it has held up "in the face of a stable dollar and higher rates."

However, recent U.S. jobs data indicating a stronger-than-expected economy led to a shift in investor sentiment. Gold for December delivery experienced a drop of 1.6%, settling at \$2,014.50 an ounce, marking its first weekly loss since early November. Jim Wyckoff, a senior analyst at Kitco.com, noted that the jobs report "appears to fall very mildly into the camp of the U.S. monetary policy hawks."

In an interview with Marketwatch, Fawad Razaqzada, a market analyst, highlighted that "It was a textbook reaction in gold in response to the stronger jobs and consumer sentiment data, with the metal falling, dollar and yields rising."

Despite this setback, gold prices still hovered above the key short-term support level of \$2,000, maintaining a generally bullish bias. Investors are now keenly awaiting the Federal Reserve's upcoming policy meeting for further clues on the future trajectory of interest rates, which will significantly influence gold prices. The upcoming Consumer Price Index (CPI) report and Fed's decision are expected to be pivotal in determining gold's near-term direction.

SOURCE: Ines Ferre for Yahoo Finance; Marketwatch

G7 Ban Diamond Ban Begins January 2024



The G7 nations implemented a comprehensive ban on Russian diamond imports as of January 1, 2024, marking a significant escalation in Western sanctions in response to

Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This ban targets one of Russia's major exports that had previously remained unaffected by Western sanctions. The G7's decision reflects months of negotiations and addresses concerns from major African diamond producers about the potential impact on their trade.

Under the agreement, the G7 will initially prohibit the import of non-industrial diamonds from Russia. Additionally, from March 1, there will be a ban on stones processed in third countries. A full traceability system for rough diamonds traded within G7 nations will be implemented from September 1. This system aims to ensure that Russian diamonds do not enter the market through indirect channels.

The G7's move is a significant gesture of solidarity with Ukraine, which has expressed distress over the EU and the US's hesitancy in committing to long-term financial and military support. Despite the gradual imposition of Western sanctions, Russia's economy and military-industrial complex have shown unexpected resilience, with rising defense spending and continued production of weapons and military equipment.

Russia, home to Alrosa, the world's second-largest diamond producer by revenue after De Beers, has seen its diamond trade shift significantly since the invasion of Ukraine, with most Russian stones now flowing largely to the Chinese market. Western jewelry companies have largely boycotted Russian gems in response to the conflict.

The G7's decision also addresses limitations in the UN-authorized certification scheme for "conflict diamonds," which currently does not apply to conflicts waged by governments. The US had previously unilaterally banned the import of Russian rough diamonds in April 2022, but polished stones from other countries were still allowed.

The implementation of the G7 ban and the proposed traceability system signals a major reshaping of the global diamond industry, with ongoing consultations involving producing and manufacturing countries.

Article continued on page 16

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The Belgian proposal, suggesting Antwerp as a gatekeeper for diamonds entering the G7, has stirred controversy within the diamond industry and among African diamond-producing nations.

Alrosa, a third of which is owned by Moscow, generated revenue of \$1.9 billion in the first half of 2022, highlighting the significant impact this ban could have on the Russian economy.

SOURCE: Financial Times

Taco Bell Contest Turns Dinner to Diamonds



Taco Bell Canada has launched an unconventional social media contest, offering a unique prize: four 1-carat diamonds grown from taco shells. These diamonds, lab-created through a process spanning over 12 months at a secretive

location, are being given away to two lucky "bestie duos." The diamonds are celebrated as an homage to the "perfectly imperfect nature of tacos," reflecting Taco Bell's brand ethos.

Devon Lawrence, the marketing director for Taco Bell Canada, emphasized the brand's philosophy, stating, "Taco Bell is all about celebrating life's messy moments and embracing what it means to be imperfect. The idea that even something as beautiful as diamonds have imperfections reinforces our brand mantra to 'live más' and celebrate our authentic, messy, and beautiful selves."

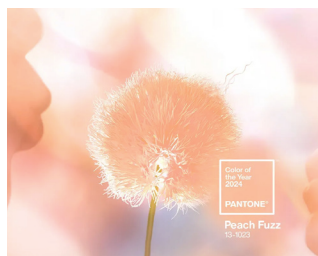
These taco shell diamonds will be officially unveiled during a pop-up event in Toronto on December 1 and 2, designed to celebrate best friends. Lab-grown diamonds, like natural ones, are made from carbon, allowing for the creation of diamonds from various carbon-based materials, including unusual sources like peanut butter, dead bodies, and even human waste.

Interestingly, Taco Bell isn't the first fast-food chain to venture into diamond creation. In 2019, Burger King in Germany offered a diamond fashioned from a Whopper. Taco Bell's take on this concept involves transforming taco shells into uncut diamonds, intended to be worn as best friend necklaces.

The contest, which ended in December, featured two pairs of these unique necklaces, each pair valued at just under \$15,000. However, the company has not provided specific details regarding the 4Cs or the exact process of how these diamonds were grown.

SOURCE: thejewelrymagazine.com

Pantone's Peachy Predictions for Warm, Fuzzy Feels in 2024



Pantone has announced "Peach Fuzz" (13-1023) as its 2024 Color of the Year, a decision that reflects the world's changing mood and desire for warmth and connection. Described as a "velvety gentle peach

tone," this color is believed to enrich "the mind, body, and soul," offering a symbol of compassion and human connection for the year ahead.

Amy Elliott, a contributing editor at JCK, envisions various applications of this hue in jewelry, including morganite, Malaia peach garnets, peach moonstone, and Melo Melo pearls. Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Color Institute, explained that the choice was influenced by the "unusual time we continue to find ourselves living in" and the evolving concept of lifestyle. Pressman describes the color as "heartfelt," providing comfort and a sense of kindness, tenderness, and community.

Leatrice Eiseman, Pantone's executive director, emphasized the color's representation of nurturing and modern elegance. Pantone's selection process involves considering emerging trends across diverse industries, including entertainment, fashion, travel, socio-economic conditions, and new technologies.

Pantone's annual color choices significantly influence product development and consumer decisions in various industries. The company's previous selections included Viva Magenta for 2023 and Very Peri for 2022.

The announcement of Peach Fuzz has elicited mixed reactions. New York Times reporters discussed the impact of Pantone's choices, with Jessica Testa highlighting the emotional tone colors can set, and Jeremy Allen noting the need for a "quiet, neither-here-nor-there color" in today's divisive social media landscape.

Social media responses varied, with some finding the color beautiful and refreshing, while others considered it outdated or unflattering. Some comments suggested a preference for green, associating it with hope and regrowth. The announcement reveals the diverse interpretations and expectations people have for color trends and their symbolic meanings in our lives.

SOURCE: Pantone; JCK Online; NPR

This may necessitate frequent appraisals and additional coverage for appreciating pieces, potentially not aligning with high-value items or large collections.

- **Best for Flexible Premiums:** Lavalier offers highly flexible deductibles ranging from \$0 to \$25,000, allowing policyholders to align premiums with their budget. This adaptability suits items of varying values. Coverage limits are set at \$50,000 per item and \$150,000 for collections, with exceptions possible. Discounts are available for added security measures.

Appraisals are required for items over \$5,000, but sales receipts suffice for lower-value items. Policies are issued in partnership with Berkley National Insurance Company, boasting an A-plus AM Best rating. However, the \$50 minimum annual premium may not suit lower-value items. Coverage caps at 100% of replacement value, necessitating regular appraisals, as Lavalier doesn't provide appraisal services. Note that standalone watch coverage isn't offered; it's included in broader jewelry policies.

- **Best for High Coverage Limits:** Chubb is ideal for extensive jewelry collections, offering flexible coverage without set dollar limits and up to 150% of an item's value to account for appreciation. Appraisals aren't mandatory for items under \$100,000, but they're advisable for accurate coverage. Premiums range from 1% to 2% of the item's value with no deductibles, and discounts are available for bank vault storage.

Chubb boasts an A-plus-plus financial rating and a

low complaint index despite its diverse insurance offerings. However, it has a \$15,000 minimum coverage requirement, potentially unsuitable for less valuable items, and obtaining a quote involves direct agency contact rather than an online process, which may require more effort but can be worthwhile for those needing Chubb's comprehensive coverage.

Don't Forget Appraisals:

In the jewelry insurance domain, appraisals play a pivotal role. They determine the value and subsequent coverage of an item. Regular appraisals are essential, especially in a market where values can fluctuate. For both retailers and consumers, staying informed about the current value of jewelry pieces is crucial for adequate insurance coverage.

Educated Retailers Lead to Informed Consumers:

For retailers, being knowledgeable about jewelry insurance is an integral part of customer service. Guiding customers through the insurance process can enhance their shopping experience and build lasting trust.

From a consumer perspective, understanding the specifics of jewelry insurance is about safeguarding their cherished possessions. It's about peace of mind, knowing that their valuable pieces are protected against unforeseen circumstances.

SOURCE: Ben Luthi for The Wall Street Journal

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Celebrity Jeweler Loses \$1 Million Chain in Late Night Diamond District Stickup



While most New Yorkers were asleep in the wee morning hours on Thursday December 7th, renowned New York City jeweler Benny Nisanov, known to many customers and admirers as 'Benny Da Jeweler', was being robbed.

The perpetrators were a gun-toting duo who demanded

entry to Nisanov's West 47th Street store in the heart of New York's Diamond District to grab a single piece of jewelry worth an estimated one million dollars.

Nisanov, whose clientele includes high-profile celebrities like Nicki Minaj, Ice Spice, and Usher, told police the incident occurred during a late hour private jewelry sale at his West 47th Street store.

According to a NYPD source, one of the assailants brandished what police say was a "simulated gun" and threatened to shoot Nisanov. They then proceeded to loot a display case containing a single, jewel-encrusted chain worth approximately \$1 million. They then fled the scene in a waiting black Mercedes.

The circumstances of the robbery has raised some eyebrows. Generally, the Diamond District shuts down for the night early and entirely. By 5 o'clock, many merchants are already removing merchandise from display windows and securing them in a safe of underground vault.

Questions of why Nisanov's store might have been open so late at night have resulted in some speculation. One Diamond District jeweler reported hearing that Nisanov opened this store to accommodate a prospective private client who had called Nisanov well after hours to buy jewelry. The whole thing was a setup, says the unnamed jeweler.

Others believe the robbery was the result of Nisanov's consistent posting on Instagram, making him a visible and familiar target for robbers. Another story is that the private client himself was live streaming throughout the purchase, essentially advertising his location to would-be thieves.

"With that kind of exposure, at that time of night," said another district insider, who declined to be named, "I'm surprised there wasn't a line of robbers waiting at the door."

NYPD sources confirmed that no injuries were reported as a result of the incident and that an investigation is ongoing. Both robbers were described as having dark complexions and one wore a white shirt, while the other wore a red shirt.

Police urge anyone with information related to the case to come forward as they continue their pursuit of the suspects.

Suspected Jewelry Thieves Wanted in Watsonville



The Watsonville Police Department is actively pursuing two women believed to be responsible for a significant jewelry theft at a local store. These suspects are accused of diverting the attention of a store employee and escaping with over \$100,000 worth of

jewelry this past September.

Now, law enforcement is calling for community assistance to locate the suspects—a mother and daughter team identified as 53-year-old Onita Rostas and 30-year-old Steluta Lacatus. The suspects reportedly engaged with the store staff, claiming to be from Spain and expressing interest in buying gifts for their family.

The police shared on social media, "A Santa Cruz County judge has issued warrants for their arrest," then noted that "We anticipate it won't be easy to locate them. We want to warn our community to be vigilant for these types of tactics used to victimize businesses."

Watsonville Police highlight that the scope of Rostas and Lacatus's alleged criminal behavior extends beyond the local area. The duo is believed to be part of a larger criminal network and are not only wanted by the FBI for offenses nationwide but are also subjects of an Interpol investigation.

SOURCE: Jessica A. York for Santa Cruz Sentinel



Jewelry Store Clerk Threatens to Impale Three Masked Robbers; Hilarity Ensues

When three would-be thieves attempting to loot a jewelry store in Tokyo's Taito Ward found themselves facing imminent perforation, they wisely chose a change of plans. Their collision with clarity occurred moments after walking into the shop and announcing a robbery.

Rather than handing over merchandise, the jewelry store clerk produced a sasumata and demonstrated his skill with the traditional Japanese weapon, which is shaped like a forked spear and very clearly capable of inflicting gruesome injuries.

Tokyo police report that the men, wearing motorcycle helmets with full face masks, demanded jewelry from the clerk. However, when confronted with the well-armed and clearly unintimidated clerk, the panicked thieves fled empty-handed.

The store, located near JR Okachimachi Station in an area known for its concentration of jewelry shops, has seen four similar incidents since March.

Fortunately, no injuries were sustained during the incident, neither to the store clerk nor the would-be robbers. Two motorcycles, presumably used by the trio, were found abandoned outside the store.

SOURCE: The Yomiuri Shimbun; japannews.com

Colorado Police: Shooting Death of Beloved Jeweler, the Result of a Failed Robbery



In a tragic incident this past November, Peter Damian Arguello, the proprietor of Peter Damian Fine Jewelry & Antiques in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, was fatally shot in what local law enforcement officials believe to be

a robbery attempt gone wrong.

Arguello's body was discovered in the early hours of the afternoon in the parking area adjacent to his jewelry store. Authorities say the perpetrators appeared in surveillance camera footage driving a red Chevy Silverado.

Peter Arguello, who had been operating his store since 2007, was a well-respected and beloved member of the Wheat Ridge community. Speaking to a local news reporter, family friend, Guy Nahmiach, shared his reflections on Arguello's character: "We live in a world full of hate and evil, but people like Peter reminded you that there's a lot of good all around us."

Brenda Ritz, a newspaper reporter who featured Arguello in a news feature earlier in the year, shared a poignant memory while being interviewed by KVDR news about the time she took a friend to Arguello's store to sell an item.

"She went to get a price and she kind of wasn't sure if she wanted to sell it or not, and he comes around the corner and gives her a hug and says, 'Don't sell that to me until you're ready,'" Ritz recalled. "And that's just how he was. He was more about making a good connection with people than the dollar."

According to the Jewelers' Security Alliance (JSA), Arguello's death is the first reported fatalities linked to jewelry-related crimes in the current year.

SOURCE: Rob Bates for JCK Online; JSA; KVDR News

Beverly Hills Police Put Armed Luxury-Watch Robbers Behind Bars



The Beverly Hills Police Department reported the arrest of two men linked to a series of armed robberies targeting individuals for their high-end watches and jewelry this past summer. Notably, one of the suspects was allegedly committing these crimes

while out on bail for similar offenses.

This law enforcement breakthrough came as the Beverly Hills police noticed a pattern after several arrests related to robbery and firearms. This observation led to a comprehensive operation involving multiple law enforcement agencies, both local and federal.

Collaborating with teams from various enforcement agencies, the suspects were identified through their alleged involvement in six Los Angeles County robberies. These incidents are believed to be part of a broader series of robberies stretching across Los Angeles and Orange counties from July to October.

Search warrants executed across Southern California and Flagstaff, Arizona, led to the recovery of six firearms, luxury watches, jewelry, and additional evidence. This is part of a broader investigation that is currently ongoing.

Justice Bloodworth, a 21-year-old from Los Angeles, faces charges including four counts of robbery, one count of conspiracy, and one count of reckless evading. Currently held without bail, Bloodworth was scheduled for a court appearance on Tuesday. Police have disclosed that Bloodworth was out on bail for other armed robberies at the time of these incidents.

Cameron Woods-Harvey, 23, from Long Beach, faces charges including three counts of robbery, one count of conspiracy, and two weapons charges. Arrested on October 7th in Arizona,

Woods-Harvey is awaiting extradition back to LA County.

The coalition involved in this extensive operation includes the Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles Police Departments, the West Hollywood Sheriff's Deputies, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Task Force, as stated by the Beverly Hills Police.

SOURCE: Chris Lindahl for Patch

41 months for \$4 Million Family-Run Extortion Case



Corry Blue Evans, 31, from New York City, has been sentenced to 41 months in prison for his role in a family-run extortion scam that deceitfully extracted over \$4 million. This elaborate scheme involved Evans' brother impersonating a mobster to coerce a Maryland man into

embezzling from his employer in Washington, D.C. Evans is the latest of five family members to face sentencing in this case.

U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves and FBI Acting Special Agent David Geist announced the sentencing. Following his guilty plea in January 2023, Evans also faces three years of supervised release and is ordered to pay restitution of approximately \$4.2 million, along with a forfeiture money judgment of \$772,500.

In April 2018, Evans, along with his brothers Tony John and Robert Evans, their parents Archie Kaslov and Candy Evans, and Robert's ex-wife Gina Rita Russell, were indicted on various charges. The scam led the Maryland victim to embezzle funds between January and March 2017, which he converted into cash and gold bars, delivering them to New York. Unbeknownst to him, these assets were funneled to the Evans-Kaslov family.

After successfully cashing stolen funds, Archie Kaslov led the family to the West 47th Street Diamond District, where they used the proceeds to buy luxury watches, showcasing the proceeds' integration into legitimate markets.

Corry Evans played a significant role in the operation, facilitating the cashing of stolen funds and misleading a check-cashing store employee about their origins. The family's elaborate tactics also included surveilling the victim to instill fear, as seen when they followed his vehicle and photographed it, implying mafia surveillance.

The case also involved the sale of over \$1 million in gold bars delivered by the victim. Corry Evans attempted to sell the gold in New York, underscoring the family's efforts to liquidate the embezzled assets.

Other family members have been sentenced: Tony John and Robert Evans received five-year terms for extortion-related charges, while Archie Kaslov got 30 months for wire fraud conspiracy. Candy Evans was sentenced to over a year for witness tampering. Gina Russell's sentencing is pending.

The FBI's Washington Field Office conducted the investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kondi Kleinman, with support from a team of legal and paralegal experts.

SOURCE: [justice.gov](https://www.justice.gov); U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Columbia

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