

IN BRIEF

✦ GENIUS RATING

A new industry report has revealed the digital strategies of high-profile jewellery and watch brands. *The Digital IQ Index: Watches & Jewellery 2018 report* released by L2 Research, analysed the digital performance of several prominent companies including Swarovski, Pandora, Tiffany & Co and Alex and Ani. All were ranked by five digital e-commerce categories, from 'genius' through to 'feeble'. Tiffany & Co and Cartier were the only brands given 'genius' status.

✦ INDIA EXPORTS STRONG

Indian polished diamond exports went up in February, according to a Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council India (GJEPC) report. The 0.5 per cent increase represented US\$2.5 billion (AU\$3.2 b) annually, but a 6 per cent drop in volume to 3.1 million carats. The average price of polished diamonds rose 6 per cent to US\$791 (AU\$1,028) per carat.

✦ FITBIT GETS IN SHAPE

A significantly cheaper Fitbit smartwatch model that "looks more like an Apple watch" has been released, a recent article by Fortune.com revealed. According to the report, the company's first smartwatch was released in 2017, but was met with "tepid" sales figures. The revamped Fitbit design reportedly aims to appeal to more women.

✦ SYNTHETIC RUBY LAYER

The Gemological Institute of America (GIA) has identified two red stones as colourless natural sapphires with a synthetic ruby 'overgrowth'. According to the GIA, the outer layers were "a cover of lab-grown stone that tinted the entire gems red." To "the naked eye", they had the appearance of chemically treated natural rubies, it noted. "This is not the first report of synthetic ruby overgrowth, but it marks the first time the laboratories have had them submitted for identification. The resurfacing of these vintage overgrowth synthetics shows that once a material is in the trade, it is here to stay," the GIA added.



Alexandre Sidrov

Master diamond workshop announced

Sydney-based Jewellery Institute of Australia (JIA) will host a workshop with Dutch "master setter" Alexandre Sidrov this month.

Sidrov will deliver a class in micro-pave setting, and highlight methods used by the Alexandre School for Optical Diamond Setting, Belgium.

"Sidrov is the pioneer in optical diamond setting. He created setting techniques that are faster, safer and more appealing, with the ability to make your own custom tools for each job," Gabriel Owen, the founder of JIA told *Jeweller*.

"We are lucky here in Australia to have such a master come and visit. Usually people have to wait six months to a year for a seat at his school in Belgium," Owen added.

As previously reported by *Jeweller*, Owen, a jeweller and graduate of the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), founded the JIA in 2017. He started the school because there were "no advanced classes for micro-pave setting and hand engraving."

Students are invited to attend either one or two week courses, beginning Monday 16 April.

Synthetic prices on a downer

According to a recent report by the *Mining Journal*, synthetic diamonds have decreased in price.

Independent New York diamond analyst Paul Zimnisky noted that the decreasing cost of technology had contributed to the fall. "The price pressure is directly a result of supply growth leading to more price competition, especially as generic production coming out of Asia increases," Zimnisky told *Jeweller*.

However, this would help boost diamond quality, he said. "The result of more production facilities, and increased

production capacity of existing facilities, will impact both supply output and quality of output going forward, with both metrics inevitably improving."

Zimnisky added he believed "consumer sentiment towards laboratory-created diamonds is improving, as awareness and education about the product increases".

According to the report, true gem-quality, synthetic diamonds suitable for jewellery represent less than 10 per cent of global output. However, laboratories supply around 99 per cent of industrial-grade diamonds for other applications.

Million dollar fail

The National Museum of Prague has discovered that some of its diamonds, sapphires and rubies are "fakes". According to reports, a routine audit exposed the stones. One diamond was reportedly plain glass with a diamond cut, while others were synthetic instead of natural.

Ivo Macek, head of the museum's precious stones department said, "What we have is still a sapphire, but it is not a natural stone as was documented when the museum gained it in the 1970s. It was artificially created so it does not have the value we thought it did. It was acquired for CZK\$200,000 (AU\$12,354) and today it would have been worth tens of millions."



The museum's deputy director Michal Stehlík said the museum was now investigating how the fakes came to be part of its collection, adding that the museum would "thoroughly" audit all its artefacts over the next three years.