



## Welcome Back

I write this on the day that restrictions in Victoria have been eased. Finally, we can get back to work. This is a day that we should celebrate – that Victorians have looked after one another (as opposed to other places in the world where self-interest reigns, and the virus takes hold, where people are outraged because pubs have to shut early).

It has been tough; our employees who love their work have been forced to stay at home and we have been unable to welcome clients to our showroom. Not surprisingly our business has taken a battering!

I would like to thank our staff – particularly Eleanor and Kylie – who have put together great stories in customer emails so that we could continue to communicate with our clients. Initially our emphasis was on clearing stock – to create a cash buffer. This succeeded beyond my wildest dreams. Thank you to all our customers (particularly you, Jan) who showed their support by purchasing great jewellery at sensational prices. We will not forget this!



*Eleanor's latest creation  
– this time for herself.*

More recently, Eleanor has concentrated on telling stories of clients visiting our workshop to participate



in creating their own rings. A unique and educational experience for them, and for you. Other stories focused on gemstones, particularly birthstones, and again we thank those who supported us by purchasing jewellery set with magnificent coloured stones or pink diamonds.

The Abrecht and Bird families have both enjoyed four generations in the jewellery trade (collectively 255 years). We survive not simply because we have earned the trust of our clients, but because we surround ourselves with and support great staff. Eleanor is soon due to have a baby, Kylie returns to work next week after the joy of giving birth to her daughter Asher. Yuki has been making jewellery to reward frontline workers. Stephanie has excelled in her first year of the Gemmology Diploma course, while Greg has worked from his home studio to produce works of art for our customers. Leon has been a tower of strength, working from home to assist in every way possible.

The pandemic has caused us to change many work practices – lots of email contact instead of face-to-face encounters that we love so much.

From all of us here, thank you for your support and well wishes – we hope that you might be attracted by one of the pieces we feature here as a gift for someone special and look forward to welcoming you once again to our showroom in 2021.

*Peter Bird*



*The Principles of Integrity and Honesty set down by our forebears have laid the perfect foundation on which we can continue to build and further practise the ideals of 'Quality without Compromise'*

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## Wisdom from the Bench

As a manufacturing jewellery company we are often asked by new clients: 'What is the difference between handmade and cast jewellery?' I have been a part of the Abrecht Bird team for the past 10 years, so I may be a little biased in favour of handmaking as opposed to CAD (Computer Assisted Design).

It is important to understand the main differences in both methods of construction and to educate our clients to assist them to make an informed decision on whether they base their needs on durability or budget.



A 'tree' of wax jewellery ready for the casting process.  
Photo courtesy of Apecs Investment castings.

A brief insight into the casting process is as follows. An item of jewellery is designed on the computer; it is often printed in wax using a 3D printer and from there a plaster mould is taken. Molten metal is then poured into the mould to create the final product. A variety of metals are used, such as gold, platinum, silver and palladium. As this is a quick and fairly simple process, it is easy for a company to produce hundreds or thousands of copies at a time depending on the popularity of the piece and how many shops will stock the item.

Due to the process of pouring the molten metal into the plaster mould, an item of jewellery can be produced in a short time and will require very little clean up, thereby reducing the cost significantly as there is barely any 'labour' in making the piece. A cast item may be ready for purchase from a showroom on the same day or be ready for collection within a week or two. However, the client will very rarely get any say in altering or adding personal touches and preferences to the design. The item of jewellery is purchased 'as is'. Often gemstones are pressed into the wax and cast in place. This technique is chosen by the manufacturer as it cuts the setting cost.

In our business model we usually have at least one showroom consultation with our client and arrange for a variety of gemstones for them to view. Once the gemstone/gemstones are selected, we use showroom samples and sketches to work through the client's desired design and personal style (there are no limits to what we can create by hand; each piece is a 'one-off', designed and made just for you).

Unlike cast construction, handmade items of jewellery are created from a bar of metal (gold, platinum, silver or palladium). The piece is then fabricated using a variety of processes, such as rolling through the rolling mills, drawing it down using a draw bench, annealing, hammering, bending, filing and sawing. All these processes work harden the metal and create a much more durable and superior jewellery item as the ions in the metal are compressed and the grain in the metal is interwoven.

*'(Handmaking) creates a much more durable and superior jewellery item ...'*

As cast jewellery is poured into a mould it encounters no work hardening and the ions remain loose and there is no grain structure. This can lead to cracking, structural weaknesses and a poor surface finish. All these extra steps that are taken in the handmaking process come at a cost, as they are produced by a jeweller who has dedicated their time to develop the skills, talent and craftsmanship to create a one-off piece that will last at least one lifetime.

My time in the workshop doesn't only entail creating brand new items of jewellery, but also repair and restoration work. It is sad to say, but more often than not the items of jewellery we are repairing are of the cast category. Due to the cheaper production processes, these items require quite a lot more attention and regular maintenance over time. I find the handmade counterparts require far less maintenance or repairs.

When shopping for a new piece of jewellery, it is important to acknowledge these key points and decide the best option for you and your budget and to consider the purpose of the jewellery item. In our showroom we stock a variety of handmade and cast items as we understand both manufacturing options have a place within our industry and showroom. Although we love to hand make all our jewellery, we acknowledge that some deadlines are tight and some budgets have a limit. At Abrecht Bird, we wish to cater for everyone's needs and this is why we are very selective with the cast items we offer and are able to give our tick of approval to them.

*Eleanor Hawke*  
Jeweller



# Gift Ideas



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## Pictured above, from left to right:

1. 9 carat white gold diamond flower stud earrings \$740
2. 18 carat white gold sapphire and diamond ring \$6,355
3. 9 carat white gold pear-shaped diamond necklet \$815
4. 18 carat white gold four-claw diamond stud earrings (a variety of sizes available) \$1,870
5. 9 carat white gold aquamarine and diamond ring \$1,125
6. 9 carat rose and white gold pink diamond cluster pendant\* \$720
7. 18 carat white gold baguette and brilliant cut diamond ring \$2,185
8. 18 carat white gold circular diamond necklet \$1,485
9. 9 carat white gold sapphire and diamond ring \$1,865
10. 9 carat rose and white gold pink and white diamond stud earrings \$1,125
11. 9 carat white gold teardrop diamond necklet \$975
12. 18 carat white gold purple sapphire and diamond ring \$3,465

\*Chain not included

# Synthetic Diamonds



Synthetic diamonds have become more prevalent in the jewellery industry, and it is more important than ever for customers to be aware of the facts around diamonds (natural or synthetic), and for jewellers and valuers to know how to distinguish between the two. I sat down with Greg John, our Master Jeweller gemmologist and diamond technologist, and asked some questions about synthetic diamonds.



## What is a synthetic diamond?

Synthetic diamonds are diamonds which have all the physical and optical properties of natural diamonds but are produced in a machine in a laboratory or factory.

## What are some of the marketing terms they are sold as or referred to?

Synthetic diamonds are marketed under several terms and trade names within the retail industry, such as 'man-made', 'created' or 'cultured', but governing bodies within the jewellery industry (CIBJO) are now requiring that all jewellers or suppliers must disclose these stones as synthetic and label them as such (laboratory grown diamonds) without abbreviations (LBD) or fancy names. They must be disclosed for what they are – synthetic diamonds.

## How are synthetic diamonds made?

They are made in a factory by a machine.

The two major (current) methods of manufacture are High Pressure High Temperature (HPHT), which involves using a large pressure chamber to simulate the environment in which diamonds naturally grow, and Chemical Vapour Deposition (CVD), which is grown under less pressure via a gas and vapour solution.

These diamonds are never produced as a cut gem. The final product produced appears as a flat plate or rough pebble that is then cut and faceted.

## General Electric has produced synthetics since the 1950s. Why are we only aware of them now?

Synthetic diamonds were originally made to cater for the industrial and not the gemmological market and were significantly smaller in size than those today. In recent times the technology has advanced to grow larger diamonds.

## Why are synthetic diamonds so cheap in comparison to natural ones?

Natural diamonds develop over millions of years in the ground and have their own unique qualities – no two diamonds are the same. Hence the larger and higher quality diamonds fetch a higher price and are more expensive than synthetics.

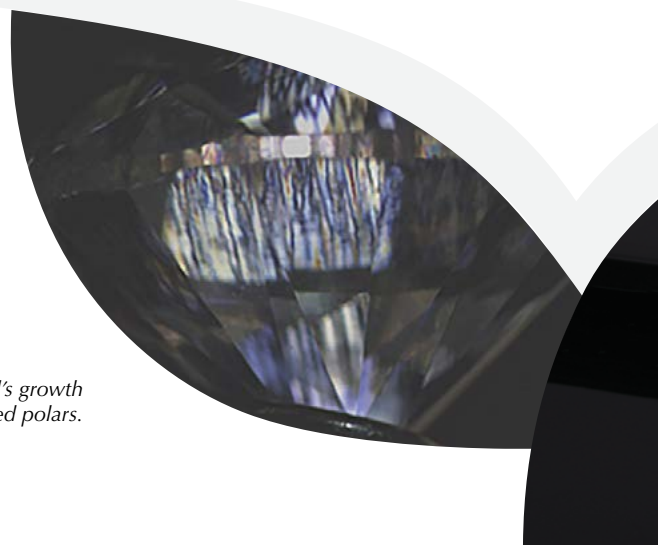
Synthetic diamonds are created in a factory over a much shorter period and can be quickly processed. Synthetic diamonds have dropped in price due to the number flooding the market and are expected to continue to decrease in price over time compared to naturals which will only increase in value.

## Other gemstones, such as ruby and emerald, have been produced synthetically. What has been the result on the price of the natural product?

No impact whatsoever. The natural gems continue to increase in price as a reflection of their rarity. By contrast, the price of synthetics has halved, then halved again as more producers emerged. The supply of synthetics is limitless – but discerning consumers are prepared to pay the price for natural gemstones.

## Why spend the extra money on a natural stone?

Natural stones have their own unique characteristics, are rarer and will only become rarer over time. The number of diamond 'pipes' (where diamonds are found) are finite, and therefore will be mined out eventually. Synthetic diamonds, however, can continue to be made by machines for many years to come.



*A CVD synthetic diamond's growth patterns viewed under crossed polars.*

*Natural stones ... are rarer,  
and will only become rarer over time.  
Synthetic diamonds, however, can continue to  
be made by machines for many years to come'*



**Synthetic diamonds are often marketed as 'greener' for the environment. Is this correct?**

The marketing of synthetic diamonds as 'greener' or more environmentally friendly is a claim that is sadly false. Yes ... there are no holes dug in the process of growing a diamond in a factory, but the power required (most often from coal) is immense and a significant amount of water is used as well. This far exceeds the environmental cost of mining. Diamond mines have long had redevelopment programs in place to reinstate the landscape and flora once mining has ceased.

**Why is it important to view a diamond in person rather than purchasing one from the internet?**

You can only learn so much from the internet and purchasing from a certificate sight unseen is not a sure bet to determine the true beauty or value of a stone. Every diamond is different with its own unique brilliance, cut and inclusions. When diamonds are graded, they are graded by eye and with a loupe and can vary based on the grader's subjectivity. When looking for a diamond, you need to know what you are looking for, be guided through the process and compare stones. As many of our clients agree, there is nothing comparable to looking into a diamond with a 10x magnification loupe! Given a choice of diamonds of varying grades from which to choose, you will easily see the difference yourself, and will pick out the best!

**Can you tell the difference between a natural diamond and a synthetic diamond?**

It is extremely hard to tell the difference. A qualified and trained valuer or jeweller with the correct training to operate and decipher the results will be able to distinguish between the two. It is particularly important therefore to know what and who you are buying from as synthetic diamonds are increasingly making their way into jewellery (many as small diamonds).

**Do Abrecht Bird sell synthetic diamonds and why?**

Abrecht Bird do not sell synthetic diamonds. Our company is not just a trader of diamonds and gemstones. Our specialty is in designing, handcrafting and manufacturing high quality fine jewellery.

**Would Abrecht Bird make an item of jewellery in the workshop with a customer supplied synthetic diamond?**

Yes, we will! We specialise in crafting fine quality jewellery, and this is our focus. Clients have used their own gemstones in the past for sentimental reasons to design personal and meaningful heirlooms and personal items of jewellery. We will always maintain our standards of precious metal quality and our workmanship to be of the highest standard. We create wearable art!

***Please call our office and speak  
to our team about making an appointment  
or with any queries you may have.***

***We would love to help you design your  
next piece of diamond jewellery!***



*Kylie Beachley*

FGAA Dip DT Regt Valuer RV348  
Office Manager

and

*Greg John*

FGAA Dip DT  
Master Jeweller



# Give a gift of gemstones

Stuck for a gift idea? How about a loose diamond or coloured gemstone? Couple this with the promise of joining with your partner at a consultation with Abrecht Bird Jewellers. The chance to design a future heirloom – a gift that will last for an eternity!



## Gift Ideas

*Pictured below, from left to right:*



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- 13. 9 carat rose gold morganite and diamond halo ring \$2,265
- 14. 18 carat white gold oval Australian sapphire and diamond stud earrings \$2,090
- 15. 9 carat yellow gold rhodolite garnet and diamond slider pendant\* \$665
- 16. 9 carat white gold prasiolite and diamond ring \$1,475
- 17. 18 carat white gold tanzanite and diamond pendant\* \$3,660
- 18. 9 carat white gold oval tanzanite and diamond ring \$3,035
- 19. 18 carat white and rose gold pink sapphire and diamond pendant\* \$2,375
- 20. 18 carat white gold South Sea pearl and diamond drop earrings \$2,035

*\*Chain not included*



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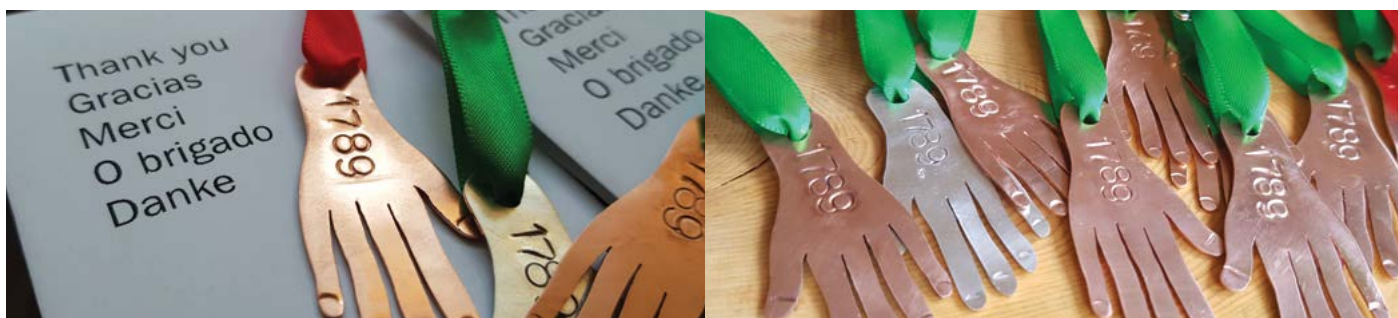
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## The Hand Medal Project



*'... this project certainly isn't about the jeweller  
– it is about the receiver, the frontline workers.'*

As the pandemic changed the world that we once knew, every day forced us to face new challenges and emotions. It took a global pandemic for me to truly appreciate the work that our frontline and healthcare workers do, putting their lives and the health of their families at risk in order to keep our communities safe. When I saw a story on the news about the Hand Medal Project, I knew immediately this was something I had to be involved in.

Starting in Argentina, the Hand Medal Project was created to bring jewellers together to saw pierce a specific hand design, attaching it to a pin and ribbon and packaging it in an envelope to distribute to hospitals across the globe.

Three thousand one hundred makers from 67 countries registered, each given a unique number to be imprinted on each hand created. This allows recipients of the 'hands' to trace it back to the maker. But this project certainly isn't about the jeweller – it is about the receiver, the frontline workers.

We will soon see about 12,000 medals delivered to their recipients. It is a small token of gratitude, appreciation and a way that gives me an opportunity to say 'Thank you'. The dedication our healthcare workers demonstrate during difficult times does not go unnoticed and I hope these hands will honour them in years to come.

*Yuki Mathwin*  
Jeweller



*This magnificent array of gemstones  
demonstrates the wide range of  
colours, shapes and sizes available.*





# Gift Ideas



**Pictured above, clockwise from top left:**

- 21. 18 carat white gold rhodolite garnet and diamond ring \$1,625
- 22. 9 carat white gold circular diamond necklet \$1,115
- 23. 9 carat white gold aquamarine and diamond drop earrings \$875
- 24. 9 carat white gold diamond ring \$1,165
- 25. 9 carat white and rose gold pink and white diamond pendant\* \$520
- 26. 9 carat white gold sapphire and diamond ring \$650
- 27. 9 carat white gold diamond slider necklet \$1,215
- 28. 9 carat white gold open circle diamond stud earrings \$950
- 29. 18 carat white gold onyx, emerald and diamond pendant\* \$1,950

\*Chain not included



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