

Right at the Centre

Classic elegance and commercial viability are key to Centres Jewellery's collection

Established, fine-jewellery manufacturer Centre Jewellery has added a range of classically influenced platinum designs to its already extensive range. Hand-crafted, using traditional skills at its factory in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, the range features popular solitaire, trilogy and half eternity ring designs, complemented by earrings and pendants.

At the heart of the collection is a desire to create well-made, commercially-designed products at very economical prices to compete in this crucial area of the market. All diamonds in the collection are hand selected and expertly matched to a consistent quality of G/H Vs2/Si1 with independently issued diamond certificates available on request.

Centre Jewellery is confident that by focusing on quality, service and competitive pricing the new range offers retailers an excellent alternative to making up their own pieces. Trade prices start from £121.

Bespoke service

Centre's range is complemented by a dedicated design and bespoke service which allows existing styles to be adjusted to meet individual requirements. The company also provides a well-established, fitted wedding ring service which offers a bespoke service from start to finish.

Recycle

Centre is also promoting recycling by encouraging retailers to send in any old stock that is proving tricky to sell to have it remodelled

into more saleable designs. To help keep costs down, Centre will give scrap value for old mounts and can arrange for the certification of diamonds if required.



T: 0121 233 1459
E: sales@centrejewellery.com
W: www.centrejewellery.com
JL: F345, Emagold Pavilion

Diamond by Appointment

'Supplier of the Year' Sharman D Neill offers a comprehensive selection of platinum and diamond jewellery through its 'Diamond by Appointment' business model.

'Tremendous support and encouragement' and 'relaxed and open communication' were just two of the glowing comments made by Sharman D Neill stockists during the judging process for the 2007 UK Jewellery Awards. But it was the company's unique Diamond by Appointment programme that was central to its success.

This attractive web portal, which was launched in January 2007, is purely for use by designated clients in their stores and is not available in the open domain. DbA provides access to a website that has been personalised for each client; carrying their own branding and product identification codes. It is effectively their own site holding a virtual stock, refined to meet their own particular needs. DbA also provides instant access to a vast additional catalogue of

diamond and platinum jewellery so comprehensive that no one shop could possibly stock all of the items shown at any one time.

Amongst the items featured on DbA is Sharman D Neill's distinctive and fast-selling 'Memoire' collection of highly-saleable rings, matching wedding rings, pendants and earrings in diamonds and platinum. A strong selling point of the range is that the engagement rings are designed to be worn in conjunction with a collection of complementary diamond-set wedding bands, available in a range of sizes. The closeness of the fit of ring against ring is perfect and is proving a real winner with brides to be.

"At Sharman D Neill we focus on three core values: people, delivery and expertise," says

MD, Roger Chamberlain. "At the heart of all our operations is "Diamond by Appointment" which clearly differentiates participating retailer's product offering from those of their competitors and delivers a business model to help them win in a competitive and diverse e-business marketplace."

RRPs for Memoire platinum rings range from £1450 to £20,000+ while the 18ct white gold pendant and earring suites start at approximately £995.

T: 02890 240 339
E: www.diamondbyappointment.com
W: sales@diamondbyappointment.com

Ringing the CHANGES

These stylish platinum and diamond rings are just a very small selection of T. A. Durant's Autumn jewellery collection.

This long-established company has built its strong reputation on the quality of its design and manufacture. Its entire collection is now available in platinum as well as gold and pieces include dress rings, men's rings, earrings and pendants.

Some pieces, such as the solitaire ring pictured, feature the company's unique, patented Starlight setting which creates an illusion of a bigger stone. A 25pt diamond looks like a 50pt when it is Starlight set. Rings available in five different diamond qualities to meet particular price points and trade prices start at £300.



T: 01789 772353
E: sales@tadurant.co.uk
IJL: G365, Emagold Pavillion

Completely Flawless

Flawless Jewellery, designs and makes exquisite, handmade pieces in platinum for the UK's finest jewellers. The company's workshop in Hatton Garden offers a comprehensive service from concept to completion with each bespoke design tailored to suit all tastes, styles and budgets.

Flawless, which in August opened its own retail outlet in Chislehurst, Kent, specialises in large and rare stones and will shortly be launching a men's collection featuring unusual, natural, grey sapphires.

This stunning emerald-cut Ceylon sapphire is cushioned between two dazzling trapezoid cut diamonds set in a beautiful, hand-crafted platinum mount.
RRP: £17,500.



T: 0208 467 5862
E: rob@flawlessjewellery.com
W: flawlessjewellery.co.uk

Setting the trend

The award winning designer and goldsmith Paul Spurgeon is known for his ability to lead trends in the field of jewellery design for both men and women.

His creations are renowned for their imaginative use of platinum mixed with rare white or natural coloured diamonds and for their superb attention to detail. Spurgeon draws a particular balance between the modernist and the wearable, the minimalist and the feminine to create this own unique and immediately identifiable design aesthetic. He finds his inspiration in visual arts, literature and nature and in so doing creates a vision that transcends the normal boundaries of jewellery setting.

Paul's designs are a fusion of organic engineering and elegant simplicity – beautiful to look at, even more beautiful to wear. This sculptural ring is crafted to perfection and set with a 0.35ct brilliant cut diamond.



T: +44 (0) 1223 891181
E: info@paulspurgeondesign.co.uk
W: www.paulspurgeondesign.co.uk
IJL: Stand E340



Can they fix it?

Yes they can! Platinum Solutions' express service is the easy answer to platinum jewellery re-sizing, alterations, repairs and much, much more.

- Claw work is done with stones in place.
- There are no more sizing lines.

This is the only company to provide a dedicated platinum service which means that more tricky jobs can now be repaired. For those with special pieces or particularly difficult repairs Platinum Solutions, a division of Jeweller Solutions, is the only company to quote a price over the phone.

T: 0161 480 2597
E: platinum@jewellersolutions.co.uk

The case for palladium

By Geoff Field, Chief Executive, British Jewellers' Association

Palladium is the new white metal which promises one of the biggest jewellery innovations of recent times. A naturally white metal, it has a density similar to that of silver but shares many of its other properties with its sibling metal, platinum. Palladium's lightness and untarnishing nature combine to enable designers to create large white metal pieces that maintain an excellent colour without the need for rhodium plating and are therefore both practical and affordable.

With palladium only around half the price of gold, 950 palladium is well placed to fit into the precious metals' market at a price level between 9ct and 14ct gold, offering a stylish and equally affordable alternative to 9ct white gold. Palladium has been causing quite a stir on the

UK market since 2006 and many BJA members have been selling palladium with customer assurances that a retrospective hallmark can be obtained when the law is changed.

Strange then, that the government has yet to accept the case put forward by the British Hallmarking Council for its inclusion in the Hallmarking Act as a precious metal, along with gold, silver and platinum. In evaluating the case for a palladium hallmark, the government seeks to balance consumer protection with its stance against business red tape and regulation but of course the tradition of hallmarking in the UK means that consumers and retailers will be reticent about purchasing jewellery at these price points without the reassurance of a hallmark.



The BJA's view is that this is a market that is ready to take off and inclusion of palladium in the Hallmarking Act will remove an important obstacle to palladium sales. With current white gold sales estimated at three million items per year, this is a significant opportunity for UK jewellers.

Evidence from BJA members is that consumers like the idea of a palladium alloy which does not have the disadvantages of white gold, which usually needs rhodium plating to give a crisp white finish and periodic replating to offset normal wear and tear. BJA also appreciates that from the trade's point of view, palladium offers a solution to the customer returns and disappointments which can sometimes arise over the durability of flash rhodium plating. Normally alloyed with other platinum group metals, such as ruthenium, palladium is also unlikely to bring any concerns about allergies or nickel sensitisation. Finenesses proposed by the British Hallmarking Council are 500 and 950 but if approved, 950 is likely to become the de facto standard, as with platinum.

Coupled with the recent changes in marking of mixed metals, palladium offers the jewellery designer an exciting new option to create colour combinations previously possible only with silver and gold or white and yellow gold, both of which bring practical issues, but as the Hallmarking Act stands at the moment, palladium is classified as a base metal – an unfair reflection on its status as a noble element.

A palladium hallmark would ensure consumers receive the same protection as they do when they purchase articles such as this platinum piece being hallmarked by the London Assay Office.



PALLADIUM THE FACTS

At IJL Johnson Matthey will be distributing a leaflet explaining all you need to know about palladium - a metal that is currently causing something of a stir in the UK trade.

Palladium is undoubtedly the coming metal but many in the trade are still unaware of how it fits into the hierarchy of precious metals and are unsure about the opportunities it can provide.

At International Jewellery London, Stand E240, Johnson Matthey (JM) staff will be on hand to share their extensive knowledge of palladium and will be distributing a free leaflet giving useful facts and figures as well as hints and tips on the metal.

JM has over a century of experience in working with and marketing palladium and is currently working on a comprehensive technical manual entitled "Palladium - an introduction". Copies of which can be ordered in advance by emailing full contact details to palladium@matthey.com.

Visit Stand E240 for more information

- Palladium is a Platinum Group metal
- The metal cannot currently be hallmarked but it is anticipated that this will be introduced in 2008
- Palladium is a bright 'white' similar in colour to platinum, but different from white gold and silver
- It does not need to be rhodium plated
- Palladium is generally worked at a purity of 95% pure
- Palladium has a similar density to silver, making it ideal for the creation of larger designer pieces and especially earrings
- Palladium is currently just over half the price of gold but has been higher in the past
- On a 'materials only' basis, palladium jewellery costs between 9 and 14ct gold

Bien targets the STYLE CONSCIOUS MAN



After the resounding success of their palladium collection launch in November, the designers at Bien have created this imaginative collection for today's style conscious man.

The sculpted surfaces and contours of the collection lend themselves perfectly to being made in palladium, creating designs that make a statement and feel great to wear.

Being slightly more expensive than 9ct white gold, this collection is at a perfect price point to provide an ideal white metal alternative that will never need rhodium coating to retain its colour.

'Today's, jewellery for men needs to make a statement and reflect their image and style and with fashion icons such as David Beckham making diamonds

trendy, we wanted to design a collection that would create that desirable look but at an affordable price. Using palladium has allowed us to achieve this and we're confident that this collection will generate fantastic sales for our customers nationwide. We've planned the official launch of this collection for IJL because of the ideal timing for Christmas gift purchasing. Also with our brand new exhibition stand being unveiled at the show and the celebration of our 40th anniversary, we'll be making an even bigger splash at the show this year,' explains Amber Saunders, Bien's sales & marketing manager.

As with all collections from Bien, these designs are supported by a bespoke marketing service and come complete with branded display, point of sale material and a palladium information pack to help retailers educate staff and consumers alike.

T: 01707 255 000
E: sales@bnrings.com
W: www.bienrings.com
IJL: Stand E330



Palladium possibilities

"Our gent's palladium range has been a great success, as retailers can see the many possibilities it offers," says Tom Green of Charles Green and Son.

The company also features palladium in its latest wedding ring brochure and in a special leaflet about this latest trend metal. At the start of the year Charles Green launched over 20 palladium designs as an addition to its standard wedding ring range featuring machined patterns and diamond set designs. RRP's £165.00 - £850.00.

Charles Green has plans for a further launch of palladium designs in the New Year, increasing its offer to over 60 unique pieces.

T: 0121 236 1874
E: sales@charles-green.co.uk
W: charles-green.co.uk



'ART'

Designer jeweller and silversmith Martyn Pugh, is currently celebrating 30 years in business.

He is very much at the forefront of palladium production in the UK and has added this light, white option to his precious metal palette to provide greater versatility in his designs and additional choice for his discerning male and female customers.

This dramatic 'Night' pendant from his ART collection combines palladium with pink sapphires and black pearls.

RRP's for ART start at £400. The pendant shown is around £1670.00.



T: 01527 502513
E: martyn@martynpugh.co.uk
W: www.martynpugh.co.uk
JL: Stand E555

Knowing a GOOD THING

Mike Hughes MD of the Birmingham casting house, JewelCast is a passionate proponent for palladium. Here he explains why he believes the growing interest in this metal is a good thing for British jewellery producers and retailers.

"If our customers and distributors are demanding new and innovative products we, the manufacturers, should be responding to that need and finding ways of supplying that demand: that's our job," says Mike Hughes.

So why palladium? Whilst conceding that this is a relatively difficult metal in which to work, Mike points out that it has been used as a precious metal in jewellery manufacture for decades. "All that is required is a little more care, effort and a willingness to step outside your "comfort zone" and embrace only slightly different manufacturing techniques. Of course not everyone is interested or has the capability to do this but many already have and although the sales are modest at the moment, they are growing," he says.

JewelCast has been testing palladium casting for over three years and has recently perfected a technique that ensures consistent quality. "It is our responsibility to work with our customers and supply the product that the market is demanding and we can now do this with confidence," says Mike.

Much of the debate about palladium revolves around whether or not, as a less expensive metal, it will 'steal' profits from platinum. "I believe the opposite is true. Palladium will offer retailers incremental sales with the opportunity of up selling to other metals. Furthermore, palladium is a far more likely to be sold as an alternative to 9ct white gold or, as we are already seeing in gent's jewellery, as a replacement for silver, than as an alternative to platinum" he says.

Finally with palladium hallmarking anticipated shortly, Mike is certain that palladium is here to stay. "It may only be a niche product at the moment but I firmly believe it offers real opportunities to the whole industry," he says.

T: 0121 212 1372
E: info@jewelcast.co.uk
W: www.jewelcast.co.uk



The three ring wedding

Retailers should remember there is strength in numbers, in particular, the opportunity available to dramatically increase turnover figures from bridal sales, by turning one into three.

"You will see in most of our platinum consumer advertising, that there are always three rings in the pack shot," explains PGI UK Manager, Ruth Donaldson. "We aim to reinforce the message to male as well as female consumers that both partners deserve the ultimate white metal."

PGI research shows that whilst many couples undoubtedly see the wedding band as the most important representation of their marriage, following the initial excitement of the engagement ring purchase, momentum can be lost. "Couples are often distracted by the overall wedding preparation and leave the purchase late, which increases the risk of not having the budget for the rings they want. This unsurprisingly can cause tensions," says Donaldson.

The challenge

When brides already have a platinum engagement ring they will usually choose a platinum band. Men however, often miss out through not being able to justify the spend on themselves. "A good retailer will be able to increase their customers' projected spend on rings by 100%. The challenge to jewellers is to help increase the priority of the male band at the engagement stage," says Donaldson. To this end many retailers encourage customers to handle male wedding bands when buying the engagement ring and offer discounts, or guaranteed prices at a later date, on their wedding bands. Stocking a wide selection of platinum bands for men really increases chances of making this additional sale."

British manufacturers are already strongly committed to the three ring cause and many collections for 2008 offer retailers a wide selection of matching, or complementary, male and female wedding bands. For a growing number of producers their most popular ranges are those where the woman's wedding ring and engagement ring are designed specifically to sit together – a trend which substantially increases the chances of making at least a two ring sale. But what about the men? "Most bloke's don't know what they want.

They are just waiting to be talked into something," says Barry Jacobs, at Jacobs Jewellery, one of PGI's 2007 'partners' for its consumer advertising campaign, who offers a wide 'three ring' selection.

Lifestyle choice

But Amber Saunders at B&N disagrees. "B&N has been offering matching male and female bands for a number of years and our experience shows us that men are becoming increasingly discriminating in their choice of ring. While women are tied to the style of the their engagement ring the guy has no restrictions and is increasingly making a decision based on his own fashion and lifestyle choices," she says.

Whether the groom in question is a style connoisseur or simply going along with the flow, the secret for retailers is having the right choice of rings for men available at the right time. The sales team should also ensure that they introduce the topic early enough and also offer the right incentives to clinch the three ring deal.

Three ring solutions



DIAMOND BY APPOINTMENT

UK Jewellery Awards 'Supplier of the Year', Sharman D Neill through its Diamond by Appointment brand is a company at the forefront of both the two and the three ring wedding.

CHARLES GREEN & SONS

In the past three years Charles Green has substantially upped its offer for both brides and grooms and many of its designs for women are supported with complementary, thicker, male rings.



DOMINO

Domino's wedding rings are available in different styles and widths for both men and women. Most rings are suitable for stone-setting, which is an increasingly popular option for both sexes. Domino's latest 'DRM' brochure features a comprehensive collection of wedding-ring-friendly engagement rings.



B&N

B&N believes that men are becoming increasingly interested in the purchase of their wedding band and that for many this is now as much a fashion and lifestyle purchase as it is for their brides. Diamond-set bands are a popular option.



Johnson Matthey
Precious Metals Marketing

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Johnson Matthey Precious Metals Marketing, Orchard Road, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5HE

T: 01763 256314 F: 01763 256339 E: platinum@matthey.com