

Jack Abraham

BY BROOKE CONNER SEVENAU

Sometimes life has surprising and different plans for us than we have for ourselves. Gem connoisseur Jack Abraham, owner and founder of Jack Abraham-The Precious Collection, would probably be the first to agree. "When I came to the United States from England, I wanted to study science, especially aerodynamics at Cornell in Ithaca. The romance of space exploration, The Sputnik Program, Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, it all lured and fascinated me. But my brother had other plans for me." Jack's brother was running a family business and told Jack, then 19, that he was going to be helping him with the business. Jack recalls, "Next thing I knew, I'm working in gemstones. You could say I got hooked, and I love every minute of it."

In the business since 1962, Jack has as much passion for the industry as ever. Most of all, it is the gems themselves that Jack is most ardent about. "Precious stones have a soul and voice. They talk to you. Each stone is special and has its own unique character, warmth and story. Some mesmerize and captivate you. In fact, there have been stones that made my chin drop, my heart start pumping and made me break out in a sweat. When I see a unique piece, I will do anything necessary to acquire it."

He is the first gem importer to take a stand on enhancements, and is a staunch advocate of full disclosure and its related effects on the integrity and price of stones.

In the early 1980's Jack Abraham did some in depth research on the heating of Rubies and Sapphires in Bangkok and wrote an article in the Summer 1982 issue of *Gems & Gemology* to educate, inform and enlighten the industry. He convinced one of the largest groups of Sapphire traders to share their secret process and special tools of enhancing with the industry. For the first time the entire process of heat-treating Sapphires was revealed.

As early as 1979, Jack has been providing certificates for many of his Rubies and Sapphires stating whether they are Heat or No Heat, and recommending that his customers do the same. The more important pieces also have a full color grading from AGL. Jack seeks out and provides several certificates for his stones from both American and European laboratories, such as AGL, GIA and Gubelin, to verify the enhancement and origin of a stone

(finalizing a purchase is conditional to results of the certification.)

He passes on this guarantee and security to all his clients, and it is this kind of reputation that makes Jack stand out in a competitive industry. He brushes aside the accolades of his peers and puts the focus back on the innate beauty of the stone and the importance of craftsmanship.

Jack uses only the best craftsmen, as he states they are "maestros who build around a design and capture the essence of a stone. I am a perfectionist and insist on a little something extra," he adds with a hint of amused delight in his voice.

Work creating a single piece of jewelry can take as long as five or six months. "I am proud that each piece is handcrafted in the United States" Jack says. "I don't rush the process. I go slowly and do it right." If a piece is not developed to his standards, he is not afraid to dismantle it and start over.

One of Jack's biggest concerns for the industry is the emerging affluence in developing nations where there is a high demand for rare jewels and the deep pockets to drive international prices skyrocketing. New rapidly emerging international markets flush with cash are dictating world prices. "The moment a stone is sold and breaks the international record, prices jump and adjust worldwide." Jack's greater concern is how the American dealers will replace their inventory of gemstones once they are sold. With an embargo on Burma Rubies and the difficulty of finding rare stones to begin with, Jack is concerned with maintaining continued access to beautiful stones. "The biggest challenge when working in colored stones is finding them." As a case in point, Jack describes a ten carat pigeon blood Ruby that might fetch \$4-5 million. "It is easier to make the \$5 million in emerging markets to pay for that gem than it is to find the stone itself." But it is the very elusiveness, the rarity, the challenge of finding beautiful stones that is one of the great pleasures of Jack's work.

For his own clients, Jack advises them to expand their search beyond the standard locales. "Sometimes we should judge a stone according to its merits, not just its origin," says Jack. His willingness to offer a client the option to buy a gem from somewhere other than the highly regarded Burmese Ruby, despite the smaller sale, is one of Jack's signature traits and a reason why he is well respected in the industry. ■





JACK ABRAHAM PUTS
EDUCATION, QUALITY, VALUE
AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
ABOVE ALL ELSE AND DOES IT
WITH GUSTO. "I'M A
PASSIONATE GUY- I HAVE MORE
RED TIES THAN ANY OTHER
COLOR- RED TO ME IS ABOUT
LOVE, WARMTH, PASSION. IT
STANDS FOR KISSING,
HUGGING, AND CONNECTION,"
HE SAYS WITH PRIDE... AND
THIS UNDERLYING QUALITY IS
QUITE POSSIBLY THE
REASON RUBIES ARE HIS
FAVORITE STONE.

JACK ABRAHAM

ELEGANCE...



Sapphire Necklace: S=97.09, D=19.80
Ruby ring: R=5.79, D=2.71 (Cu 2.00+Round 0.71).
Emerald Ring: E=20.08, D=1.56



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