

Classic gems, signature cuts sparkle on strong China demand

Demand for traditional favourites and exceptional gemstones in designer cuts will continue to hold up in 2015, a major coloured gemstone manufacturer said recently.

The high-end coloured gemstone trade recorded “huge” growth in 2014, according to Markus Wild, CEO of Paul Wild, adding that demand will only increase further due to tightening supply.

“There was strong demand for classic gems, forms and cuts, and at the same time, customers were asking for new and special items,” Wild said. “Untreated sapphires, rubies and emeralds were doing well. In addition to these classics, the most valuable green stones – as we had predicted – were in high demand, particularly demantoid and tsavorite. The top tourmalines – Paraiba and rubellite – were equally popular.”

To the Kirschweiler-based gemstone manufacturer’s pleasant surprise, Ethiopian opals, which the company introduced to the market more than a year ago, also fared well in 2014.

“With regards to shapes and cuts, classic cuts – especially pears, ovals and antiques – performed strongly last year. At the same time, our ‘Characters’ gemstones have been enjoying solid demand since their launch. These gemstones are treasured by our customers worldwide,” Wild said. “Characters,” a cut invented by Paul Wild in 2012, highlights the original, natural form of the gemstone, the company said.

In spite of concerns about the softening of China’s economy, the mainland remains a growth market for the gemstone sector. “A tradition and culture for coloured gemstone jewellery is still developing in China, hence, the market is far from saturated – and won’t be for a long time,” Wild said.

“Chinese customers prefer classic styles when it comes to gemstones but they are very modern and open to new things, too. Therefore, we see a predominance of classic gems, colours and cuts,

and solid demand for stones in signature cuts. I think increasing individualism in Chinese society is driving the demand for the latter.”

The US market is accepting of gemstones in virtually every colour, size and cut, he continued.

Paul Wild likewise remains upbeat about its business prospects in Europe. “Our European clients consist mostly of the top jewellers in Paris and Milan. They sell their jewellery to customers all over the world, which is why we can’t exactly give a clear assessment of the European market. Demand from Russia, however, seems to be stable, which might be surprising, too.”

Asked to share his colour forecast for 2015, Wild said classic colours and high-end gemstones – emerald, ruby and sapphire – will continue to top his customers’ shopping lists. “These gems are, in a way, a store of wealth. They are valuable assets,” the gemstone dealer said.

“We also expect a move towards golden green to bluish-green hues, and since there are quite a number of gemstones in delicate green colours, this might meet the upcoming trend of pastels.”

In China, red and green remain big favourites, regardless of fashions and trends, he added.

“Generally, we notice that in economically harder times, customers prefer classic gems and colours, and fine stones in natural colours. I assume that this will impact demand this year,” Wild said.

The gemstone manufacturer added that the “Big Three” will remain the most desired gems since they fulfill two criteria: Beauty and investment. “Increased demand leads to higher prices but the demand is focused exclusively on high-end untreated gems. We are proud to say that we can offer a few of the very rare no-oil emeralds.”

Asked to name Paul Wild’s major challenges in 2015, Wild replied, “We hope to haul enough demantoids and Paraiba tourmalines from our own mines to meet our clients’ demand. We are proud that these gemstones have achieved a special reputation. Many of our customers bid for these stones. Meeting demand, however, is really a challenge since these wonderful gifts of nature cannot just get ‘produced.’” **JNA**



From top: An 11.77-carat antique-cut rubellite; a 4.63-carat pear-shaped Paraiba tourmaline; and an antique-cut emerald. Photo credit: Images provided by Paul Wild

