

The Story Behind the Stone by Diana Jarrett GG, RMV, member NAJA

Getting it write

So what do you want to know? That may be the knee jerk response you give to someone coming into your business asking if you can "tell them a little bit more about _____" (fill in the blank). A decade or so back, consumers smugly approached the diamond ring case at the mall jeweler 'armed' with a basic understanding of the 4 Cs. And, of course, it's still a pretty good idea to have that foundation if one is going to put down serious cash for an engagement ring.

But even with this fragile economy - or maybe *because of it* - people want to know more when it comes to jewelry these days. What should you look for as a sign of quality? Do treatments matter? Are they permanent? The list gets pretty specific if you hang around counters long enough, eaves drop-

ping on the next looky-loo.

Maybe having less discretionary income available to most people means they really have to think through every purchase. So are there ways to actually make that work for you? Perhaps. Meet the need - create an ally.

A tool hiding right in front of you - make that *write* in front of you - could be the several books dedicated to making wise choices with jewelry. You say you don't need those - because you are already knowledgeable about every little divot in the jewelry world? I agree, but your customer isn't, and that's my point.

Veteran jeweler-appraiser Susan Eisen wrote "Crazy About Jewelry!" to teach women how to buy - maybe even when to sell and how to care for their jewelry

- all wrapped around light hearted illustrations that reinforce to the reader "It's not going to hurt at all - you're going to have a blast."

Renowned gem and jewelry author Renee Newman writes prolifically on a number of gem specific subjects that are important to both the trade and to consumers. Her latest release, "Diamond Ring Buying Guide" is a beautifully produced 7th edition tome answering just about any question the most thorough investigative mind could come up with when it comes to that subject. And because colored diamonds and new ring styles are penetrating the market at every level, she sorts out all of these vital concerns as well.

"Jewelry Savvy - What Every Jewelry Wearer Should Know," sounds like just the ticket to equip a consumer with the how-to's of who should select what - and why. Not every jewelry style is for everyone, a fact known stingingly well to women with a jewelry box full of "this doesn't really look good on me." But clever authors Cynthia Sliwa and Caroline Stanley say it's not a mystery - it's an acquired technique that anyone can learn.

Who doesn't love "Antiques Roadshow?" Eventually we all catch ourselves shouting our 'appraised value' back at the TV screen before the expert delights or disappoints the anxious item owner in front of the entire world

- who are watching this traveling appraisal fair road show.

Bell, a veteran appraiser with years of experience, is one of the elite experts that tour with the show to venues around the US. Locals line up forever it seems, clutching their treasures for the brief chance to experience their 15 minutes of fame or 'not-so-much'. One of Bell's books, "How to be a Jewelry Detective," puts the shopper in the driver's seat. Her content rich, purse-sized book dives right into subjects like what to look for in findings, hallmarks, clues found on stones, and do-able tips for field-testing materials. It makes an intriguing game out of sleuthing for 'what in the world' one is looking at, in an antiques store, or in grandma's trinket box.

I've just run down my current list of personal faves when it comes to jewelry books. And you may want to run out and get these books yourself so you'll be armed with more insider's info than ever before. And when that next looky-loo comes into your place and says, "What can you tell me about _____?" - you'll be a genius.

You can do one-better than that by actually having several of these books handy as an added value with your next sale; especially for that timid customer who wasn't at all confident about their choice. These books are also an important way to thank loyal customers who give you first shot at fulfilling



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their wish-list when it comes to jewelry. They will likely not read any of these books in one sitting. And you like that. Every time they curl up in a corner at home or pull out your thoughtful gift book from their bag while waiting at the Jiffy Lube, they will think of you. And they should - because you did the write thing.

Graduate Gemologist and Registered Master Valuer Diana Jarrett is also a member of the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers (NAJA). She's a frequent lecturer at conferences and trade shows. Jarrett serves as Colored Stone Editor for Rapaport Diamond Report; with other works regularly appearing in trade and consumer publications. Contact her at info@dianajarrett.com or visit her website: www.dianajarrett.com.

