

a doubly rare combination in mammoth ivory and ammolite mosaic pendants. Pieces utilizing agatized dinosaur bones inlaid with ammolite also appealed to artistic jewellery lovers.

Bargain hunting

All this rush for the best and rarest didn't preclude buyers from bargain hunting, though. Value shopping is still a major consideration for buyers who need to deliver the most worth wrapped in style to price-conscious shoppers. Several exhibitors responded to this call.

Appealing to the still-uncertain U.S. customer, Toronto-based Best Bargains tailored its offerings with price point in mind. Usually sold as a pricey upper-tier gem, tanzanite helped meet the demand shoppers were looking for when set in 10-karat yellow gold. Sterling silver finished jewellery also held strong, despite an 80 per cent increase in the metal's price last year. Demand was particularly robust for one-offs at affordable price points.

Separating pearls... from pearls

Pearls made for a hot topic this year by creating a buzz on the trading floor in light of developments within the marine gem industry. In addition to unifying the nomenclature for these gems, the burgeoning array of pearl products penetrating the market demands a greater need for identification of different types, including faux pearls and non-nacreous stones. Thomas Hainschwang, founder of Gemlab, Lichtenstein, shared his findings at a discussion presented by the Accredited Gemologists Association (AGA) on the recent commercial use of nucleating bivalves with a natural pearl, resulting in strikingly large, yet definitely faux, natural pearls. Natural pearls by definition lack human intervention in their creation.

To aid the standardization for names and pearl identification, the Pearl Commission of CIBJO (The World Jewellery Confederation) released a special report prior to its 2011 Congress in March in Portugal. The document lists

a number of proposals for amendments to the *Pearl Blue Book* to assist CIBJO's efforts to develop it into a truly international standard for the understanding of natural and cultured pearls.

One of the suggested edits is to qualify 'pearl' as either 'natural', 'cultured' or 'imitation.' In the past, the use of the word 'pearl' alone was used to describe a natural pearl. However, modern usage dictates being more specific to reduce any possible ambiguity, particularly among the buying public.

Speaking of pearls, bead-nucleated Chinese freshwater baroque pearls got their fair share of attention, both for their size at more than 19 mm, as well as their delicate pastel pink and lavender shades. Metallic-coloured pearls also appeared to draw the crowd in closer for a better look.

Gathering honeysuckle

Colour trend forecaster Pantone provided jewellers an ample heads-up when declaring 'honeysuckle' as the colour for 2011. The




▲ Sterling silver pendant with blue moonstones, white sapphires, and diamonds by Vicente Agor.




▲ 14-karat white and yellow gold ring by Claudia Ender Designs, with oval amethyst cabochon.

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