

From

The Collector

to You...

The Collector Story

Rated One of America's Coolest Stores

The Collector is an unusual gallery showcasing fine jewelry, mineral specimens and objets d'art. Its story is a fascinating one.

In 1968, gem and mineral connoisseur William Larson, with Ed Swoboda, formed what later became Pala International. They owned and operated three San Diego County gem mines: the Stewart Lithia, Tourmaline Queen and Pala Chief. In 1978 Pala leased (later to purchase) the Himalaya Mine in Mesa Grande located in the foothills of northern San Diego County. Those mines are part of a local mining history dating back to the 1800's. Larson and Swoboda separated their partnership in 1980 and Pala, now owned by Bill Larson, continued mining The Himalaya Mine.

The most important gem mined here is tourmaline. Gemstone production during the early 1900's exceeded two million dollars (perhaps 50 - 100 million in today's markets) with American, European and Oriental gem houses actively involved,



TZU-HSI, the Dowager Empress of China, (1834-1908) loved our California pink tourmaline.

including Tiffany's, who had part-time buyers in the Pala and Mesa Grande mining districts. The Chinese were particularly fond of tourmaline, and large quantities were shipped to China for use in carvings and ornamentation on mandarin clothing. The Empress Dowager's favorite gem was the vibrant pink tourmaline.

The retail part of Pala International known as The Collector Fine Jewelry, opened in Fallbrook in 1971.

The shop features a mine tunnel with a recreated tourmaline pocket which visually demonstrates how gemstones are created by nature and mined by man. Also on display in the store is part of Bill Larson's private San Diego County mineral collection.

A second gallery was opened at the Four Seasons Resort Aviara in Carlsbad, CA. Each location sparkles with exquisite custom and handcrafted jewelry featuring a variety of gem materials from around the world. *We mine, refine and design...one of a kind..*

Bill Larson, a native of San Diego County, is President and CEO of Pala International and The Collector Fine Jewelry. Renowned gemstone mining expert, Larson has a stunning private mineral collection as well as some of the rarest mineral-related books. He has supplied many of the most respected museums with some of the finest mineral specimens in the world.

Larson began rock hunting and collecting minerals at a very young age. Being raised in Fallbrook, he collected materials from the gem mine dumps of Pala. At the age of 10, Larson was helping well-known mineral collector Josie Scripps gather local gem specimens and was known as one of her monsters. Graduating with

Meet Burma Bill...

The Collector's Resident Collector



honors from the Colorado School of Mines in 1967, he put his education into use and became involved in mineral and gemstone mining in Southern California and soon began Pala International in 1968.

Larson is a world traveler who frequents the remote ruby and sapphire mines of Burma, the fascinating mining areas of Russia and many other exciting localities of the world. He has traveled to Mogok more than 20 times. One never knows what odd and amazing things Burma Bill will bring back from his travels.

Designer Spotlight - Steve Walters

Award Winning Gem Carver

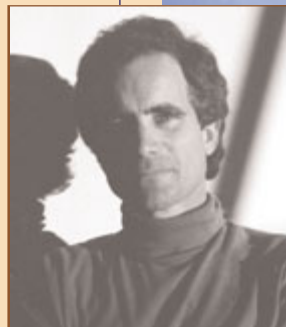
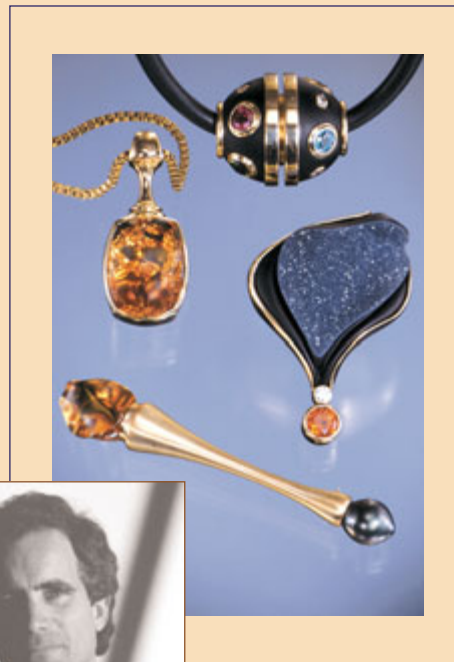
Award winning gem carver and local San Diego resident, Steve Walters, has been involved in the gemstone world all of his life. His parents began their gemstone tumbling factory in 1953, the year he was born.

Steve learned the art of lapidary production while working for a jewelry manufacturer in Beverly Hills. The company produced thousands of carvings and simple shapes that were all used in fashion jewelry designs. After 10 years of this he became burned out on high production work and chose to take his experience working with gems to the next level. Inspired by the innovative German gemstone carver, Dieter Lorenz, Steve began designing and producing carvings for contemporary jewelry designers.

He followed the lead of German cutter, Bernd Munsteiner, and using

transparent gems, came up with his own versions of the Fantasy Cut. This soon led to carving designs that were more flowing, softer looking and organically inspired.

Jewelry making came as a natural offshoot to the carving. After years of working exclusively in stone, he wanted to put together his lapidary experience and goldsmith skills to create finished jewelry designs. Today, Steve uses a variety of gemstone materials, from colored chacedonies, jades and opals to transparent gems such as tourmaline and aquamarine. Over the years his carvings have won several Cutting Edge Awards and have been used in eight Spectrum Award winning jewelry designs.



Steve Walters

Appraiser Notes *by Jo Ellen Cole*

Shopping For A Professional Gem And Jewelry Appraiser

What criteria are necessary to be qualified as an appraiser? In a word, **education**. An appraiser is a gemologist or jeweler who:

- ◆ has undergone formal gemological training, holds a degree or has had special education in valuation science
- ◆ has buying and selling experience at a wholesale or retail level
- ◆ knows the history of jewelry with knowledge of circa dating and gemstone cuts
- ◆ has experience in evaluating various manufacturing methods
- ◆ has knowledge of the different levels of value and how they affect the market.

Also, the qualified appraiser will have:

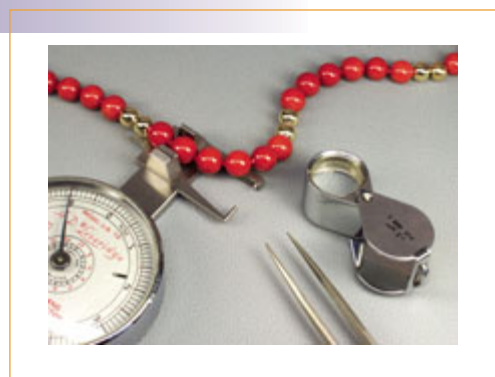
- ◆ a fully equipped gemological laboratory to perform the identification and valuation services.

- ◆ access to or ownership of a substantial library relating to the industry.

Appraisers can specialize in certain aspects of gemstone and jewelry appraisal, such as lapidary or glyptic arts, jade, pearls and ivory. A responsible appraiser might refer a client to a specialist if they need a more exact appraisal.

A professional appraiser should be independent of any particular store that might refer them. This assures that the client is purchasing an unbiased opinion as to the value of their piece. All information should also be kept confidential.

When choosing an appraiser, ask about professional affiliations and length of time in the industry. Be wary of appraisers who charge a fee dependent upon the final value of the jewelry being appraised. This is unethical and unacceptable.



Appraisal Tools

A professional appraiser will not pursue buying or selling the piece in question unless the interest is clearly stated and agreed upon by the owner of the item and the appraiser.

For a professional appraisal or any further information, please contact Jo Ellen Cole, GG., FGA. at 760-758-8315 or jocole2@cox.net.

From the Executive's Desk



Jeanne with a friend, Rendezvous at the San Diego Zoo; Chairman 1994

Welcome to the first edition of our Collector newsletter. I hope that you will find our newsletter interesting and informative. My husband "Burma" Bill and I established The Collector in 1968 and it is known world-wide for its exquisite collection of fine jewelry. It is our pleasure to offer quality, artistry, craftsmanship and value to our customers. This newsletter is just another way to let you know we deeply appreciate your business and look forward to serving you with all your jewelry and gift needs.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Hancock Larson
Executive Director

Earth Treasures

Tanzanite: *The New Birth Stone For December*

If you love things that are gorgeous and unique you will surely love the gemstone tanzanite. This deep blue stone with a hint of purple is one of the most extravagant ones around and is relatively new to

the colored stone industry. Tanzanite was first found in 1962 in northern Tanzania, in eastern Africa. This is still the only place this fabulous stone can be found which is partly why it is so valuable. Upon

being presented with the first tanzanites, New York jeweler Louis Comfort Tiffany of Tiffany & Co quickly realized its potential and arranged to become the main distributor. Naming the gem after its homeland, Tanzanite became popular almost overnight with its introduction to the public in 1968.

Tanzanites are heat-treated to produce its wonderful color which ranges from light to dark violetish blue and bluish purple as well as pure blue. The most valued color is a deep blue with a purplish hue shimmering around it. This gem requires special care and therefore should be handled accordingly. Active people should consider wearing a Tanzanite as a pendant or earrings. This stone should not be cleaned in an ultrasonic machine or with a steam cleaner. One can simply clean jewelry with warm soapy water.

Tanzanite is a fascinating stone that holds people captive. It symbolizes immaculate and unusual elegance. The owner of a tanzanite is individual and self-confident and wants to be set apart from the crowd.



The Collector's Tanzanite Jewelry





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*Big Mama's
 in the House*

One of the most extraordinary ruby specimens ever to emerge from Burma's fabled Mogok was acquired by Bill Larson. Pictured at left, this crystal weighs an incredible 10,100 carats. We have affectionately named it "Big Mama."

In the world of rubies, Mogok has no peer, with the finest reds so rare that, above two carats, they easily surpass diamond in price. Crystals of this quality are equally rare.

