



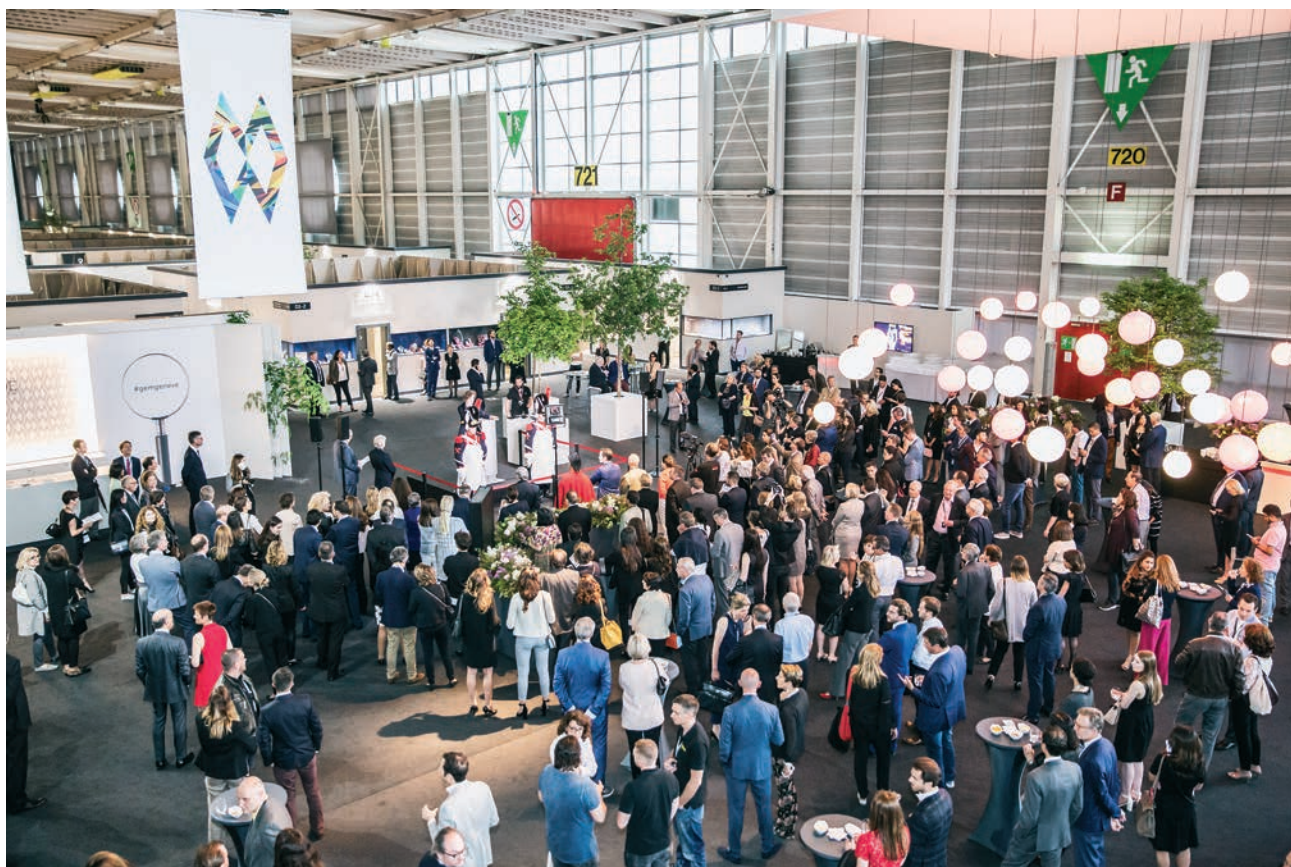
Faerber Butterfly brooch.

# GEM GENEVE: DAWN OF A NEW ERA



Osellieri Racine earrings with diamonds, emeralds and natural pearls set in white and blackened gold.

***The GemGeneve gem and jewellery trade fair debuted in Switzerland amid great fanfare. Held from May 10th-13th, it was a show with a difference, as it was open to both trade and public. The exhibitors were a diverse group of globally renowned jewellers, antique jewellery dealers, gem merchants, and pearl specialists among others. Jewellery specialist RICHA GOYAL SIKRI reports.***



**T**he birth of something new is always exciting, the germinating of an idea, the years, months, days of non-stop hard-work leading up to the launch. Moments before the curtain rises, the players rush to take their places, adjust their costumes, and the rest, as they say, is history.

However, behind each new beginning, there is a backstory, something that triggers a reaction resulting in a domino effect, setting an individual or in this case, an entire community on a new path. Our two protagonists in this story are Ronny Totah of Horovitz & Totah and Thomas Faerber of The Faerber Collection.

Horovitz & Totah are a family business for the past three generations. They specialise in untreated gemstones and exclusive vintage jewellery and objets d'art. Over the years, they have become *the* specialists for Kashmir sapphires and natural pearls, with an active network in Europe, Asia and the United States.

The Faerber family are fourth-generation jewellers specialising in

exceptional gemstones, diamonds and antique jewellery. Faerber's reputation is built on the purchase of historical pieces and stones. The firm has offices in Geneva, Antwerp, New York, Paris and Hong Kong. Its inventory, selected with expertise and professionalism and known as the Faerber Collection, is renowned for its beauty, quality and often historical provenance.







Thomas Faerber and Ronny Totah.



Towe Norlén's Magique sapphire ring.



"I had been exhibiting in Baselworld for 44 years, Ronny for 27 years and for the past few years our dissatisfaction kept festering like an old wound that refused to heal. There was a *'folie de grandeur'* that had permeated the show with big brands dominating the stage. I remember how in the early years, there was so much diversity among the exhibitors, which enriched the experience for everyone, but now Baselworld was primarily a Watch and Jewellery show for the big names only. We tried to talk to the organisers to express our dissatisfaction but to no avail. I don't know about others, but I for one don't want to go to a party where I am not wanted," says Faerber.

Across the board, whether one speaks with exhibitors, customers, or press, GemGeneve has been declared a grand success. What is the secret of such a positive result in its first year? "I think primarily three factors played a role in the show's success. First, since Ronny and I are both exhibitors ourselves, and participated in the show, we understood the needs of our peers and made every effort to ensure the experience was user-friendly. Second, we wanted it to be a family affair, the booth sizes were 60 sq m, 30 sq m, and 15 sq m. This enabled mid-size brands to participate, which further reinforced the spirit of diversity in the show. Finally, as cliché as this may sound, it was an atmosphere of happiness and a sincere sense of community that pervaded the exhibition," says Faerber.

When you throw a dinner party at home, you want to make sure that each and every guest is having a good time. You think about how you place them at the table, and throughout the evening, you keep circulating to ensure they are comfortable and having a good time. It seems the atmosphere in GemGeneve was like a glamorous party among friends. Out of the 147 exhibitors, which included gem merchants, antique jewellery and pearl merchants, diamantaires, 60% knew each other and had been working alongside for generations.



The Pat Saling Jewel  
Collection presented a Rene  
Lalique necklace.



***"There was a 'folie de grandeur' that had permeated the show with big brands dominating the stage. I remember how in the early years, there was so much diversity among the exhibitors, which enriched the experience for everyone, but now Baselworld was primarily a Watch and Jewellery show for the big names only."***





Horowitz and Totah - Tiare Dias;  
Kashmir sapphires and pearls.



The show was attended by over 4,300 visitors, which included the crème-de-la-crème of collectors, dealers from around the globe, auction experts, historians, gemmologists, jewellers, amateurs and connoisseurs alike. They came not only for the exquisite collections on display but to learn from jewellery historians like Vivienne Becker, Vanessa Cron, Amanda Triossi, and Dr. Michael Krzemnicki of the Swiss Foundation for the Research of Gemstones (SSEF) through the talks that were scheduled. The highlight of the show for most of the exhibitors and visitors was the Designer's Showcase that was positioned right in the middle of the space, featuring outstanding creations by Emmanuel Tarpin, Nadia Morgenthaler,

Ninotchka Jewels, Sean Gilson and many more, whose creative energy infused new life among the industry veterans.

One of the exhibitors at GemGeneve from India was Tank Fine Gems, and Dharmendra Tank had only good things to say, "It was a wonderful show, the quality of exhibitors was superb and we felt proud to stand with such a stellar gathering. The show organisers, Ronny and Thomas, acted immediately on exhibitor feedback to improve the show – and their sincerity was heart-warming. The small seating area outside the booths where one could engage with clients was a good feature. I have already signed up for next year, and will be planning my next collection keeping the show in mind."

Quality is one word that resonated with everyone who spoke about the show. Both Ronny and Thomas used the same three words to describe their selection criteria for exhibitors – quality, family owned, and medium-sized!

Looking towards the future, I asked them what they would do differently next year? "We have made a list of 80 points we need to work on for 2019. The first is the floor plan. While it was quite good, our aim is to ensure that it's even better next year and there is a balanced flow of traffic throughout the space. This year, there was one small section, which was a bit sleepy. When we realised this, we swung into action, moving furniture, bringing in plants. We want to make sure that we plan in advance for 2019, expand the size of the space to make the show even more



beautiful and effective for all our exhibitors equally,” says Totah.

Given that both are veterans of the industry and long-time exhibitors themselves, it only makes sense to ask them for some tips for first-time exhibitors. “First, make a big effort to present your gemstones and jewellery in the best possible way. Second, play the game, invite all your customers to the show. Ronny

and I invited everyone we knew and if all exhibitors do that, then we will all benefit together as a community. Third, look at your own garden and not the colour of the grass on the other side. Finally, be yourself, do what comes naturally to you. This may mean that it takes more time to make money but it’s the only way to build a sustainable brand, a strong reputation and a legacy,” say Totah and Faerber. ■



Cuff by Joanne Savary.

## CONTEMPORARY DESIGNER SHOWCASE



Earrings set with natural pearls, diamonds and rubies by Nadia Morgenthaler.



An arresting ring by Ninotchka Jewels.



Tenzo's Star ruby ring set with demontoids and diamonds in yellow gold, silver and black rhodium.



Emmanuel Tarpin's organic Geranium earrings in deep green tinted aluminium, edged with diamonds.



Emmanuel Tarpin's Hortensia Brooch.

**The GemGeneve show also featured the Contemporary Designer Showcase, conceived by Faerber and Totah, and curated by jewellery historian, journalist and author, Vivienne Becker, for Vivarium, a new, authoritative jewellery platform that brings jewels and their stories, both past and present, to life.**



Sean Gilson's graphic ring features opal, natural black pearls, steel, blue diamonds with a rose gold shank.

**The Showcase had a specially designed conceptual space at the heart of the exhibition, emphasising the individuality of each designer and creative vision.**

**“It is important for us to highlight emerging talent and explain how the new generation of designers is evolving. We would like GemGenève to become not only a vibrant trading place, but also an educational experience, a place where, each year, people come to discover new talent, new stories and undiscovered treasures,” noted Faerber’s daughter, Ida.**