



# Fancy man

*Yves Frey is the fourth generation of a family of Antwerp-based diamond merchants. His eponymous company is famous for its natural fancy colour diamonds and he talks to John Rice about the market for these rare and precious stones*

**What trends do you see in tastes for coloured diamonds?**

There is demand across the full range of the fancy colour diamond spectrum. Being more specific, we've seen a trend in pinks, yellows and chocolate diamonds lately.

The main reason for the demand in fancy colour diamonds is that some customers view white diamonds as too conventional. When someone wants a unique piece of jewellery, or a second ring, for example, they gravitate towards natural fancy colours.

The first trend we are seeing is for pinks. Fancy pinks, orangey pinks and, naturally, the intense pinks and purplish pinks. Pink diamonds, as we know, are a matter of budget. People are becoming aware of their rarity and, therefore,

the price they have to pay for them. We always try our best to match the best stone with the customer's budget.

The second trend we are seeing is for yellows. This trend is global since we can observe its growing popularity in the Far East, in the US and also in Europe. When you see adverts for coloured diamonds in magazines they will often include a piece with a yellow diamond. This is because large yellow diamonds remain more affordable than white, and there is always a yellow that matches any skin type.

The new kids on the block are the browns: chocolate coloured diamonds, champagne, coffee – you can find all shades. As an indication of new trends and tastes, many contemporary designers have recently started to use them. Again, an

attraction of this stone is its relatively low price for such high quality and size.

**What impact will the financial crisis have on the market for rare coloured diamonds in the future?**

The financial world is one with which I am familiar, having worked in financial markets in the 1980s and 1990s. I traded that lifestyle for something that offers me more beauty and much more creativity.

Just like paintings, antiques and modern art, fancy colour diamonds are products that attract investors keen to diversify out of traditional financial markets.

The latest results from the world's main auction houses support this trend. People are



A selection of jewellery featuring fancy colour and white diamonds by Yves Frey



rough, from our own manufacturing, or from the specialised market of our fellow traders in polished goods. We have also recently introduced a new collection, Les Adorables, which we launched at IJL in September. This is a unique concept collection of rings with natural fancy colour diamonds.

*“People are exploring new areas for their investments. Historically, we know that rare coloured diamonds keep their value through financial crises”*

**Given the huge challenges facing the diamond trade as we head into a worsening global economic climate, possibly even a recession, what should the diamond trade do to keep ahead of other luxury goods?**

This is a question for the mining companies and the large trading companies to develop a programme of how to help the industry in general, and to work with the jewellery industry in this present time of concern.

I would say that what you call a danger is an opportunity. Diamonds have remained both symbolic and iconic since time immemorial. They have passed through the numerous cycles of economic crises. Jewellery carries a magic not necessarily found in other luxury goods. There will always be something meaningful to celebrate between lovers and in family circles. We'll always have good reason to want beautiful diamonds, with colour or without, for these occasions. ■

exploring new areas for their investments. Historically, we know that beautiful, rare coloured diamonds keep their value through financial crises.

This is not an investment that you have to put in the safe just for a rainy day. You can enjoy yourself by wearing your investment as jewellery. So this is something that keeps its value while you enjoy it.

**Are you finding it increasingly difficult to source rare coloured diamonds?**

It's now becoming harder to get hold of beautiful diamonds. This is especially true for coloured diamonds as they are so rare.

In our established family network, we can still access exceptional stones, whether in the