

## **AWARD WINNING GRADUATE PROFILE**

**Hugh Kronenberg**

**FGA, FGAA, Diploma of Diamond Technology**

**2018 Sutherland Award winner**

**Name: Hugh Kronenberg**

### **What is your current job?**

I am a gem merchant, selling Sri Lankan sapphires, as well as emeralds and rubies. I have sold to clients in Australia, Asia and the middle East.

### **What did you study at the Gemmological Association of Australia?**

I studied Gemmology in the intensive mode, followed by passing my British Gemmology Association exams, then Diamond Grading and recently Diamond Technology.

### **What did you think of the course?**

I really enjoyed Gemmology and had some great demonstrators, who have become friends. The Diamond Tech course I recently completed was great fun.

### **Did you do any other study?**

I'm studying Mandarin at the moment, but my first degree was English Honours at Sydney Uni, followed by Psychology at Macquarie. I worked in Advertising as a Creative Director before catching the gemmology bug.

### **Why did you choose to study gemmology?**

My family was getting tired of me constantly looking in jewellery shop windows, so I decided it was time I actually knew what I was looking at.

**What do you enjoy most about working in the gem or jewellery industry?**

I really enjoy closing a deal on a breathtaking gem. It's really exciting to stand in a dusty backstreet and have something so beautiful shining in your hand.

**How did the GAA help you?**

Their courses are excellent and there's a good camaraderie.

**What do you like most about your job?**

I enjoy the travel and meeting people.

**Favourite gem?**

Today it's an antique cushion shaped 20 carat Tanzanite, cut for perfect blue.

**Favourite gadget you use related to gemstones?**

It's got to be my loupe.

**What is your most treasured possession?**

I have a Maori club, called a mere pounamu. It's made of a rare type of Greenstone called Kahurangi, which means 'clear sky' in the Maori language. It was sourced from the Arahura river on the west coast of the South Island.

**What is your greatest business or hobby extravagance?**

I spend 100 nights every year in hotels.

**Best part of your job?**

The friends I've made.

**Hardest part?**

Travelling can be exhausting.

**What personal qualities do you need to succeed?**

I think you need a real passion for beautiful pieces. I was once told 'always buy the best that you can afford'. My only regrets are when I've not listened to that advice and missed out on special pieces.

**Best kept secret gem?**

In Western cultures it's probably jade. I've been spending a lot of time learning to appreciate it. My favourite is river jade, white nephrite from rivers in Xinjiang province in western China.

**I wish I hadn't...**

Chickened out when a Sri Lankan miner wanted \$3000 per carat for a 7 carat perfect stone. I saw an identical piece recently for \$35,000 per carat.

**My favourite gadget is...**

A tiny Spyderco knife on my keyring, made of steel from Seki in Japan, the home of Samurai swords.

**It's not fashionable but I love...**

Cat's eye chrysoberyl.

**I am always being asked to...**

Give opinions on the relative quality of two equally amazing pieces.

**I often wonder...**

What it would have been like to travel to India with Tavernier, the seventeenth century French diamond merchant.

**I am very good at...**

Helping people understand just what's so special about the gem in their hand.

**Friends say I am...**

Carried away by details.

**Favourite gem?**

Golconda diamonds

**Dream job:**

I'd love to either be a gem buyer for a major jewellery house or to work for a high end jeweller bringing knowledge and enthusiasm to selling incredible pieces.

**Advice:**

Stones are about love. As rewards for yourself or gifts for someone you love. It starts with passion, and ends with passion.