

## Career Profile: Steven Milonas

Summing up my career in a couple of paragraphs is not always easy but there are the highlights which seem to stand out in ones mind.

Just recently I completed my certificate in gemmology; a task I had been wanting to undertake for a long time and, having been in the jewellery industry twelve years it was time I concreted my passion for gems and jewellery.

I had always taken a keen interest in jewellery as a youngster and having had family members in the industry I attended gem shows from the age of six or seven collecting rocks and crystals, not for their chemical composition but, for a kid of six, just because they looked 'awesome'.

As a keen art student, I honed my talents at high school where I hoped I would study graphic design at university, but instead ended up studying marketing where my design skills were still useful. While at college I met a good friend in the jewellery industry who upon seeing my knowledge, offered me a job which I eagerly accepted. With several weeks training from superiors I was thrust into the industry, loving every minute and working in a fabulous environment that felt just 'me'.



As time went by consultation with clients became more involved and I found myself not only selling but designing bespoke items and this is where my graphics skills played a huge role. At the time the jewellery house I was employed by had three boutiques across Melbourne so when all the other staff members caught on to what I was doing that was the launching pad for me becoming designer to the firm.

Ten years on my role had become very demanding, designing and consulting to clients while designing private collections behind the scenes as well as input in company advertising. As much as I thrived on the adrenalin of working with amazing products and companies I was now married and had started a family and my role at the company had really come full circle. I felt it was time to learn about

other aspects of the industry and so I accepted employment at the French Jewel Box, a long standing jewellery establishment servicing the antique jewellery sector of the industry, owned and run by Mary Louise Walsh; a leading member of the jewellery community, a gemmologist, registered valuer and specialist in antique and vintage jewellery.

Under her guidance I have learnt an in depth knowledge of how jewellery used to be produced in periods long past, creating for myself a solid basis for understanding the more technical side to designing jewellery.

My role at present is still one of designer but also extends to the care and restoration of existing jewels and that is where my gemmology skills really play a huge part; ie. the diagnosis of treatments of particular gem materials and their authenticity. The role is challenging but equally rewarding. I hear of so many unnecessary 'faux pas' made in the trade and that is why I chose to study gemmology, to refine my knowledge in order to move forward and become more professional in the trade I love.

***Ed. Congratulations to Steven on winning the Jewellers Association prize for top trade student.***