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The Colors of
Color Story

Color Story

An American Best Seller

If Color Story were a novel, it would be on the New York Times best-seller list. Skyrocketing demand from an ever-increasing number of high-end retailers has sent sales soaring and the company's newest collections flying off the shelves.

By Diana S. Zimmerman

As both a company and a brand, Color Story, is remarkable in more ways than one. Less than ten years ago, Robert Leser, the creative genius behind it, had to practically plead with retailers to carry his radiant collections of multi-hued gemstone jewelry. Now—the only pleading is from retailers for more of his spectacular pieces.

“When I started mixing various colored gemstones back in 1997, almost no one was doing it,” Leser explains. “White diamonds were overwhelmingly the stone of choice. Retailers thought I was crazy. ‘Who will buy it?’ they asked.”

Who indeed. Today, Color Story has over 15,000 Skus, with three brand new collections, *Manhattan Pavé*, *Strand 2Side*, and *Park Avenue*, having just been introduced at the Couture, Luxury and JCK shows in Las Vegas. “We are growing very rapidly in the high-end market,” explains Leser. “Our three newest collections contain matching sets of necklaces, rings, and earrings, and were a huge hit in Las Vegas. As demand for colored jewelry increases, more and more upscale retailers are realizing there are substantial profits to be made by providing their customers with choices.”

Here is what a few of these upscale retailers are saying about Robert and his Color Story collections: “The new introductions of Robert Leser’s Color Story Collection at the Las Vegas shows were perfection! Robert is a master of balance in color and diamonds, bling and restraint. The consumer’s lifestyle is always part of the design equation,” says Philip Livingston, owner of Elegant Slumming Fine Jewelry. Olivia Cornell, of Cornell’s Jewelers, adds, “Color Story jewelry is amazing when it comes to color. Our clients love it. I might add that Robert is also always there for that last minute customer!” And, speaking of being there for the customer, Donna Miller, of Carlyle & Co., says “Working with Robert Leser is always satisfying. His company has a great sense of urgency and is great with customer service. Robert listens to his buyers’ suggestions. It is always pleasant working with him and his staff of talented professionals.” Elizabeth Mandros Miller, of Mystique Jewelers agrees, “Color Story is one of the few companies that follow through with everything they say. Every customer who admires or purchases a piece is happy with the quality and price from Color Story. The color of the gemstones is consistent. The quality of the workmanship is beautiful and very well received from our

customers. Any time we need to special order, the transaction is smooth and the staff is friendly and knowledgeable.”

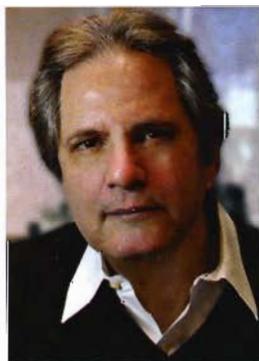
Among the popular collections is Leser’s *Manhattan Pavé* line featuring a large center stone engulfed in micro-pavé diamonds. It screams feminine individuality and glamour. “The lemon citrine center stone surrounded by diamonds was a huge hit at the show. Women really love it,” Leser exclaims. “Men buy white diamonds for women. But women buy colored gemstone jewelry for themselves. Retailers who are savvy enough to market to women – and carry the type of jewelry they want to purchase – are realizing that this market is a highly profitable one.”

The women’s market is the fastest growing segment in the jewelry industry, and the one that Color Story, with its unique blend of both traditional and modern designs, has specifically targeted by offering pieces that are both dazzling and affordable. Prices range from \$500 to \$20,000, so virtually every woman can afford to own a piece from one of its collections.

One of the ways that Leser has been able to bring such affordable luxury to his clients is by utilizing enhanced diamonds. Realizing that natural fancies were far too expensive and would not allow for color consistency, he turned to enhanced diamonds in 2005. He created what he calls “*The Enhanced Diamond Experience™*” – jewelry that is set with genuine diamonds whose color has been permanently enhanced. “Gemstones radiate color differently than fancy colored diamonds. When I combine gemstones with colored diamonds, there is an unexpected vibrancy

that makes you look twice. With ten colors of diamonds in my palette to choose from, the possibilities are endless.

The results are nothing short of spectacular. By using enhanced diamonds, Color Story is able to produce a line of jewelry that is beautiful, affordable, and replicable in color, availability, and pricing. “Having perfectly matched colors is not that important when making one-of-a-kind jewelry,” explains Leser. “But at Color Story, we have superb color matching throughout an entire line. What this means is that any piece of jewelry can be matched with any other piece, even if the customer purchases them on separate occasions. It also means that pieces, brought in by clients for custom orders can be perfectly matched.” According to Leser, selling enhanced diamonds is just a



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ROBERT LESER



matter of education. “Retailers need to take the time to educate their customers about these stones. When they do, enhanced diamonds sell really well.”

Today, the company also produces a fashionable line of custom-created, individualized watches. With a patent pending, it is yet another first in the industry. Customers can go to Color Story’s interactive website and select from a series of styles, colors, and configurations to create watches that are uniquely their own. “Women want to be individualistic,” Leser asserts. “With our watches, they can create a piece that completely reflects their own personality and taste.”

Each watch contains 41 diamonds (0.55 carat) set in the bezel, combined with another 108 diamonds (0.85 carat) set in the dial, and are available in either yellow or white 14K gold. With nine different colors that range from delicate to dark blue through green, canary yellow, and cognac, the diamonds can be mixed or matched on the bezel and dial. Even the crocodile bands are available in five different colors, adding more individuality to each custom-created look. Add all this to a five-year warranty, and it truly is a watch “without peer in the industry.”

Leser inherited his innovative spirit from his father and grandfather. “My grandfather started in diamonds in 1910, buying and polishing rough. He became a De Beers’ sightholder in 1928, which continued under my father until 1981.” When he was 16, the eager young Leser apprenticed in his father’s factory, learning to polish stones. He began working full-time in the industry in the 1970s, and founded Color Story in 1997. Not only is he an astute businessman, but he is Color Story’s only designer.

Color, however, is just part of Leser’s Color Story. “We pride ourselves on our quality and expert workmanship. Aside from our Swiss Made watches, all of our jewelry is made in New York City by skilled craftspeople,” he asserts. “And, each piece comes with an unlimited lifetime warranty covering defects in workmanship. We make jewelry that women can receive as treasured gifts, or that they can purchase for themselves to accessorize their wardrobe. Our jewelry is in tune with the times, yet will be in style well into the future.”

The future for Color Story and Robert Leser, is bold, beautiful, and brilliantly branded – all by a man who has unquestionably transformed “color” into the Color Story of the decade.

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