

company profile

Family JEWELS

Dehres expands into Canada bringing a slice of history and luxury

By Emily Smibert

From left to right: Ronen Zion, managing director; Hannah Zion, co-founder; Ephraim Zion, founder; Simon Zion, director of sourcing.



Photos courtesy Dehres



'The Four Seasons' collection consists of fancy coloured diamond rings. Each ring displays an array of colours, representing the four seasons. Unlike traditional solitaire rings, which are quite common, this ring collection features fancy coloured diamonds in a cluster setting. The rings' centerpieces remind one of multi-colour blooms, four-leaf clovers, enchanting dragonflies, and butterflies.

Dehres, a family-owned multi-generational manufacturer of one-of-a-kind pieces is no industry newcomer. In fact, their name is synonymous with some of the world's most prominent luxury houses, but it's the brand's humble demeanour and commitment to providing clients with exceptional goods and family-oriented customer service which propels them forward.

In an exclusive interview with *Jewellery Business*, Ronen Zion, the company's general manager, and Sandy Ray, managing director for Dehres Canada, shared the story of their brand; touching on the family's rich history and dedication to the industry, and why Canada is the perfect platform for growth.

Passion and opportunity collide

Headquartered in Hong Kong, Dehres was formally founded by Ephraim Zion, Ronen's father, in 1985. He first realized the potential of the Asian market in 1970 when Hong Kong had just begun on its path to economic dominance.

Having a pre-existing business set up in New York, Ephraim started to import diamonds and precious stones to test the market. Whether they were diamonds from the U.S. or green emeralds from Colombia, regardless of size, the demand was great and clients were excited to view the new collections. "Shipments from the U.S. to my father could not be sent fast enough," recalls Ronen. "My father was among the early pioneers to come to Asia with a collection of high-end goods sourced from around the world. Even though he had come to Hong Kong for personal reasons, it was the right time and place for business and he had expertise in a sector that was otherwise almost nonexistent before him."

Over time, the business evolved into the Dehres we know today.

When speaking of the company, Ronen proudly explains, "Our name is actually an acronym made from the first initial of our family members' names: Daniela, Ephraim, Hannah, Ronen, Erez, and Simon. This was an important personal touch for us as it symbolizes unity and shared passion."

Though the initial inspiration goes back to Ephraim's appreciation for unique and extraordinary diamonds and gemstones, it is the same appreciation which translated into Ronen's intuition,

insight, and uncompromising passion to create exquisite jewellery composed of those one-of-a-kind diamonds and gemstones.

It comes as no surprise that working in an industry that brings people joy is immensely rewarding. "In everything we do, we strive to create a sense of joy whether through the experience or in the product itself," says Ronen. "Through jewellery, we are able to celebrate and honour life-changing milestones such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, and other special occasions."

The Zion family has led a dedicated team at Dehres and made a concerted effort in creating a memorable experience for clients by offering them only the very best.

"People like a family business because it's about finding the right balance between giving them the confidence that is of a large corporate company, yet remaining personable and approachable," says Ronen.

"There aren't many companies this large and significant without the ego that is commonly associated with this level of success," adds Ray. "Dehres remains humble and focuses on delivering exceptional experiences and quality. They don't need—or like—a lot of self-garnered attention and are content with the business model they have, and that is growing the business quietly."

Quality counts

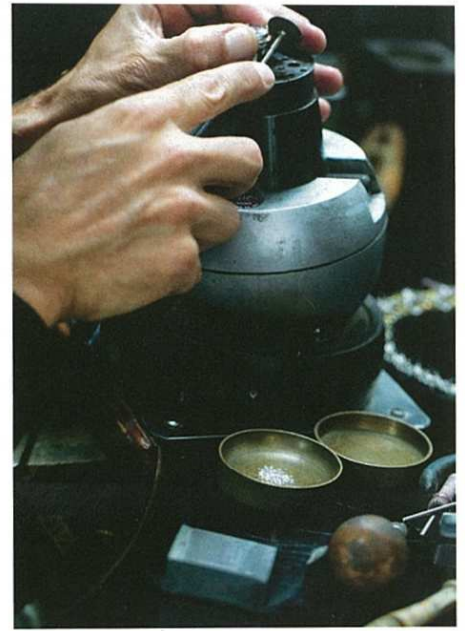
In the workshop, a combination of both traditional and innovative jewellery-making techniques are used with the finest stones available and realized into exquisite designs. Each creation is a meticulous work of art. The entire process represents a craftsman's lifetime culmination of skills and discipline.

Generally, it takes two to six months to create a Dehres masterpiece. Sometimes, however, it can take as long as one year to complete a complex design. "Our extensive and versatile inventory, coupled with efficient production capabilities, allow us to complete production faster than the average workshop with this calibre of quality," says Ronen.

Two of the core values Dehres emphasizes most in its business philosophy are trust and integrity. "We never put our reputation at risk or acquire diamonds or gemstones from questionable sources," says Ronen. "All our stones are conflict free. Sustainability and ethics play a great part in our business, and we're committed to honouring them."

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Dehres headquarters in Hong Kong.

Dehres also prides itself on providing gemmological reports from recognized institutes for gemstones, which provide proof of authenticity and origin. All Dehres jewellery is produced in compliance with internationally-recognized Best Practice Principles (BPP), and is soon to become certified with the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), which means it is abiding by the international standard code of responsible practices.

"We are one of the few companies in the world invited to exclusive diamond and precious gem mines to have a first-hand view of the rough stones coming into the market," says Ronen. "We are privileged and extremely proud to provide our customers with 'masterpieces from the source,' and are excited to have these beautiful jewels in Canada."

Canada bound

Over the past two decades, Canada has made a name for itself on the global stage. What was once a relatively

small international player, now shows great potential. "Canada is known for hockey and maple syrup," Ronen jokes, "but it is now on the map with its political changes, increase in exports such as diamonds and oil, and rate of immigration—securing a lot of wealth for the country."

Canada not only offers a market for economic growth, but it also comes with safety and security. "Canadian cities are safe, and when we're handling high-value goods, it's an important factor to consider," Ronen explains.

According to Ray, no calibre of jewels similar to Dehres exists in Canada. "We are known for carrying exceptional jewellery and can provide the Canadian market with an extensive range of white and fancy coloured diamonds as well as other valuable precious gems. This sets us apart because a retailer may not have the resources to acquire the same variety and quality as we have," he says. Historically, a client would make a request to a retailer which would often not be met due to its scale or limitations. Dehres has the unique products and infrastructure to enable efficient delivery, which is why customers look to them for their jewellery needs.

"Dehres is targeting a specific small handful of jewellers across Canada," explains Ray. "This isn't the brand for every store. It's a niche market, but we have a solid infrastructure to facilitate any request coming to us."

The company already has a vast inventory available in Canada. In the case of exceptional requests, fortunately, Hong Kong is only an ocean away and houses a deep and extensive collection of loose gems and finished pieces available to be shipped and delivered. It's an efficient operation.

"Setting up a Vancouver-based office means we are positioned to expand and promote our brand worldwide by ensuring positive exposure and influence in the North American market," says Ronen. "Ultimately, our goal is to work with important jewellers and jewellery brands in every major Canadian city. We're thrilled to be here and to build relationships in this new and exciting market." ♦