



FOREVER STARTS NOW

In times of uncertainty, we play the long game by adding a little sparkle to our investment portfolio. *DARA CHAU* visits CEO and Co-Founder of M&B Private Jewelers, **ROI SHEINFELD**, at his private showroom as he explains why there's no better time like the present to acquire precious gems



As we navigate through the volatile economy today, it may be time to relook at investment opportunities. And while most may argue that the best investment on earth is earth itself, we're reminded that spicing up our portfolio and redistributing our assets will safeguard our wealth. The truth is that diamond investments have been on the rise in the recent decade, but apparently, when it comes to acquiring what Shirley Bassey claims are forever, now is the time.

CEO of M&B Private Jewelers and avid diamond collector himself, Roi Sheinfeld welcome us into his dazzling showroom in Hong Kong. We make our way into the private lounge that he and his mentor and business partner, Oren Hilel, designed to host his clients for personal viewings and design workshops, but not before we pause at every showcase to steal a look at the blinding gems in awe.

"Adding diamonds to a portfolio is a great way to diversify. Diamonds retain their value as they'll hold for years and even decades," the Israeli jeweller and diamond manufacturer explains. "More and more people are inclined to include diamonds as part of their investment, because not only will they be worth more than when you first purchased them, but they can actually be enjoyed in your possession, unlike other options." By setting diamonds into jewellery, they can easily

transform into wearable pieces to be enjoyed for decades. And in these worrying times, there's a certain safe comfort that comes with the tangibility of diamonds, unlike reading stock prices on a screen.

Well, how would one go about picking up a rock or two? Roi describes the process as being quite simple, so long you do your homework. "Like buying anything, be sure to know how much you're willing to spend and stick with it. A common misconception is that a good investment means a high ticket price. That's not the case at all. The starting prices for some pieces begin at just a few thousand US dollars and, of course, can also go up to more than \$50 million."

Following a set amount, it's equally crucial to ensure that you buy your diamond in a real time market value. Only through certified diamond professionals will you get the most honest price and an expert valuation. Roi recommends getting at least two opinions before the hammer comes down. "Credible jewellers will always have all the universally recognised accreditations and will most likely offer trade-in and upgrade options."

When it comes to what to buy exactly, the options are endless. For most people, their first encounter with a diamond is the engagement ring. Traditions guide us towards the brilliant round-cut white diamond, and while the popularity of it means that

it's easy to liquidate as there'll always be a buyer (and while "second-hand" means nothing in gem world), the value remains relatively consistent even over long periods of time.

Meanwhile, a fancy-shape white diamond (think pear shape, emerald cut, oval shape) if cut properly is considerably more unique than that of a brilliant in the same carat weight, and therefore more likely to gain value over time.

"Yellow diamonds are fun and also quite easy to find. It's also considered an entry level in the fancy-colour world of diamonds and can be of equal value if not cheaper than white in the same size," the diamond connoisseur explains. Of course, a lot goes into the valuable of the stone (4Cs – carat, cut, colour, clarity), but generally speaking, it's a great piece to consider, as Roi suggests. Going beyond that is looking at rare colours – blues, pinks and the extremely rare greens most certainly come with a notorious price tag. However, since tremendous sales at auction houses they've become more appealing to UHNWIs.

Any investment involves extreme speculation. But getting your foot in the door is actually pretty easy, as we live in one of the heaviest diamond-trading cities in Asia. If you're not keen on risk in a speculative economy, in no rush for returns, and like your money where you can see (or wear) it, consider diamonds your best friend. **■**

