

Rio Tinto Diamonds Launches Champagne Diamond Design Competition

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RAPAPORT... Press Release - New York: Rio Tinto Diamonds on Tuesday launched an exciting new jewelry design contest aimed at demonstrating the beauty of champagne diamonds, of which Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond Mine is a leading supplier.

The Champagne Diamond Design Competition aims to attract talented new jewelry designers who will be inspired to showcase the full color range of champagne diamonds in new and innovative designs.

Rio Tinto has been marketing champagne diamonds from its Argyle mine since the early 1990's with the US, the world's largest consumer market for champagne diamond jewelry. In 2008 Rio Tinto launched a new series of champagne diamond promotional materials focussing on educating retailers, generating consumer interest and developing new distribution channels.

According to Jean-Marc Lieberherr, General manager for the sales and marketing of all diamonds from Rio Tinto's mines, "The design contest is a natural extension of our market development for champagne diamonds in the US. The argyle mine has fuelled the growth of champagne diamond jewelry around the globe and we are now looking to the next generation of new design talent to inspire retailers and consumers alike."

The competition comprises four categories with the overall winner receiving the title of "Champagne Visionary". The four winning designs will form part of a nation-wide travelling exhibition hosted at leading jewelry retail locations, in time for the holiday season.

As Rebecca Foerster, Manager of the U.S. representative office for Rio Tinto's Diamonds Sales and Marketing, explains, "The timing is perfect for a design contest because it provides inspiration and new ideas to invigorate our industry. The market is hungry for creativity and the combination of flawless craftsmanship and consumer appeal will set the winners apart."

The design contest closes on July 1, 2009 with judging by a panel of fashion and jewelry experts in New York City on July 14, 2009.

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