

## From Thai Brand to International Powerhouse

Starting out in Bangkok as Pranda Design Company in 1973, the Pranda Group is now a global powerhouse with a stable of more than a dozen brands around the world. The Group continues its successful adventures with the recent changes to one of its—and the world's—most iconic brands, Gringoire Joaillier, which is now featuring its GEM collection, featuring colored gemstones faceted by the world renown master cutter, Victor Tuzlukov.

By Marie Chabrol and Cynthia Unninayar

The beginnings of Gringoire Joaillier can be traced back to 1880 and a man named Achille Hourdequin. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, he created his own jewelry company and on March 3, 1880, he set up shop, along with his associate and master goldsmith Charles Hack, at 42 rue de Turbigo in Paris. The maker's mark was represented by two axes surmounted by a star and the letters H&H, although it changed on November 12, 1884.

The Hack & Hourdequin house was—and still is—known to lovers of beautifully crafted gold jewelry, which is regularly offered at auction. In addition to jewelry, some of the successes are very fine ewers.

The two partners remained together until the company was dissolved and the mark was struck on June 4, 1902. After that, Hack continued alone at 42 rue de Turbigo, while Hourdequin moved to the historical address on 79 rue de Turbigo. His new mark became an ax surmounted by a star with the initial AH.

After the death of Achille in 1942, his daughter picked up the torch together with her husband Gérard Gringoire. The name of the company was then changed to H. Gringoire. During its 135 years of history, only five leaders have led the company, testifying to its steadfast continuity in the ultra-competitive fine jewelry sector.



Achille Hourdequin, the man at the origin of today's H. Gringoire.



Created in 1902, this was the historical maker's mark of Achille Hourdequin, at the origins of Gringoire Joaillier.



The Rue de Turbigo in Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Gringoire Joaillier boutique, at 32 Avenue Matignon in Paris, today.



Rose ring with a prasiolite center faceted by Victor Tuzlukov, accented by diamonds.

Diamond-accented pendant in the Rose line featuring an amethyst faceted by Victor Tuzlukov.



Gold pendant and ring in the King line features a lion-inspired cut of citrine by Victor Tuzlukov, accented by diamonds.

In 1992, the Thailand-based Pranda Group purchased the venerable French brand, which continued to be known for its use of more accessibly priced colorful gemstones as well as its elegant and classic designs. Today, the brand has more than 500 stores worldwide and is known as Gringoire Joaillier.

"When a customer looks at a ring, she should be able to forget its shape and concentrate on the stones and their color combinations. That is why the brand stands out in a window or on a hand," says Mina El Hadraoui, director of Gringoire Joaillier since May 2017. This focus has led to the collaboration with noted gemstone cutter Victor Tuzlukov.

Celebration gold ring features a blue topaz faceted by Victor Tuzlukov with accents of amethyst, blue topaz and diamonds.



### Enter Victor Tuzlukov

A few months ago, Gringoire Joaillier launched a new fine jewelry collection, GEM, featuring colored gemstones faceted by the master cutter, Victor Tuzlukov.

Victor Tuzlukov was born in 1964 in Siberia. His interest in gemstones started at an early age, along with a love of photography, traveling, sports and literature.

He took his original writing very seriously and his philosophical tales won an award at the international literary contest entitled "The Golden Feather of Russia."

Victor graduated from the Moscow branch of GIA with the diploma of Graduate Gemologist. In 1998, he began faceting gemstones and was a founder of the Russian Faceters' Guild.

He became a member of the U.S. Faceters' Guild in 2006, and has participated in various national and international faceting competitions around the world. In 2010, he won the International Individual Faceting Championship in Australia, where he set the world record, scoring 299.17 points out of a total of 300.

This master cutter and ICA member has exhibited his works in France, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, Thailand and the United States. His "Philosophical Stone" collection has opened a new direction in gemstone cutting, using symbols in the patterns of the facets.

Victor lives in Bangkok and teaches gemstone faceting in the Gem & Jewelry Institute of Thailand (GIT).



Victor Tuzlukov



Interior of the Gringoire Joaillier boutique.



Creative Facets, Creative Colors

Gringoire Joaillier's GEM collection featuring gemstones faceted by Victor Tuzlukov is composed of several beautiful lines: *Rose, King, Celebration, Galaxy, Globe and Lotus*.

One of the brand's latest lines is *King*. Inspired by Art Deco and its geometric forms and sculpted in the form of a lion's head, *King* features the warm colors of citrine, with or without diamonds or other accents.

Another recent addition, *Rose* focuses on the center stone of amethyst or prasiolite crafted in the form of a budding flower, which has been specially faceted for this floral line.

Among the stones used in the brand's GEM collection are morganite, citrine, prasiolite, blue topaz, amethyst and other colorful gems, accented with diamonds, sapphires or other stones. A few examples are on these pages.



*Celebration* gold ring features an amethyst faceted by Victor Tuzlukov with accents of amethyst, diamonds and sapphires.



*Galaxy* gold ring features a morganite center faceted by Victor Tuzlukov, surrounded by diamonds.



*Lotus* gold and diamond ring features two blue topazes faceted by Victor Tuzlukov.



Gold ring features a prasiolite center faceted by Victor Tuzlukov in the *Rose* line accented by diamonds.



*Globe* gold ring with a blue topaz faceted by Victor Tuzlukov, with diamonds.

The Pranda Group

The story of Thailand's largest jewelry export group dates back to 1973, when it was established as Pranda Design Company Limited. On April 27, 1984, the company changed its name to Pranda Jewelry Limited. In 1990, the family company became listed on the stock exchange in Thailand and on June 3, 1994, it was transformed into a public company. At that time, the Bangkok-based company declared a registered capital of more than US\$12 million.

The company specializes in the design of gem-set and up-market jewelry for export. First expanding into Europe, it quickly set its sights on the United States without, however, ignoring Asia, a region that generates important revenue.

With more than 80% of its sales outside of Thailand, the Pranda group comprises some dozen jewelry brands. The most important are Prima Gold, Cai jewels, Batik Silver, Esse and H. Gringoire. The group has a strong network of distributors, along with six marketing departments responsible for purchasing and distributing goods. Their headquarters are in the USA, France, England, Germany, India and Indonesia.

The group has more than 3000 points of sale, ranging from small neighborhood retailers to luxurious multi-brand shops. The group also manages its own network of boutiques as well as franchise operations.

At the helm of Pranda is Prida Tiasuwan. In 1971, after his studies and his first professional experience in England with Renold London Co Ltd, Prida received an H.N.D. in Business Studies from Thames Valley University.

Soft-spoken and discreet, Prida is a highly respected business leader, not only in Thailand, but around the world. He is also one of the leading voices in various Asian organizations in the gem and jewelry arena.

Among his many activities have been vice-president of the Thai Gem and Jewelry Traders Association, Director of Listed and Authorized Companies, Director of the Thailand-U.S. Business Council, director of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Board Member for the Thai Social Venture Network, Commissioner on the Law Reform Commission of Thailand, and Director of the Assembly of Thailand Reform. He was also a Director and Vice-President of ICA, 2005 to 2008.

In 2016, Prida received the prestigious Commerce Diamond Award 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce for his contribution to the nation's economy, trade and commerce. In March 2018, the company became a member of the Responsible Jewellery Council.

Today, the sixty-year-old Prida is preparing his replacement. In 2010, after years of study in the USA and especially in Boston, Massachusetts, his son, Pitipong Tiasuwan, joined the company. The young man is developing the E-channel department of the family business.



Prida Tiasuwan