

SEATTLE FACETOR DESIGN

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DIAMOND FACETERS PROGRESS by Basil Watermeyer

In 1970 patents were applied for the Barion cut as shown in Figure 1. Subsequent shapes were only developed a year later. The half-moon was the centre of the patent and only after my book "Diamond Cutting" had been published did I discover that it was the design which had been patented and not the half-moon facet. Today the Barion is no longer a particular cut but a definite technique applied to the straight side or sides of any shape. Thus all the cuts using this technique will be known as Barion...squares, oblongs, triangles etc. At least fifty new cuts have been developed using this technique and it is much easier for communications between faceters to describe these cuts as a Barion adaptation. The original Barion square cut is already becoming history as the new "split facet" square cut takes over (see Figure 2). Some faceters have also shown a preference for the scissors cut crown which also deviates from the patent.

In coming of age, the Barion has proved itself in its ability to spread evenly and hold colour in diamonds. This has led to new developments in other fancy cuts where improvement of colour and weight retention is required.

In diamond material the split-facet is a startling change from the older cut. Greater fragmentation creates greater scintillation. This is made possible by splitting the main base or pavilion facet in two. These facets are then prevented from reflecting on to their opposing facet as in the round cut. This technique was derived from the points of the old marquise or pendeloque where the main facets reflect at a slant and not directly on to the opposing facet. The modern split facet marquise has this fragmentatiuon running across the stone which is proof of this technique.

Unlike colour stone faceters, we diamond cutters are constantly aware of the limitations imposed on us by the material we use. It is EXPENSIVE which means that weight retentiou is of prime importance. But we are dominated by a market which knows only the round brilliant cut; beyond that basically nothing. Certification of the round cut has not helped as some dealers, when evaluating, now study only the certificate and not the diamond.

Since publication of my book in 1980 there has been a great awareness amongst diamond cutters of the possibilities in other shapes. They now understand that the facets, angles and proportions used in the round cuts which create brilliance and fire can now be adapted to other shapes, sometimes with even better results.

The original Barion square started a strange train of events and as it progressed to different angular shapes. It became like a training ground for experimenting with the adaptation of its techniques to other shapes.

A parallel development was the Trilliant [which unknown at the time of designing was actually an extension of the Seminavette shown in GIA Diamond Dictionary 1960]. This cut distinctly shows the first known "split facet" technique on a standard style of brilliant cut faceting. In the past five years this technique has been adapted to many cuts : marquise, pendeloque, oval and most Barions.

Recently the old cushion cut showed signs of revival so it was inevitable that I became involved in modernising this cut. It was pure application of the Trilliant faceting sty... On the four sided cut it was a tremendous improvement on the old cushion, but I felt it required more scintillation on the base [pavilion]. The central halves appeared weak. Instant remedy was the application of the Barion half-moon which in turn was an instant success. Back went the half-moon to the Trilliant cut and other shapes were born with or without the half-moon, depending on the curve of the outline of the shape. Like the Barion, the Cushion cut is now a faceting technique. The Barion for a straight side and the Cushion for the curved side.

It did not take me long to realize that the Cushion and the Barion had the identical faceting style so why not join them. The result, a whole series of hybrids which can give the colour stone faceter designers a field day. Unfortunately we diamond cutters are limited to the few shapes which rough diamond allows us. Those which occur frequently for us are the square, oblong, square and long cushions and to a lesser degree, triangles and fans.

For purpose of communication between faceters I would prefer usage of the name BARION and CUSHION as a faceting technique or style in the same way as STEPCUT is used. Should a faceter then cut one of my fan cuts and decide to call it the "Spanish Fan". which conveys nothing, he could describe it as a Barion Cushion combination, half-open or three-quarters open. We would then have a perfect picture in our minds

Ed. note: This entire issue is devoted to Mr Watermeyer's

article so we can present it in it's entirety.

In September we will start a series of designs for the United States vs Australia Challenge Cup Competition along with details of some of the Watermeyer Barion variation.