

## MEDIA RELEASE

20 November 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# World's Most Expensive Advent Calendar is Coming to the Queen Victoria Building, Sydney

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On December 1st, 2018 Mondial Pink Diamond Atelier will unveil the world's most expensive Advent Calendar in their store on the ground floor of the iconic Queen Victoria Building. The calendar, worth in excess of A\$4,000,000 (Four Million Dollars), has been meticulously handcrafted by master cabinet maker and Sydney resident Tim Garside, using specially selected, natural Australian timbers and embellished with precious gemstones, gold and silver as well as hand-made, crystal chandeliers.

With secret doors and panels numbering 1 to 24, each day of December will reveal a new treasure to the public up until Christmas day. The calendar will not only delight those interested in luxury jewellery and time-honoured craftsmanship but also draw attention to the historic QVB as it continues to celebrate its 120th birthday.

Michael Neuman, Co-Director of Mondial says of the window display,

"This has been over 18 months in the making and we are so thrilled to finally see our vision come to life. For us, it really is about adding that spark of wonder and excitement back into Christmas and we are looking forward to seeing the faces of both adults and children light up as they look into our shop windows and see the incredible and totally unique display."

"While we understand that very few people can afford to purchase the Calendar, we do hope it draws attention to the magnificent coloured diamonds and gemstones that Australia produces as well as our fine timbers. In this current age of suburban shopping centres, we also wish to renew excitement in visiting the city for those unique experiences, where for 120 years the QVB has been serving the community as a central and often premium shopping destination. This year Mondial celebrates 25 wonderful years in this special location and like the QVB herself and many of the retailers here, this advent calendar is one of a kind. The calendar has been designed to reflect the architectural style and details one sees in the famous Queen Victoria Building and it includes featured Mondial jewellery such as an extremely rare Argyle Red Diamond ring valued at \$690,000."

Shane Carswell, Regional Manager, Vicinity Centres says of the new Advent Calendar,

"The Queen Victoria Building has always been the perfect destination to celebrate Christmas. In our 120th year, we are delighted to see that Mondial have produced such a luxurious

and unique window display that will surely captivate all who visit this holiday season. As Mondial celebrate a noteworthy quarter of a century located on the “Grand Walk” main level of the QVB, we particularly love the references to our iconic architecture in the Advent Calendar design. The truly breath-taking diamonds, jewellery and coloured gemstones which are part of the calendar are a brilliant addition to our iconic QVB Swarovski Christmas tree, Santa’s Enchanted Garden, and festive activities we have available for shoppers and visitors at the Queen Victoria Building during this Christmas season.”

Tim Garside, the designer and master craftsman involved in the project says,

“The materials chosen were Australian woods and veneers revolving around a complimentary theme. The details on and within the cabinets were to take features of the Queen Victoria Building itself to create a connection between the display and the building. You can see such features in the chequered floor, arched windows, glass in the windows and pillared arch and columns on the facade.

One half of the calendar consists of predominantly Australian Red Cedar, along with Australian walnut, and Forest Red Gum, features of Gold Leaf, natural gemstones and crystal. The other side consists of predominantly Huon Pine, Birds Eye Maple, Silky Oak and Red Gum Burl along with features of Silver Leaf, natural gemstones and Crystal.

As a master craftsman, I would like to feel the Calendar will capture the public’s imagination and create a sense of intrigue as to what lies behind the various numbered doors. The construction of both of the interiors has been done using traditional methods and incorporates many skill sets from veneer work, metal work, joinery, design, inlay, parquetry, gilding, French polishing, glass cutting and fine wood work. I would like the calendar to re-awaken the public’s appreciation of the natural unique precious materials found here in Australia with their beauty and wonderment to be seen through the calendar and the jewellery on display.”

## QUICK STATS

- Took over 18 months to design and build
- Design is based on the unique QVB Romanesque Revival style
- Specifically commissioned for the joint celebration of Mondial’s 25 years in the QVB and 120 year Anniversary of the building
- Mondial’s window display had to be re-built to accommodate the Christmas fixture
- Includes Australian timbers, precious gemstones, gold, silver and crystal chandeliers
- Every day, a new piece of exquisite jewellery will be revealed up until December 24
- The total value of the Advent Calendar is over A\$4million dollars
- To our knowledge, it is the most expensive Advent Calendar in the world
- Some of the 24 exceptional pieces of jewellery in the Advent Calendar include:
  - Mondial Red** — Beyond Rare. From the Argyle Pink Diamond Tender, this 0.33ct brilliant cut is a pure Natural Fancy Red of unsurpassed colour. RRP \$690,000.
  - Aria** — Unique and handcrafted. A beautiful pear-shaped diamond enhanced by a frame of interlaced Australian Argyle pink diamonds. RRP \$58,000.
  - Celestia** — One of a kind. An historic 3.51ct, VVS1 Fancy Intense Yellow Argyle Diamond. RRP \$275,000.



*The*  
**World's Most Expensive**  
ADVENT CALENDAR

*Exclusively at Mondial Pink Diamond Atelier,  
Queen Victoria Building, Sydney, Australia.*



**CELESTIA**  
\$275,000



**MONDIAL RED**  
\$690,000



**ARIA**  
\$58,000



## CONTACT

The thumbnail samples attached represent a small selection of images available. To request *high-resolution press* images, please either call **Georgia Witheridge** on + 61 2 9267 7974 or email [georgia@mondial.com.au](mailto:georgia@mondial.com.au)

Additionally, representatives from Mondial, the QVB and the designer Tim Garside are all available for further comment or a private viewing. To arrange, please call **Georgia Witheridge** on + 61 2 9267 7974 or email [georgia@mondial.com.au](mailto:georgia@mondial.com.au)



## ABOUT MONDIAL

Mondial is an Australian family owned and operated jewellery business stretching back over 50 years and involving 3 generations and currently 2 retail boutiques.

The Mondial story began in 1962 when Fred and Maria Neuman opened a jewellery store called Carina Jewellers on Darlinghurst road in the East Sydney area known as Kings Cross, when it was a rather eclectic, vibrant and bohemian environment. The shop itself was noteworthy for having a large mural façade created by influential ceramicist and Archibald Prize finalist Gerard Havekes, who was a friend of Fred and Maria's.

The Neumans then transitioned from Retail into Wholesale, creating Neuman Jewellery Imports, which over a period of 30 years or so was instrumental in growing and supporting some of the most recognised retailers in Australia. This venture led them overseas in search of new trends, ideas and the finest diamonds and gemstones, with which to create beautiful stock of a quality which was uncommon in Australia at that time. It was in Singapore, which had become a hub for Fred and Maria that they came up with "Mondial", a business name and concept for a boutique selling upmarket jewellery with a contemporary and Western aesthetic in an Asian environment. The Mondial name built an enviable reputation for quality and luxury and counted the Sultan of Brunei amongst its clientele. Mondial in Singapore was sold but the upscale legacy continued when Mondial in Sydney was launched with the opening of the new Ritz Carlton in Double Bay in 1991.

Mondial moved from the Ritz Carlton "Promenade" in Double Bay to "The Grand Walk" of the iconic Queen Victoria Building in 1993, where this year it celebrates a rare quarter of a century as one of the QVB's oldest and most august tenants.

Though Maria passed away in 1989, Fred has been joined in the business by his 2 children Michael and Nadia, as well as his cousin Jacob. Nadia, who inherited her mother's creativity and flair for design, has established herself as one of Australia's most awarded and talented jewellery designers. She manages the Mondial group's second store, the eponymously named "Mondial by Nadia Neuman" in The Strand Arcade. Mondial by Nadia will be celebrating it's 10th year in 2019 and already has a well-established clientele who appreciate Nadia's bold and innovative creations.

While Fred Neuman has stepped back from active involvement in the Mondial Group, the grounding and example both he and Maria passed onto the family is evident in all aspects of the business – from the focus on customer service and satisfaction, to the quality of design, manufacturing and materials used. Mondial, in the QVB, has the largest selection of pink Argyle diamonds in Australia. It has exhibited Argyle Pink Diamond Jewellery at Buckingham Palace as part of Queen Elizabeth the second's Diamond Jubilee, launched Australia's first range of Indigenous fine jewellery (designed in collaboration with indigenous designer Alison Page) and won "Retailer of the Year" for the whole Ipoh group (encompassing prime CBD retail locations such as the QVB, Strand, Galleries Victoria, Chifley Plaza etc) an unprecedented 3 times.

Fred Neuman was the inaugural recipient of the Jewellers Association of Australia's Lifetime achievement award in 2014 (<http://www.mondial.com.au/page/lifetime-achievement-award>) for his outstanding contribution to the jewellery industry and his family business Mondial is proud to be carrying on in his footsteps.

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