



Muzo single stones

MUZO'S COMMITMENT TO EMERALDS

This summer, Muzo Emerald Colombia debuted a multi-faceted programme to promote Colombian emeralds. As part of its 10th anniversary, Muzo has planned a series of initiatives that puts the spotlight on its emeralds, while educating consumers about its 'Mine to Maison' philosophy. GABBI HARVEY, head of business development and designer outreach for Muzo, sheds light on the exciting new ways the company is going about its business. By Smitha Sadanandan



Muzo Heritage collection, Royal Orb earrings

Muzo has been one of the first internationally funded emerald miners that started out in 2009. Tell us about the journey. What key challenges did Muzo have to surmount?

GH: While we actually didn't take full ownership of the Muzo mine until 2014, The Muzo Companies entered the Colombian market in 2009. Since then we have worked to establish one of the most productive and world-renowned mines in the Colombian town of Muzo, which is located in the region of Western Boyacá. We have remained committed to bringing modern mining extraction methods to Muzo, through technology-driven craftsmanship, transparency, mine-to-market traceability for consumers and a safe and fair

employment environment to the Boyacá region of Colombia. Our challenges have been the obvious ones – how to follow the governmental regulations and laws, while doing our best to be highly sensitive to our surroundings.

What makes these emeralds different and unique?

GH: Firstly, Muzo emeralds are all one-of-a-kind; no two gemstones are exactly alike. They are also imprinted with thousands of years of history, which makes them incredibly special. One important point of differentiation is that Muzo emeralds are produced under legal, environmental and humane working conditions. This makes our Colombian emeralds

This year as part of the 10th anniversary, Muzo launched its own line of jewels – Heritage Collection – at JCK Luxury in Las Vegas. What inspired the collection?

GH: Muzo has announced the release of its own consumer-facing, shoppable website: MuzoStore.com. The site features original Colombian emerald designs from the Heritage collection, which was derived from the Private Treasure of Muzo Emerald Colombia. Inspired by a cache of Colombian emerald treasures that were recovered from a 1622 shipwreck, the collection incorporates old-world techniques to create a sophisticated line of modern-day masterpieces.

Is the Heritage collection designed in-house?

GH: Yes – there are five unique sub-collections – Atocha, Chakana, Muisca, Royal Orb and Verity – and each collection has its special approach to tell the story of the Colombian emerald. The Heritage collection is made up of 120 pieces, and unearthing the emeralds required more than a year of production, as each gemstone was meticulously selected to ensure uniformity throughout. We actually sorted through more than 150,000 carats before arriving at the 15,000 carats of emeralds that were incorporated into the finished collection. From there, the pieces were assembled by highly skilled craftsman from some of the world’s top ateliers. ■



Muzo Heritage collection - Atocha necklace

not only unique for their beauty but also for their responsible mining origin – so buyers can feel confident in their purchase.

How is Muzo empowering women on the team?

GH: We currently operate with more than 900 staff members, and we are continually growing, which supports the local economy. We are especially proud to have a significant number of women working with our mines. Women were long excluded by the patriarchal system in the area but thanks to Muzo they have been given new opportunities to work both directly and indirectly with our organisation. Our core values include a strong commitment to the community and equal chances for both genders.

Muzo has a ‘block chain’ to guarantee traceability: track the rough, where it is cut and sold. Could you elaborate?

GH: Muzo has secured its whole production chain, integration of all

the sectors of activity from emerald extraction to distribution in compliance with best practices in the natural and social environment in which we operate. Our multiple certification policy tracks every stone from raw crystal to polished gem. Thanks to computer technologies integrated into the mine, Muzo is the only company in the world that is able to issue an in-house certificate of origin and traceability (certified ISO 9000). For each crystal, this certificate states the date, place and time of extraction. It also provides details of the rough and final gemstone, and indicates whether the emerald has been treated with oil or resin. Each Muzo emerald is crafted by our sophisticated cutting and polishing operation called (EDLA) in the Free Trade Zone in Bogota. We control our distribution channels by working with partners, who share our same high standards and therefore, we focus on creating value downstream for our production.



Muzo Heritage collection, Chakana ring



Muzo Heritage collection, Muisca bracelet