

Lords of the ring

Upward Curve visits auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's to marvel at five of the world's most expensive ring-mounted jewels ever auctioned



the diamond was auctioned by Sotheby for a massive US\$83m in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2013. However, after the buyer defaulted, Sotheby's re-acquired the diamond.

The Oppenheimer Blue Diamond is a sensational, 14.62-carat rectangular-cut coloured diamond ring (Fancy Vivid Blue/VVS1), flanked on either side by a trapeze-shaped diamond and set in the original 'Eight Blades' platinum ring mount by Verdura. It sold for \$58,002,681 (\$3,935,826 per carat) with Christie's in Geneva in May 2016, attesting to the rarity and provenance of the stone. Further accompanied by a hardbound monograph from the GIA Gemological Institute of America, it features additional photography, data collection charts and gemological research. ➤

Welcome to the blue blood of the elite mineral; the diamond. Where there is a rare diamond, one can expect Sotheby's and Christie's to be selling it. The two largest houses of the western world have been in business for a combined 522 years. Sotheby's is a British multinational corporation headquartered in New York. Christie's, with its primary premises in St James', London, is a private company owned by a French luxury-goods billionaire, François Pinault.

The majority of the most prolific jewellery auctions take place in Hong Kong, Geneva, New York and London, with around 750 auctions a year (across all strands of the business) in more than 80 categories between them. Together they run over 140 offices in 40 countries, and have 22 salerooms. They amass something in the region of \$6bn a year in

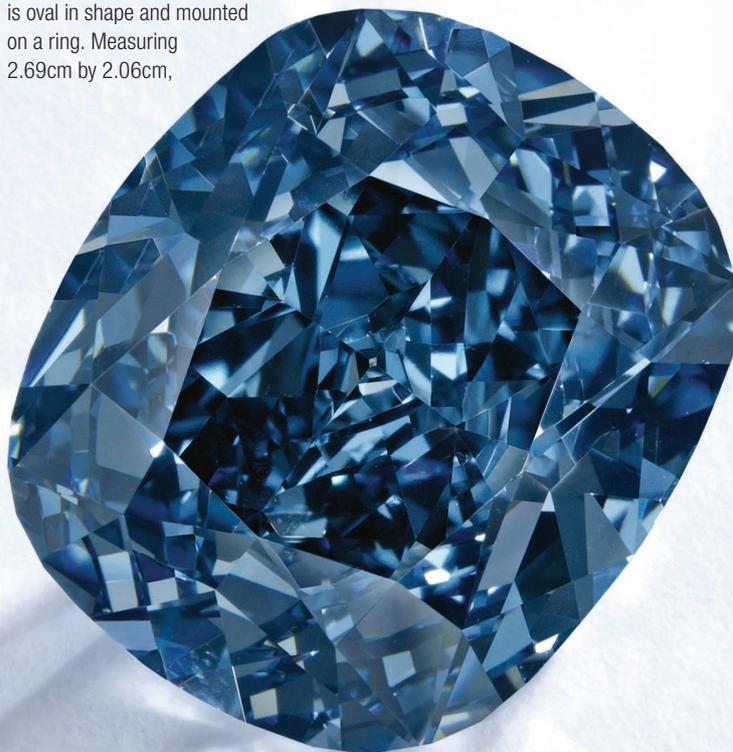
auction sales (the rest comes from private sales they broker).

Below are five of the most expensive lot prices for a ring-mounted jewel ever sold. Special mentions also go to rings sold by Christie's (lot prices in brackets rounded to the nearest \$m); The Cullinan Dream (\$25m), Winston Blue (\$24m) and The Aurora Green (\$17m) – the latter, a regular-cut coloured diamond ring, (5.03 ct. Fancy Vivid Green/VS2) going for \$3.34m per carat.

The 'CTF Pink Star', a Fancy Vivid Pink Internally Flawless diamond weighing 59.60 carats sold for \$71,192,517 (\$1,194,505 per carat) in Sotheby's Hong Kong in April this year. This was the world auction record for any diamond or gemstone.

Above: The Pink Star is a stunning piece of jewellery
Right: The Blue Moon of Josephine sold for almost \$50m

The 59.60-carat flawless diamond is oval in shape and mounted on a ring. Measuring 2.69cm by 2.06cm,



Portfolio

RINGS



The 'Graff Pink' is a Fancy Intense Pink diamond weighing 24.78 carats. It was sold for \$46,158,674 (\$1,862,739 per carat) at a Sotheby's auction in Geneva in November 2010 at a then-world-record auction price for a pink diamond. The majestic 24.78-carat pink diamond is one of the very few flawless diamonds existing in the world. The diamond was sold to the British billionaire jeweller Laurence Graff in 2010 who named it 'The Graff Pink.'

The world auction record for any diamond or any gemstone



— per carat — currently sits with The 'Blue Moon of Josephine', a sensational Internally Flawless Fancy Vivid Blue diamond, weighing 12.03 carats. It sold for \$48,468,158 (\$4,028,941 per carat) at Sotheby's in Geneva in November 2015. The 2.406g blue diamond, described as 'flawless' by experts, was discovered in South Africa in January 2014. The diamond is the largest cushion-shaped blue stone classified as 'fancy vivid' ever to appear at auction. The 'Blue Moon' sale, according to David Bennett, the head of Sotheby's international jewellery

division, set a record for the highest-ever price per carat and it made the diamond both the most expensive jewel ever sold at auction and the world's most expensive diamond, regardless of color. The diamond exhibits red phosphorescence when observed under ultraviolet light.

'The Unique Pink' was the star lot of the Sotheby's Magnificent Jewels & Noble Jewels auction in Geneva in May 2016. The stone combines an exceedingly rare and sought-after Fancy Vivid pink colour (Type 2a), a remarkable 15.38-carat weight, as well as stunning clarity and an

Left: The Unique Pink broke a the world record auction price for a Fancy Vivid Pink Diamond Below: The Graff Pink was auctioned at Sotheby's in November 2010 Bottom left: The Oppenheimer Blue is auctioned for more than \$58m at Christie's in Geneva

exceptionally pure structure. No surprises that it went for a world auction record for a Fancy Vivid Pink Diamond at \$31,561,200 (\$2,052,094 per carat). "When I first saw the 'Unique Pink' diamond the colour really did jump out at me," explained Joanna Hardy in *The Daily Telegraph*.

"To think nature has created this gem is quite awe-inspiring."

The diamond was cut by Cora International, a company known worldwide for producing rare diamonds of large sizes and vivid fancy colours. ■

