



PLATINUM

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**PGI-USA ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF ITS FIRST
PLATINUM INNOVATION CHALLENGE AT JCK 2010**

LAS VEGAS, NV (June 9, 2010)— Platinum Guild International (PGI-USA) proudly announces its first group of winners of the Platinum Innovation Challenge - JCK 2010. The contest was PGI's latest initiative to broaden access to platinum jewelry at retail, by promoting creative design in the new entry platinum category. An impressive 75 entries were reviewed, from more than 40 of the nation's top brands, including Chad Allison, Tacori, Simon G., Gem Platinum, and Sasha Primak.

Participants were judged in five separate categories, and their designs were evaluated according to originality, creativity, quality, wearability and innovation within the specified price category. The winners included the following designers, divided by contest category:

- Entry Platinum Engagement Ring under \$2,500 retail (semi-mounts)
 - Designs by Vatche: "Jennifer" platinum semi-mount engagement ring featuring diamonds around the head and shank (.40 ct. tw), \$2,500 (suggested retail price)
- Entry Platinum Wedding Bands under \$1,500 retail (men's or women's)
 - True Knots: Platinum men's 5mm platinum wedding band, \$998 (suggested retail price)
- Entry Platinum Fashion under \$2,500 (pendants, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, brooches, etc.)
 - Uneek: Platinum "snowflake" pendant with round diamonds (.30 ct. tw) on a platinum chain, \$1,995 (suggested retail price)
- Entry Platinum Color under \$2,500 (bridal or fashion featuring colored gemstones)
 - Benchmark: Platinum men's 8.5mm wedding band with pave set black diamonds wrapped around a satin-finish concave design, \$2,200 (suggested retail price)
- Platinum Fashion over \$2,500 (pendants, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, brooches, etc.)
 - Steven Kretchmer: Platinum "Mini Infinity" bracelet with 23 tension set diamonds, the most tension set stones in a single piece of jewelry single, \$30,200 (suggested retail price)

The Platinum Innovation Challenge not only inspired creativity and innovative platinum design among manufacturers, but it also highlighted entry platinum product to retailers walking the JCK show floor. Chris Childress, Director of Marketing for Benchmark, winner of the Entry Platinum Color category, stated, "*Benchmark is very excited and honored to be a winner of the Platinum Innovation Challenge - JCK 2010, but we think the more exciting news is that in these challenging economic times, demand for platinum is still alive, and our customers are still requesting new and innovative platinum*

designs."

Judges spanned four categories, including editors Alison Rowe from *Bride & Bloom* and Heather Levine from *The Knot*; renowned retailers Gary Thrapp of G. Thrapp Jewelers and Ronda Daily from Bremer's Jewelers; distinguished stylists Quentin Owens and Nicole Allowitz; and casting specialist, Teresa Frye, President TechForm Advanced Casting Technology.

Judge Teresa Frye, President of TechForm Advanced Casting Technology noted she was very impressed with the quality of the winning pieces. *"I am a manufacturer and caster by trade, so I was looking closely at all of the pieces for quality of workmanship,"* stated Frye. *"The winners in the lower price point targets did an admirable job without sacrificing quality or beauty. I think the Innovation Challenge was a brilliant initiative by PGI that clearly inspired designers to create innovative entry platinum product, and I believe we will see this category grow exponentially in the future."*

Judge Heather Levine, Fashion and Beauty Editor of leading bridal publication, *The Knot*, was excited to view the contest submissions, and she believes new entry platinum lines will be welcome news to many of her publication's readers.

Levine stated, *"I was so excited by the large selection of affordable platinum pieces! The designs were innovative, refreshing and, of course, totally stunning. I know that Knotties with entry level budgets will be excited to hear that they can shop for platinum!"*

Each winner received the official Platinum Innovation Prize, valued at over \$20,000. In addition to a retailer signage package and inclusion in future national PGI publicity campaigns, the grand prize included an official contest trophy, customized posters and professional photography of the winning piece. The pieces will also be honored on PGI's consumer web site and featured in upcoming press materials, among them an official "congratulatory ad" set to appear in a top trade publication.

About Platinum Guild:

Platinum Guild International is dedicated to promoting platinum and its, pure, rare and eternal qualities to the consumer and the jewelry trade. PGI has offices in each of the world's major jewelry markets, providing information, assistance and education on all aspects of platinum jewelry. For more information please visit www.platinumguild.com

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