



MARTIN LATTIN



Nephrite and brass make up the base of this tree decorated with white jade and priced at \$300.

Oriental trade opens

Jade jets into popularity

By SHIRLEE HEN

East is east and west is west and these days the two are meeting and mingling more than ever. Since the ping-pong diplomats and the opening up of China to some Western tourism and trade, the Oriental influence has made a visual mark on western fads and fashions.

Along with the new importance for silks and brocades, and satins and slashes has come a new appreciation for jade.

From the dawn of their civilization the Chinese regarded jade as the fairest and most desirable of stones. Fit to be fashioned into religious ritual objects and the insignia of kings and emperors.

It was believed to be highly charged with creative force, with mysterious powers of healing the body and even thought to render immortality.

Jade shrines were buried with the dead of the supposed virtue as a preservative of the corpse. Others were kept in the home or carried on the person.

Jade in its natural state is not found within the borders of China proper because it had to travel a long distance it always commanded a high price.

The first carved jade to reach Europe was brought back by early Spanish navigators from Mexico and Central America.

Latin and jade carving is associated primarily with China since in no other region of the world has this material found to be so well worked with such skill and in such a long and unbroken tradition.

Jade is the species of which there are two varieties, jadeite and nephrite," said Martin Lattin, Southfield jeweler who has made two buying trips to the Orient recently and is planning a third.

Lattin said nephrite is more common and is found in most areas of the world including Wyoming, and especially Taiwan. Jadeite is found in remote areas of China, Thailand and Ceylon.

"I bought two pieces of carved jade from a woman in the open air jade market in Hong Kong," he said. "Jade is usually carved by hand and the skill is based on the individual traditions. Most of the jade today comes from Hong Kong. The

families come to the market and show their wares."

"Jade is a tough, hard, fine-grained mineral which ranges in color from almost pure white through clear emerald green to a dark blue-green. Because of its pleasing color and extreme toughness, it has been widely used both by the ancients and the moderns as a lapidary stone and for small decorative carvings and jewelry."

"Some of the varieties of color in jade include green, white, black, brown and even lavender," he said. "The price of the piece depends on the purity of the color and the translucency of the stone. What is growing in popularity is lavender jade."

Lattin said he learned about jade "by trial and error" and from the Gemological Institute.

"Real fine quality is determined via color, translucency, freedom of color and lack of striations," he said. "The luster of the material is critical."

"There's been a tremendous influx of interest in jade recently now that China is open to trade with the U.S. Most jade is cut in China."

"The Chinese like jade that is uncarved. They feel you carve out imperfections," Lattin said. "A Chinese would not buy a bracelet with a clasp fast into it."

Many materials are sold as jade which are only substitutes. Serpentine and aventurine are the two most common imposters.

According to Lattin, the Chinese wear jade but they also like it in their homes and are very superstitious about it.

"Jade is thought to have the warmth of long life and happiness," he said.

In Taipei, Taiwan, Lattin visited the Imperial Museum which has collections of porcelain, jade, wood carvings so extensive that the entire exhibit is changed every 90 days. "They have enough to keep doing this for 60 years," he said.

"They had jade pieces so fine there is no price on them."

Another fashionable use for jade is as a decorative item in the home. Trees made of jade, carnelian, amethyst and metals are currently very popular.

Lattin's "The Gold Place" has a variety of these in terms of price, color and material. The most expensive of these is a jade tree made on a base of nephrite and brass and priced at \$300.

A fully three dimensional brown jade pendant is a true museum piece bought in Hong Kong's open air market and priced at \$1500.

Lattin said there's a great deal of "phoniness" in the jade business. "You can even buy marble that looks like jade."

"Other popular materials which resemble jade are tiger eye and carnelian are the things now," Lattin said.

"Women want a fashion piece that's different. The moral of the story is that everybody should go to the Orient. It's really exciting."



Purchased at the open air jade market in Hong Kong, this pendant, a museum piece, is brown jade. It is carved front and back, fully three dimensional.

FASHION

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a la mode

Fashion's future looms luxurious

Looking into the fashion future, it's possible to make some predictions now even as the sparkle of fireworks is still vivid.

Heads, hips and legs will be the focal point with many kinds of head gear to top off an outfit.

The tunic, which has been of interest for a couple of seasons will continue to be a fashion favorite.

Turtlenecks, cow necklines and hoods will all be a part of a multi-layered look being shown frequently, and boots, by now a classic and a must in every wardrobe will be worn with either skirts or pants.

In her first collection, Gloria Vanderbilt showed a sweatshirt-styled poached pocket top in twill with contrasting beige jersey hood which slips over matching jersey slim-styled pants.

The neutrality of good grey flannel will be in vogue quite a bit this fall particularly in classic suits. Suits with tailored details in the familiar blazer fashion are shown with coordinating sweaters in stripes or other patterns. Skirts are slender and often worn with a multitude of shirt and sweater separates.

Hill Blasse's women will luxuriate in cashmere evening dresses in the fall. His long cape coat sweeps over matching cashmere pants and an off-white satin blouse over blouse in the photo below, while the wild rice cashmere poncho swirls over elastic waist satin pants.



Luxury materials make up the clothes shown by Bill Blasse for fall.

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