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THE DIAMOND BROTHERS

Homegrown jewellery atelier Genesis-Global is run by a power duo who are not just business partners, but blood brothers and gem connoisseurs as well. Who says diamonds are just a girl's best friend? BY DAZZLYN KOH

PHOTOGRAPHER / RONALD LEONG



WHEN DENNIS TAN was a boy of seven, he became fascinated by the colours and iridescent sparkle of his mother's jewels. Each week, he would take her jewellery set out, admire and fastidiously polish them piece by piece. Fast-forward more than 30 years later and his love for the precious baubles has taken a professional turn.

Together with his older brother Kelvin, who has had a similar passion for jewellery his whole life, they established local jewellery company Genesis-Global in April 2012. The Hong Kong branch was incorporated five months later in September.

Specialising in supplying top-quality natural and unheated coloured and white diamonds, the company is located at Soho 1 The Central and also retails jewellery pieces. It boasts impressive performance records for such a young establishment — having achieved revenues of more than \$1.6 million last year.

Kelvin, 42, is the managing director of the company, and in his previous life, was a corporate lawyer with an illustrious 16 years of experience in the legal industry. But there came a day when he realised that he had lost



his passion for practising law, yet his love for gems remained steadfast. He thus took the leap into the world of jewellery and set up Genesis-Global. It seemed only natural that Dennis, 39, best friend and fellow gem lover, would join him shortly after. The vice-president of business development and sales, the younger Tan once held a variety of positions in service management, such as the

head of guest relations at The Ritz-Carlton.

What are the perks of a family-run business?

Dennis: The gems trade requires a lot of integrity and trust. Who else can you trust better than your family?

Kelvin: We can pool together our resources and the support level is phenomenal, which is difficult to find in a non-family business.



The latter often has most people being “cold-stored” in their various departments and they rarely go beyond their call of duty.

And the downside?

Dennis: We can never take a breather from work but fortunately, it’s our passion that keeps us going.

Kelvin: We eat live and sleep our work. Sometimes, I cannot even distinguish

between public and non-public holidays, weekdays and weekends.

As brothers, there must have been times of conflict with each other while doing business. How do you resolve those issues?

Dennis: We have a common mutual respect for each other. When conflict arises, we put the company’s interests first and agree to

disagree later. Then we talk it out properly. I also take breaks and go on holidays.

Kelvin: Essentially, he likes to take breaks from me (laughs). But that is how we keep our relationship healthy; by giving each other space. I also agree that it is very important to respect each other’s strengths. For example, Dennis is better at client relations whereas I am more involved in the analytical planning of the business.

What sets your company apart from other jewellery brands?

Dennis: We offer extremely personalised service. Both of us are in the office all day, meeting and dealing directly with clients.

Kelvin: He’s Ritz-Carlton-trained after all, so expect the best, top-notch service! On another note, Genesis-Global deals not only with the best diamonds, but investment-grade diamonds as well. We offer the world’s first diamond investment plan. Diamonds are a precious commodity and we want to make it into a viable investment product.

Where do you source your gems from?

Dennis: Mainly Myanmar, East and South Africa, Australia, Canada and Russia.

Kelvin: We currently have the world’s largest fancy vivid green diamond from South Africa that weighs a total of 3.03ct.

What is your collective vision for the brand?

Dennis: We want to become the first top Singaporean jewellery brand to become known internationally. We’d like to join the ranks of established jewellery houses famous worldwide, such as Graff and Harry Winston.

Kelvin: And that explains why we named our company Genesis-Global — to achieve a global status and because Genesis is the first book of the Bible where it was said: “Let there be light.” What else does a diamond do but sparkle and shine with the light? Also, we want to put Singapore onto the international diamond map of the world. No more playing second fiddle to Hong Kong, which has traditionally been the jewellery centre of the Far East.

Where do you see Genesis-Global in five years time?

Kelvin: We plan to open a store in Paris.

Do you have any advice for people who are interested in leaving their jobs to pursue their lifelong passion?

Dennis: Take risks, embrace the possibility of failure and give yourself the chance to fulfil your passion. We only have one life.

Kelvin: If you feel your job is no longer your calling or does not suit you, stop and reconsider your options. Then re-prioritise your career. Do not be careless and allow life to slip you by without thinking about what you really want to do and how you want to spend time in this world. ■