



# 360 Degrees of Rough

by Shira Ami

The new website launched by Armaan (the partnership of Shlomi Angel of Israel and the Modi family of Belgium) presents clear, sharp photos of select stones from the company's rough stock, each of them from dozens of angles, in stills and video

**W**e are drawn first to the images of the largest stone: 942.66 carats, in color J-K, clarity I, non-fluorescent, at a price of 1,000 dollars a carat. 942,600 dollars and the diamond is yours.

Hundreds of carats away, we find rough weighing 5 to 50 carats, each stone revolving so that we see every corner from every angle, and accompanied by data on weight, color, clarity, fluorescence, price per carat and total price. As of the writing of this article, the website - [www.carat-diamonds.com](http://www.carat-diamonds.com) - shows 109 photos and 13 videos of stones revolving 360 degrees, and it has been up and running for just two months.

Recently, and especially in the last year, we have been witness to the increased application of advanced photographic technologies to display polished diamonds and jewelry (covered in the pages of *Hayahalom*, as well), but it appears that rough marketers have yet to adopt these methods. This, then - at least to the best of our knowledge - is a world first. But first we'd like to present the main characters of the story.



Shlomi Angel

## The History of Armaan

In 1991, when Shlomi Angel (now 44) was about to complete his military service in the Golani Commando unit, a friend of his parents suggested he join the diamond industry: "When I returned my army gear, instead of going to Eilat for a vacation with the guys, I headed straight for the diamond exchange. I tried it out and I thought it was worth considering.

"Dede and Yair Bartal had a partnership, a subsidiary of Schachter & Namdar. Dede was an expert in polished and Yair, in rough and marking. For two years they taught me the trade from A to

Z: for 3-4 months I studied polishing, another 3-4 were devoted to cleaving, 3-4 months learning sawing and so forth and so on. They taught me to mark; in fact, they taught me everything. I went through a true training course. That's where I developed and grew. In 1991-1992, when Russia opened its doors to the world, we added it to our list of destinations. We bought rough and manufactured it there. I did marking in Israel.

In 1996, the partnership was dissolved and I moved to Schachter



& Namdar. I was one of 200 employees in the extremely powerful company, number 2 on the list of exporters from Israel. I quickly proved by ability as a marker and became responsible for all marking in the company.

In 2000, when Moshe Namdar decided to set up a department for buying rough, I had the privilege of looking for rough diamonds for the firm in every corner of the world - Congo, Guinea, Angola, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Canada, Siberia and, of course, Belgium and Moscow. First we bought rough for manufacturing, but the department gradually developed into an independent profit center, selling rough diamonds as is. In 2004, when Schachter & Namdar broke up, I formed a partnership with Moshe Namdar - Namdar & Angel Diamonds. Buying rough throughout the world, we reached an annual sales turnover of nearly 100 million dollars within a year. In 2007, my plans to establish an independent firm came together with those of Modi - one of the largest rough firms, which I got to know on my trips to Belgium - to open a company in Israel, and together we founded Armaan International (*armaan* is Hindi for “wish”). The company engages in the trade of rough, from 10 points to infinity, as well as trade in polished.”

## Photographed and Posted

“In late 2013 we realized that for three or four years we had been experiencing a gradual wane in the local trade of rough. Less rough buyers were coming to Israel and increasingly less diamond manufacturers were polishing in Israel. We realized that we had to reach beyond the local market and take our rough abroad. The best and most modern way to do so today is through the Internet. We believed that what could and already was being done with polished would work for rough, as well. **We saw that no one had done this yet and understood that we would be the first firm in the world to set up electronic trade in rough diamonds.**

**We decided to develop our own advanced photographic technology to achieve a quality of scanning and filming that would enable users to feel as though they were holding the stone in their hands.”**

This is where Ran Nissan comes into the story. He developed Armaan’s photographic technology. “Over the last two years, the field of 360° photography has developed. We provide a technological marketing response, including solutions designed specifically for online marketing and sales. The application that Armaan uses includes special photography boxes and unique integration with our e-trade platform, with 360° photo and video filming designed specifically for the diamond market. What sets us apart are our technological and marketing abilities, such as close-ups within

the 360 degrees. **We shoot over 100 photos of every diamond and show 70 to the clients, or alternatively, present 360° video films.** In addition, our marketing abilities have put Armaan on the first page of Google’s organic search results.”

## Without Tenders, Without Galatea

In response to my question, Shlomi Angel says that he doesn’t buy rough in tenders. **“All the stones exhibited on the site are from our vaults - stones that are in the company’s stock. All of them reach us from regular supply sources. We don’t buy in tenders, because I don’t believe in that method of sale as a tool for establishing a business. I am interested exclusively in sources of regular, steady supply.** In the tenders held recently in Israel we offered goods, but did not participate as buyers.”

To another question, Angel replied: “No. We do not send our stones to Galatea for examination. We don’t think that’s appropriate for our business.”



Itay Perry

## B2B & B2C

Itay Perry, the firm’s sales manager explains that the website is designed for both business and private buyers.

“Since launching the website in early 2014, we’ve made ties with buyers around the world that we didn’t know before, and whom we might have never met, including buyers from London, New York, Australia, Germany, Hong Kong and even a diamond company from Hungary, which have already bought rough through the site. At this point we are counting 150 entries a day. We are active on all social networks, such as LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and so forth, and we send a newsletter to existing and prospective clients. We supply all the logistics right to the client’s door, free of charge, through Brinks and Malka Amit, and also assist our clients in meeting all their country’s import requirements, including taxes and the like. Naturally, every diamond is accompanied by a Kimberley certificate as required by law.” ●



**For comments:**  
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