

THE MIDWEST FACETER



The Official Newsletter of the Midwest Faceter's Guild
September 2026

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On the Front Cover:
*Danny Stern cut this flame fusion
corundum (pink verneuil #2).
The design was Interminable
Interegnum by Jay Conner. The
stone is 16 mm and 19 ct.*



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About the Guild

The Guild began in 1979. Its missions are to promote faceting education and recreation.

Developing the art of faceting is its most important responsibility. The Guild also creates an environment of shared information related to faceting via meetings for those of like interests and encourages the achievement of individuals.



President's Message

By Chester Kiernicki



Image created in Microsoft CoPilot

Here we are in the second half of the year. Summer is here and Mother Nature has had it in for us. Rain, thunder, lightning, tornadoes, flooding, power outages, heat, and humidity. You name it, we are having it.

Registration for the Annual Seminar kicked off on January 15th earlier than usual due to the high level of interest. This year's Seminar was a sell out for the beginner's session by the end of March. More interestingly we also have 10 people who are still on the wait list. We were able to show 16 beginners how to facet their very first stone in CZ. All 16 were excited that they accomplished their stones.

We had 10 Guild members in the Intermediate session. This year we changed the cutting design so all 10 faceters had to work through a fancier cut. All ten were able to finish the stone and all I can say is their stones were absolutely beautiful. They cut the stone using synthetic blue spinel donated by Tom at Tom's Box of Rocks. As a bonus to the Intermediate cutters, the synthetic blue spinel glows a beautiful red under UV light.

Thank you Guild Instructors and Staff for another great Seminar.

We had very positive feedback from all the participants. The best part was many of them stayed and helped the Education Committee staff pack up Guild equipment and gear into our trailer and we were done before the heavy rains started. Thank you Mother Nature.

Any Guild member that is interested in experiencing the excitement of the Annual Seminar, consider becoming an instructor, or just stopping in and volunteering for a few hours.

Our Education Committee is working on lining up guest speakers for our Zoom Workshops. We're just working out the details and date. How can you help the Guild out with the workshops? Do you know someone in the hobby? Do they have an interesting skill or talent? Consider asking them if they would be interested in sharing their talents with like-minded faceters. Reach out to me or any of the Guild officers and we can assist with closing the deal.

Good News! We have a group in Ann Arbor, MI that meet about once a month and talk about all things faceting. The group has grown from 4 members to 14 members in less than a year. They've outgrown three meeting places and are checking out a fourth location. If you're interested in finding out more about the Ann Arbor group, reach out to us.

The Chicago area had a meet up with five local Guild members who got together and then a follow up meeting up with several additional folks meeting at a local restaurant. Chris and Jenny Evans put together a Meet Point-Meetup, which had a good turnout with Guild members from around the Chicagoland area.

If you are interested in starting a local group, send an email to ckiernicki@midwestfaceters.org and I can provide you with a list of members in your general area or put you in contact

with local groups.

This time of the year is also when we ask our Guild members to volunteer to help run the Guild. We have over 90 current members. We have several opportunities for members to volunteer to help the Midwest Faceter's Guild (MWFG) operate and grow. One of the opportunities is to join the Executive Board. There are 4 elected positions, President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. We also have several committees. Watch for an email shortly with more details. We have several long-time members who have been serving the Guild for many years. We need new members to step up and bring new ideas to keep us as a successful Guild.

I've been a member of the MWFG for a long time and I still think this is one of the best memberships I have.

Again, I've mentioned this before and I'll mention it again, this is Our Guild, not my Guild, not his Guild, not her Guild, "OUR Guild." Thank you to members that have already volunteered to help with the many jobs that we have. If you have a talent or skill that you've spent time developing, please consider reaching out. Let's talk! Don't be bashful!

Sincerely,

Chester Kiernicki

President Midwest Faceter's Guild

ckiernicki@midwestfactors.org

***"Keep your face always toward the sunshine--
and shadows will fall behind you."***

--Walt Whitman

Editor's Gem

By Dr. Reg Williams

As you may recall from the last newsletter, we formed a Newsletter Committee to brainstorm ideas for future directions of the Guild's newsletter. I am grateful to Graham Sherar, Marie Bellard, and Phyllis Cox for serving on the committee. We make a great team. We discussed the realities of what people want and through our understanding, it is not lengthy articles, so the last two newsletters have been considerably shortened. We know some people prefer "how to" videos instead of reading short articles in a newsletter. That is something to consider but require another set of skills. You will note in this issue that the Committee wrote an article on using a black marker when faceting. It was having people write a paragraph or two about their experiences using a marker, which produced a complete article on some tips and tricks for the membership, which is a model we want to continue for future issues. We have ideas for other articles too. You also see that with the help of Danny Stern, as the webmaster, I can send you the newsletter with one click of the url to read it. This bypasses having to download an attached PDF.

On a personal note, my life is changing in a profound way! I will become a grandfather for the very first time! My daughter is pregnant and a baby boy is due January 23, 2027. I am over the top, to say the least! My daughter lives in Aurora, Colorado, so this means more frequent trips to Colorado to see the baby. I have already decided what I want the baby to call me, **Nonno** (Italian for grandfather)!



Image created in Microsoft CoPilot

All of this leads to the next reality. I will need to cut back on what I do as the Editor of *The Midwest Faceter*. The Committee did recommend reducing the newsletter from quarterly to just twice a year. Since I cannot be Editor in perpetuity it may be time to consider another model to keeping the quarterly newsletter. Chester has asked members to volunteer to help the Guild. A task open is to become Associate Editor, where I take the lead on two issues with your help, and then you take the lead on two issues with my help. We want to have some articles written by the Committee, so you are not signing up for a burdensome task, plus I am there to help you. Please seriously consider it and let me know if you have any interest or if you have any questions.

May all your facets sparkle!

Dr. Reg

Membership Chair Connection

By Chester Kiernicki

It's September already. The first half of the year flew by quickly and July and August were a blur of activity. In July the Education Committee finalized plans for the Annual Seminar. The first week of August, we started executing the plans for the Annual Faceting Seminar, getting manuals, the final pieces of CZ getting preformed, fretting about the Guild trailer, planning food for a banquet and lunches, and a score of other details. This was all accomplished by Guild members who volunteered time from their busy schedules to make this Annual Seminar a huge success.

I am pleased that so many members helped with the Annual Seminar. In addition to that group, we have members who work behind the scenes, the Executive Board, our new Webmaster working on getting the **midwestfaceters.org** website tuned up and polishing the dents out, our Newsletter Committee, and other members that give of their time.

Singing the praises of these members is great, however when I look at the volunteers' names, I see the same names repeatedly. These same 20 people volunteering for stuff. In the next few weeks, an email will go out with volunteering opportunities. We need additional talented volunteers. Us old timers, yes, I'm one of that group, need new blood to join the committees. Fresh new ideas and ways of doing things is what the Guild needs now. We need to expand our outreach, we have 14 Guild Members meeting once a month in Ann Arbor, we had a group that meets in the Chicagoland. Can we expand that? Yes we can.

In about 4 months we will send out renewal notices. Is it worth renewing? These are still great reasons. Here's what you will have access to:

- **Zoom Workshops** with guest speakers that

are leaders and movers in our hobby

- Access to our **private section** of our website.
- Access to our **Resources Page**. Guild members who are volunteering their time and knowledge in answering questions about almost anything faceting related. Our Resource page also has information on joining a **Discord Faceting** group hosted by Michael Holmes.
- Our **Quarterly Guild newsletter**, *The Midwest Faceter*
- *The Midwest Faceter* archive.
- **Technical manuals** library (we are looking to expand our collection)
- Our **Annual Faceting Seminar**. Members have priority in registering for the Intermediate Session.
- Automatic membership in the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Society.

Sincerely,

Chester Kiernicki

Membership Chair and President

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."

--Mark Twain

New Members

Welcome to these new members of the MWFG

Meghan and Rob Oleary

Ferndale, MI

Joe O'Connor

Brookfield, WI

Vince Vartorella

Bedford, OH

Phyllis Cox and Joe Lacovelli

Westmont, IL

Matthew Kuehl

Allegan, MI

Max Merritts

Allegan, MI

Dr. Daniyeh Khurram

Ann Arbor, MI

Emily Morgan

Huntington Woods, MI

Karen Henderson

Sun City, AZ

Kevin Hazard

Fridley, MN

Kelly Pfeiffer

Chelsea, MI

Joseph Thomas

Ann Arbor, MI

Jessica Cruz

Ada, MI

Eleanor Sweeney

Chicago, IL

Beth Arcand

Fridley, MN

William Mathis

South Bend, IN

Virginia Stiles

Ada, MI

Dr. Arya Akhavan

Ann Arbor, MI

Black Mark Faceting

By Graham Sherar, Peter Krake, Dr. Reg Williams, and Marie Bellard

If you don't currently have a permanent marker pen in your faceting kit, hopefully the following information will convince you to add one to your faceting paraphernalia. If you do have a permanent marker in your kit, read on, you may discover new ways to use your pen.

“Does anyone else paint their facets with a black marker, so you can see them cutting in?”

I put this question to several experienced faceters recently following a similar question being posted in an on-line forum. As I collated the results, it became clear from my research using a black marker to mark a facet is just one use. A black permanent marker pen offers many more opportunities than appear on “face” value. This article explores how you can learn to love your Sharpie as an important tool in your toolbox - and improve your faceting.

“Simple question, do you use a marker pen (black Sharpie or similar) to mark certain facets when you cut to better see what you are cutting?”

This question, posed in an online forum, attracted 21 yes responses and five negative responses.

Some respondents favored blue over black, and two said they use a gray lead pencil. 2 added that they use multiple colors on complex designs.

Some responders felt that marking facets was very useful for novices/learners and was a valuable tool for instructors when teaching others to facet.

I think an article regarding this issue would be beneficial to the less experienced readers of *The Midwest Faceter* and may also appeal to some of our more experienced faceters, particularly those who are in a teaching role.

Over to you to consider the above and hopefully provide some feedback concerning your use, or otherwise, of a permanent marker pen.

Your thoughts on this topic would be very much appreciated.

Best regards, Graham Sherar”

Peter Krake, current International Faceting Champion Faceter and Australian Faceting Judge offered the following response to my email:

“Hi Graham,

My immediate thought was that no, I do not use a marker pen when I am faceting. On reflection though, I have used a marker pen occasionally to help align the rough ready for dopping. With an irregular piece of rough identifying the center of the stone with a dot can be useful for maximizing return on a round cut. It can also be useful to put a dot on a preformed teardrop shape to show where the stone should be dopped off center, i.e. towards the round end.



I prefer to use a transfer block to get the best alignment possible when transferring a stone. Some faceters suggested that using a marker pen on a reference facet helps them with alignment after the transfer has been completed. The correct use of a transfer block should avoid the need to do this.



We have all had stones come off the dop from time to time. It's always frustrating when it happens but I find that I can usually get the stone back into the right position on the dop by matching the edges of the adhesive as closely as possible. Some faceters suggested that marking a reference facet can help with the re-alignment of the stone. This may well be true but it is not something I have ever tried.

Using a marker pen to identify a facet can be a useful strategy to employ when learning to facet. Inexperienced faceters sometimes have difficulty identifying the facet they are working on. By marking a facet this problem can be overcome. I have used a marker pen in this way when teaching faceting. Not necessarily in every case but sometimes when the learner is uncertain of what facet they are looking at. It can also be useful when the beginner is learning to use the cheater and cannot easily see the exact orientation of a facet being polished. I hope this helps Graham.

Cheers, Peter"

"I must say I am trying to live my life with a Sharpie marker approach. You can't erase the strokes you've made, but each step is much

bolder and more deliberate."

– Dianna Argon



Dr Reg Williams, Editor of *The Midwest Faceter*, offered the following comments in response to our email:

"Hi Graham and Marie!

To address Graham's question about using a black Sharpie, I will share my thoughts and Marie, you may want to add any additional thoughts to Graham.

During the Annual Seminar that the Guild sponsors, we will find beginner students that are having trouble cutting P2 on a round brilliant and can't quite see how much they cut down on a facet. Using a black Sharpie can help them see where they are at on the facet. However, if the stone they are cutting is a dark color, the black can make it harder to see, so using a lighter contrasting color can help better, sometimes blue, or even orange. Using pencil lead can be enough of a contrast so they can see the facet they are cutting. Sometimes the Sharpie smudges

and the edges of the facets get blurred making it hard to see where they are. They can wipe the stone with alcohol and start over. After they have cut a few facets, they may no longer need to use the Sharpie to know where they are. So, in short, it can help but not in every case.

Marie may have other ideas because she does come up with neat ways of solving a problem!

Ciao, Dr Reg.”

Marie Bellard, Jeweler, and Gemologist has been faceting stones for 7–8 years. Marie offered the following in response to the question about the use of a permanent marker when faceting:

“Hello Graham,

Regarding the question, I too use a black Sharpie. It helps with a few things:

1. Identify where the facet is.
2. To know where it’s going.
3. To make sure during polishing that the facet is flat on the lap.

It is useful for very small facets and those cutting quickly (e.g. princess cut pavilion). I personally use the Sharpie when polishing, a simple swipe with the lap stopped, and you know where the sharpie disappeared is where the facet touches the lap. You can now adjust the cheater to adjust the facet as flat as possible on the lap. But, if you have difficulty finding the first facet of a diagram line, lower the mast slowly until you hear the “tik-tak” of the slow running lap touching the stone. And look, take the time you need to find where it touched. The Sharpie is useful, but as Dr. Reg said, it has its limitations. I also use a pencil lead, but it’s mostly to see the overall design I’ve cut, and it helps to show the facets when taking pictures.

See you soon, Marie”



Graham said, “When I am teaching beginner faceters, I encourage them to mark the girdle on the first Index (e.g., 96) before starting to rough cut the Crown facets down to the girdle line. The idea is to mark the line on the girdle facet to around double the desired girdle width and to rough cut the crown facets down to the mark prior to refining the girdle thickness with a finer (pre-polishing) lap.

The girdle line marked to around double the desired finishing width prior to starting the cut on the crown:

At a four-day faceting workshop in Shepparton (Regional Victoria, Australia) one of our relatively inexperienced Novice faceters arrived at the workshop with the 25mm X-Cube pictured below. She showed the marked-out Cube to a group of experienced faceters and sought advice concerning her proposed orientation on the dop and the Crown/Girdle/Pavilion orientation of the cube cut. She used the markings on her cube to seek recommendations from the Workshop Mentors as to an appropriate design for the cut.



The marked-out X-Cube

During the same workshop, another use for a permanent black marking pen came to light. One of the members at the workshop had recently purchased a 40 year-old Halls faceting machine which was in need of some repairs; the owner of the machine cut a stone with the machine but was having difficulty reading the Index settings due to the vague, worn numbers and markings on the Index Wheel.

The owner was advised to remove the Index Wheel from the machine and to clean it thoroughly with a solvent (Methylated Spirits or Kerosene). The procedure from there was to dry the wheel thoroughly and then painstakingly refine the markings and numbering on the wheel with a fine black permanent marker.

The Halls machine with the Index wheel requiring some attention with a marking pen.



Photographs by Graham Sherar

“I always have a Sharpie, because usually when someone asks me for an autograph, they don’t have a pen. I carry one in my purse, as well as in my tennis bag.”

– Maria Sharapova

If you don’t currently have a permanent marker in your faceting kit, hopefully the information provided above will convince you to add one.”

Happy faceting!

Why I'm Drawn to Gem Faceting

By Phyllis Cox

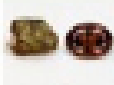
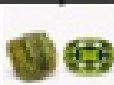
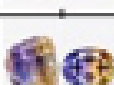
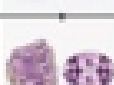
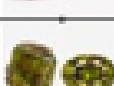
For years, I've wandered through jewelry stores hoping to discover some unusual gemstones, only to find the usual favorites such as diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. While these gemstones certainly are beautiful, I couldn't help but wonder what other beautiful gemstones existed that most people never had the opportunity to see.

That curiosity changed one day at a gem and mineral show when I came across a perfectly round, faceted piece of moldavite. I had never seen anything quite like it. Its rich green color and brilliant sparkle captivated me instantly. As I learned more about moldavite, I discovered that it was created about 15 million years ago when a massive meteorite struck what is now southern Germany, sending molten material into the atmosphere before it fell back to Earth over what is now the Czech Republic.

That discovery made me wonder what other gemstones were hidden beyond the display cases of traditional jewelry stores. As a complete beginner learning the art of gem faceting, I'm discovering that the journey is about far more than simply cutting stones. It's also about learning the fascinating science behind them. While researching these gemstones, I encountered terms that were completely new to me, such as **pleochroism** (*the property that causes some gemstones to display different colors when viewed from different directions*) and **spodumene** (*a mineral that produces gemstones such as kunzite and hiddenite*). Every new gemstone seems to introduce another interesting story or concept, making the learning process especially rewarding.

I hope you enjoy this article. I look forward to contributing future articles as I continue learning the art of gem faceting and sharing what I learn with others who are just beginning their own journey into the world of gemstones and gem faceting.

Below is a table providing an overview of several overlooked gemstones and some of their most interesting characteristics.

Stone	Rough / Faceted	Type	Color	Mohs Hardness	Faceting Complexity	Origin (Primary)	Additional Information
Andalusite		Nesosilicate	Brown, olive, reddish green	6.5-7.5	Intermediate	Brazil, Sri Lanka, USA	Strong pleochroism; good durability.
Axinite		Nesosilicate	Violet-brown, reddish brown	6.5-7	Intermediate	Madagascar, Myanmar, Sri Lanka	Pleochroic; unique colors.
Clinohumite		Nesosilicate	Yellow-green to olive green	6-6.5	Intermediate	Myanmar, Tanzania, Sri Lanka	Lustrous with good durability.
Danburite		Sorosilicate	Colorless, pale yellow, pink	7-7.5	Beginner to Intermediate	Mexico, Madagascar, USA	Excellent clarity; easy to polish.
Diaspore (Zultanite-type)		Diaspore	Green, yellow-green, color-change	6.5-7	Intermediate	Turkey	Color-change from green to reddish under light.
Fluorapatite		Phosphate	Green, blue, yellow, purple, colorless	5-5.5	Beginner to Intermediate	Madagascar, Mexico, Myanmar	Wide color variety; lower hardness.
Hiddenite		Spodumene (Variety)	Green	6.5-7	Intermediate	Afghanistan, USA, Myanmar	Green variety of spodumene; rare and collectible.
Idocrase (Vesuvianite)		Sorosilicate	Green, yellow-green, brown	6.5	Beginner to Intermediate	Italy, Russia, USA, Pakistan	Affordable; good brilliance and toughness.
Iolite		Sorosilicate	Violet-blue to blue	7-7.5	Intermediate	India, Madagascar, Sri Lanka	Pleochroic; often confused with sapphire.
Kornerupine		Nesosilicate	Green, yellow-green, brownish green	6.5-7	Advanced	Sri Lanka, Madagascar	Rare; high dispersion and brilliance.
Mali Garnet		Garnet (Andradite)	Yellow-green to olive green	7-7.5	Intermediate	Mali	Exceptional brilliance; rarely seen in jewelry.
Moldavite		Tektite (Natural Glass)	Olive green to dark green	5.5-7	Advanced	Czech Republic	Meteorite impact glass; often included for its rarity.
Scapolite		Tectosilicate	Yellow, violet, pink, colorless	5.5-6	Intermediate	Myanmar, Tanzania, Canada	Wide color range; better for pendants than rings.
Sinhaitite		Nesosilicate	Honey yellow to brown	6.5-7	Intermediate	Sri Lanka	Pleochroic; excellent polish and clarity.
Sphene (Titanite)		Sorosilicate	Yellow-green, golden, brown	5-5.5	Advanced	Madagascar, Pakistan, USA	Very high dispersion; softer and requires care.

Funny Old Sod!

By Graham Sherar, B.Ed (Melb) Retired

I was searching through the faceting diagrams section of The Gemology Project looking for a couple of diagrams to pair with another Newsletter article when the title of one of the diagrams caught my eye **“Bienia – SOD.”**

My Uncle, Dad’s older brother, frequently used the word “sod” as his universal adjective to describe almost anything. Uncle was a dairy farmer, a cow that was reticent to enter the bail for milking was a “sod of a thing,” his neighbor who was in and out of hospital with various ailments was “a poor old sod.”

When I saw Bienia – SOD amongst the faceting diagrams on the Gemology Project site I thought of my uncle and was keen to find out why a faceting diagram would be given such a name.

The word “sod” in the English language is a slang word used to refer to a person, especially a man, that we are annoyed with or think is unpleasant. “You stupid sod!” It is definitely not a polite term, as it is spoken to rudely express anger or annoyance at something or someone.

“I like to read my diary occasionally to remind myself what a miserable, alienated old sod I used to be.”

– Jo Brand

So, I opened Bienia SOD and learned the rationale for its unusual name. It has nothing to do with my uncle’s universal adjective! In this case, Bienia used it as an acronym for “Star of David.”

The Star of David, Hebrew Magen David (“Shield of David”) is a Jewish symbol composed of two

overlaid equilateral triangles that form a six-pointed star. It appears on synagogues, Jewish tombstones, and the flag of the State of Israel.

The symbol, which historically was not limited to use by Jews, originated in antiquity, when side-by-side with the five-pointed star, it served as a magical sign or as a decoration. It can also be found in some medieval cathedrals.

If you haven’t had a look at the Gemology Project do yourself a favor and have a browse through it, it’s an amazing resource for all things lapidary, including faceting: **www.gemologyproject.com**

Over the years, many variations of a Star of David faceting design have been produced by various designers, some good, some bad. Unfortunately, “Bienia SOD” rendered poorly in Gem Cad and GCS and the cut stone was just as underwhelming.

However, Robert H Long’s “Star of David for CZ” and Fred Van Sant’s “Star of David” were designs recommended by some of our experienced Australian faceters.

I hope you enjoy cutting SOD designs without describing either of them as “a sod of a design to cut.”

Your passion is waiting for your courage to catch up!

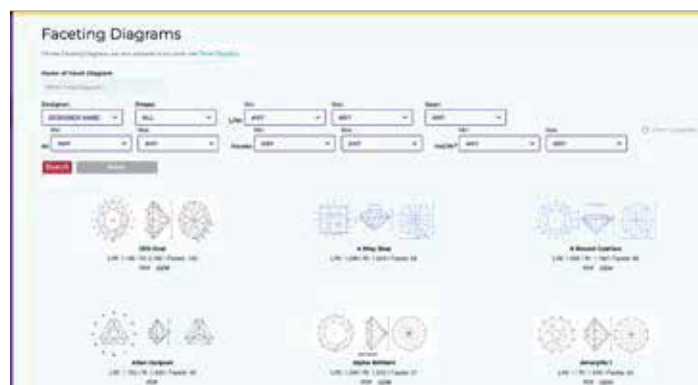
Happy Faceting!

Faceting Diagrams

In the past, *The Midwest Faceter* included faceting diagrams. Rather than selecting diagrams that may or may not be appealing to the membership, you can select the faceting diagram of your choosing from several sites that have a multitude of designs. [A note to gem designers--If you use Gem Cut Studio or GemCad, create your own designs, and would like to share with Guild members, just send a PDF of your design to the Editor and it can be featured in the next *The Midwest Faceter*.] As a member, if you cut the design and you would like to send in a picture of your gem, look what we could start!

The Faceting Diagram Website: <https://www.facetdiagrams.org> has now been taken over by the US Faceters Guild but it remains free. As a member of the US Faceters Guild there is some additional benefits to the facet diagrams. The dues are \$24 per year.

The United States Faceters Guild Website: <https://usfacetersguild.org>



Tom Herbst, the author of *Amateur Gemstone Faceting, Vol. 1 and 2*, has a website with some faceting diagrams. His website is: <http://boghome.com/TomsPages/MyDesigns/index.html>

Tom's Original Gem Designs

	BBS - A simple, stretched, triangle cushion BOG-optimized for beryl
	BluZerk - A keystone design optimized for zircon
	Figaro - A spiral round BOG-optimized for tourmaline
	Fritz - An unusual reflector BOG-optimized for tourmaline
	Green Flash - An interesting sunburst design - BOG optimized for Peridot
	Hexpo - A very lively hexagon for tourmaline NEW! USFG optimized version available
	Integral-8 - An asymmetric round with lots of sparkle - shown here in tourmaline
	Keystar - A keystone with starburst for tourmaline
	North by Northwest - A simple yet sparkly design, optimized for tourmaline
	O-Pace - A frosted design with a message - optimized for Contra-Luz Opal
	Sepang - An unusual pie-shaped design. BOG optimized for garnet
	Tearbuncle - A fast and simple teardrop BOG optimized for garnet
	Topo - A very flashy checker-burst design BOG optimized for topaz
	Trigger - A striking geometric triangle cushion BOG optimized for tourmaline
	Tris de Garnet - Simple yet very lively design for garnet



Shape?

L&S code

Design name

Designer

Reference

Publication year

Index gear

L/W

H/W

Vol/W

Show designs added

☒ Only show Open designs (with GemCad ASC files and cutting instructions)

Results per page

I have read and agree to abide by the [Terms of Use](#)

*These texts accept numeric values or a range of values separated by a dash as in 100-200.

Find Us !

midwestfaceters.org



The Midwest Faceter's Guild was established in 1979 for the purpose of developing the art of faceting, to promote education, and recreation through the exchange of information, to provide meetings for those with like interests, and to encourage the achievements of individuals.

The Midwest Faceter's Guild is also a member of the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies as well as the American Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies.

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[Facebook Private group](#)

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