



Lugano Diamonds CEO Moti Ferder has made a name for himself as a luxury jeweler, but it's his generosity that has endeared him to so many.

What's in a name? If Shakespeare had asked Lugano Diamonds' Moti Ferder that question, he'd have gotten three answers.

First, there's the inspiration — the namesake resort town in Switzerland that embodies subtle luxury (“a good representation of the brand,” says Ferder, Lugano Diamonds’

design director and CEO).

Then there's the company's exquisite jewelry — all of the one-of-a-kind pieces that reflect refinement and timeless appeal. And there's the extensive support of philanthropic organizations, making Lugano one of the most generous businesses in Orange County. On average, the company hosts or sponsors about 75 events per year, often donating or custom designing jewelry for silent auctions and fundraisers.

Ferder's involvement in the equestrian world serves as a perfect example of that commitment — the company has been a key sponsor at equestrian competitions throughout the United States and helps fund some half a dozen elite events each year. The sport is a passion for the family — one that spans more than three decades. Ferder's younger brother was an equestrian champion. It's also a tight-knit community, and its members make up some of Lugano's first clients. “That's truly a community where everybody knows everybody,” says Ferder. “They spend hours and hours on end together, and it gives us the ability to make an impact and have a relationship, and not just count on foot traffic to create business.”

HEART OF GOLD

By Aliese Willard Muhonen

Lugano Diamonds' High Jewelry collection includes unique designs that pay homage to equestrian sports, like this pendant.



But for Ferder, it's the design and creation of high-end jewelry that has been his lifelong pursuit. Raised the son of a diamond cutter in Israel, his first job (at the age of 5) was helping fold diamond envelopes. "Now you can buy them already folded," Ferder says with a smile. "But at the time, they weren't, and my dad had to have thousands of them. So I used to sit and fold, and I could do it in my sleep."

In his early 20s, Ferder met his wife (and Lugano's future COO), Idit, while they were both serving in the Israeli army. The two moved their family to Newport Beach and partnered to open Lugano's first retail location near Fashion Island® in 2005.



From the start, they devised Lugano as a unique and superior jewelry experience in every facet of the business. Lugano's clients are invited into a posh but comfortable Newport Center salon via appointment only. While private, the space is not exclusive or fussy. The employees give equal attention to clients with budgets from \$1,000 on into the millions, and guests are encouraged to try on the pieces.

"You go into a lot of stores where they show you a \$5,000 piece, and they use gloves to show it to you," notes Ferder. "We don't want to make the clients feel like

Moti Ferder, seen here in Lugano's vault, shows his penchant for equestrian life with designs like this Black Stallion cuff bracelet.

it's a museum. You're supposed to put it on, play with it and fall in love with it."

The approach sure seems to have worked. In 15 years of business, Lugano has grown from four employees to 30, and has opened salons in Aspen and Palm Beach, with more planned for the future. The company was also recognized as one of the best jewelers in the world by luxury lifestyle magazine Robb Report.

While Ferder attributes Lugano's success to its dedicated employees and his family's we-can-do-it mentality, the company's extensive philanthropic efforts have endeared it to customers near and far. Among the many beneficiaries: arts institutions such as the Irvine Barclay Theatre, American Film Institute and Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, as well as local schools, and organizations such as the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Alzheimer's Orange County, the Tahirih Justice Center and United Way. To Ferder, giving back is at the heart of the business. "We're very involved in the community, and we kind of make that the centerpiece of who and what we're about, and what the relationship



with our clients is about," he says. "I feel that philanthropy is a thread of the community. It's really what ties people together here, specifically in Orange County."

He serves as a board member for some of the organizations Lugano supports, including the American Film Institute. He's also a fellow at the Aspen Institute. "It's super-important for us to not just be involved, but to be leaders," he says. "There are a lot of great different causes, and we are closest to the ones that do a good job of actually creating a community around it. That's where we flourish and, I believe, where the charities flourish." 🌸

For more information, visit luganodiamonds.com.

A supporter of many causes, Lugano sponsors several elite equestrian events each year.

