

SIMPLY UNIQUE **JEWELRY DESIGNS**

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YORK COUNTY JEWELRY STORE TAKES TOP GLOBAL PRIZE

Owner of Simply Unique Jewelry Designs earns highest honor
in the “Oscars of the jewelry industry”



HONG KONG (MARCH 5, 2019) – A custom jewelry store in York County has achieved the highest honor in their industry—winning “Champion of the Champions” in the 2019 International Jewellery Design Excellence Awards (IJDE).

Aleksandr Maryaskin and Tim Wright, co-owners of Simply Unique Jewelry Designs, traveled to Hong Kong last week for the Feb. 28 ceremony, with only the knowledge that Maryaskin’s creation was a finalist. To hear his name called as the top winner was “the highlight of our dreams and careers,” said Maryaskin. They were especially proud to bring this honor back to the United States, which has not won in at least five years. With half of the other eight finalists coming from China (and half the judges as well), they had worried victory would be a long shot.

Maryaskin's winning entry was an egg-shaped filigree decoration named "Discovery of Eggcellance". The "egg" can be twisted open to reveal a miniature church complex inspired by a traditional church that Maryaskin helped restore while living in Ukraine—the very church where he learned to repair antique filigree work. He created the piece over the course of 538 hours in the Simply Unique Jewelry Designs studio.

"He worked on it seven days a week for four months plus," reports Wright. "We would have to hide our materials so they would not disappear over our days off!" The piece is entirely handmade, without referring to a single drawing, study or rendering.

"It came right out of Alex's head," said Wright. It stands about 6 inches tall and 3 ½ inches wide. When it is opened, the egg exposes an amazing church complex. Each roof shingle was cut one by one and assembled.

"Discovery of Eggcellance" contains over 3 carats of high-grade diamonds and the sapphires, rubies and tsavorite garnets, with a lapis base. It has just under 10 ounces of 14k gold hand-twisted wire and frame. This museum-quality piece, which has appraised at \$217,000.

The award is the greatest in a long line of [jewelry design honors](#) for Maryaskin, who is completely self-taught. He has been designing jewelry for over 27 years, with 9 spent at Simply Unique. His most recent local honor was "Best in Show" at the Port Warwick Art and Sculpture Show in 2018. Maryaskin creates about 50% of the jewelry sold at Simply Unique, alongside two other artists and one apprentice.

Winners of the IDJE were announced during the 36th Hong Kong Trade Development Council International Jewellery Show. A total of 137 award-winning designers from 21 countries and regions participated in this year's competition, with nine finalists. The biennial event gathers award-winning designers from all over the world to compete for a number of accolades that honor outstanding jewelry designers and provides an opportunity for the industry to exchange experiences, expertise and craftsmanship.

Official press release from the HKTDC: <https://www.nasdaq.com/article/2019-international-jewellery-design-excellence-ijde-awards-presented-20190301-00178>



HIGH-RES PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST, COURTESY OF SIMPLY UNIQUE JEWELRY DESIGNS
Designer Alex Maryaskin (right) accepts the "Champion of Champions" Award from chief judge Lawrence Ma at the HKTDC Hong Long International Jewellery Show.

About Simply Unique Jewelry Designs

Simply Unique Jewelry Designs has been recognized for its creative talents, business expertise and customer service by local, national and international organizations. This locally owned jewelry store on Highway 17 in Yorktown emphasizes local artisanship and a friendly atmosphere. Customers can select from one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces or work with an artist to create a custom design. The store also offers jewelry repair, appraisals and related services. Most of their stones are locally cut, and custom designs are hand fabricated in the studio in the back of the store by creative and trained metalsmiths with a combined experience of 50 years. The store specializes in hand-fabrication with filigree accents, carving and casting, enameling, and stone setting. The store prides itself on the restoration or modernization of inherited jewelry pieces.