



Gerry Lewy

Gemz Diamond Setting
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada
Setter, teacher, author

The next time you consider tossing one of your old burs in the trash, think of Gerry Lewy's bench. This diamond setter/pack rat reconditions all of his old burs, using a separating disk to sharpen each of the burs' teeth. To avoid the mixing of old and new burs, Lewy keeps them separated in trays by age and use.

"My primary business is cut and bead setting, pavé, gypsy setting princess stones, bright cutting—in a nutshell, the easy stuff," Lewy jokes. "I don't do much production four-prong work. That's not my thing." Although Lewy's bench could drive some bur crazy, he can honestly say that he always has the right tool for the job.

1. BURS IN WOODEN BOXES. I keep my high-speed steel burs against the back of my bench in four boxes. They are arranged by age, size, and function. My favorite bur for diamond setting is the 90° high-speed steel bur. Because it mirrors the shape of any diamond, it's great for cutting pavilion seats in prongs. It also takes the place of a file when preparing the resting place for the diamond. You simply use the belly of the bur as a pseudo-file.

2. MODIFIED BURS. I keep one box for modified burs only. For example, I transform large round burs into cutting and shaping tools for bezel setting by using a bench grinder to cut off half of the



bur. This is the perfect tool for forming the inside of a bezel.

3. BURS IN GREEN HOLDERS. The burs on the front of my bench are separated by style. I keep all bud burs in ascending order of size in one green tray, all cup burs in another, and so forth. The very large burs that I don't use on a daily basis are set aside. And all my large, worn down burs are kept in the rotating tool caddy.

4. WHEELS AND DISCS. I keep all of my wire wheels, pumice wheels, and sanding discs in their own tray.

5. GEMSTONE HOLDERS. When I saw these rubber table leg covers in the hardware store, I knew they'd make the perfect gemstone holders. I glued five of them to my benchtop so I can separate stones by size. On the two square pads, I cut away the front lip so I'd have easier access to the stones inside.

6. OIL. I keep my bur oil in an old fuse (with the brass inserts removed) between my gemstone holding pads. Instead of using oil of wintergreen, which can irritate sensitive skin, I use ordinary machine oil with a light viscosity, such as 3 in 1.

7. BENCH PIN. I dug a recess in my bench pin for holding diamonds during a setting project. Also, I keep my bench pin oiled. This dulls the wood a bit so it's less likely to refract fluorescent light into your eyes as you work. It also makes it look cleaner.

8. FILES. To quickly locate the correct file for the job, I number my files with indelible ink. The large pillar files are numbered by grit size, and the triangular files are labeled with small lines; one line indicates a #1 cut, two lines indicate a #2 cut, and so on.

9. HANDPIECE. I love my Foredom micromotor handpiece—especially for bezel setting and post-setting cleanup, where maneuverability is a must. I can easily move the lightweight handle from vertical to horizontal positions, as it weighs only 7 oz.

10. VULCANIZED RUBBER. I use a piece of vulcanized rubber to clean wax off diamonds after setting.

11. PLIERS. To customize my pliers for prong setting, I use a corundum wheel to etch grooves inside the jaws. The prongs nestle in the grooves, preventing the pliers from slipping off during setting.

12. OIL STONE. I keep my oil stone close by my left side for sharpening gravers.

13. MAGNET. To the right of my oil stone, I tacked a refrigerator magnet to my bench. If I need to use three or four burs in sequence for a particular job, I stick them to the magnet in order. This prevents time lost searching through various bur pads for the right tool.

14. POLISHING PAPER. I keep wooden sticks of emery and polishing paper on a lunch tray in my bench pan. (The lunch tray captures the filing dust and also cushions the fall for any diamonds I drop.) Each paper is labeled by grit. On the 4/0 stick, I rubbed an area with soft pencil lead. This fills in the small granules and transforms the 4/0 paper into 6/0 paper for finer polishing, which I use primarily for bright cutting. ♦

If you've got some neat bench organization ideas that you'd like to share with other *AJM* readers, e-mail *AJM* Editor Tina Wojtkiello, tinaw@ajm-magazine.com.

