

Turn late loved one into a gem

BY CHERYL LIM

WHEN her aunt-in-law died after a stroke last month, Ms Penny Chin, a retiree in her late 50s, chose an unusual way to

remember her.

She sent part of the ashes of Madam Chin Mee Ngo to Switzerland. There, it is being turned into a “memorial diamond” through a process that subjects it to high pressure and a temperature of 2,500 deg C.

Ms Chin will give the gem to Madam Chin’s 83-year-old sister.

She is the first here to use this service by Swiss company Algordanza International. It has been available in over 20 countries since 2004, and has now been brought here.

Many Singaporeans travel frequently for studies and job postings overseas, and miss occasions to remember the dead, such as Qing Ming, said Algordanza Singapore chief executive Ang Ziqian.

“The memorial diamond can keep the memory permanently with you, as it can be as mobile as you want it to be,” he added.

About 500g of ashes are needed to create a gem, which takes over three to six months. The cremation of an adult leaves about 2kg of ashes.

Expect to pay \$6,399 for the smallest size of 0.25 carat, to \$33,999 for the largest of 1 carat.

The gems come with a bluish tint because they contain boron, said Mr Ang. Boron, a mineral that occurs in soil, is ingested by humans with fruit, vegetables, water and consumer products.

While diamonds made from the remains of the dead are new here, simulated diamonds made of other materials in laboratories, such as moissanites and Russian diamonds, have been available here since 2004. They

are almost as hard and shiny as the real thing, and cost only a fraction of the price.

A real 1-carat diamond costs about \$10,000, but a moissanite of a similar size costs about \$1,000, while a 1-carat Russian diamond costs only \$200.

Mrs Theresa Chen, 52, a housewife and diamond lover, said: “It will appeal to those who want to feel that they have immortalised their beloved family members. However, I find it a bit strange.”

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