

Quality and provenance are the mantra of serious collectors, and the early 20th century had them in abundance, finds **JOANNA HARDY**

BLUE & GREEN: AN ART DECO FAVORITE

In the Art Deco period, gemstones were used for their color and were cut geometrically to complement the linear style of the time. The wonderful drop-waisted cocktail dresses of the 1920s and '30s were enhanced with long sautoir necklaces, and the short haircuts made way for drop-ear pendants to accentuate an elegant bare neck.

It was also a time of “East meets West.” Indian princes were visiting Europe to soak up Western culture, and were inspired to re-set their spectacular jewelry collections—mainly in the more traditional Indian gold and brightly colored enamels—in the new white metal, platinum. Conversely, it was these vibrant color combinations of the Indian enamels that inspired the French jeweler Cartier and its designers, as the vogue for sumptuous gems had never been greater.

It was under the influence of Parisian haute couturier Paul Poiret that fashion began to dictate Persian-Indian aigrettes—plumed headdresses—and pendant motifs. Cartier’s early 20th-century designers frequently referenced a popular sourcebook of the time, “The Grammar of Ornament” by architect Owen Jones; and in 1910, according to Cartier chronicler Hans Nadelhoffer, the New York press was already praising the “Persian and Indian designs of Cartier.”

But it was during the Delhi Durbar in 1911—when Jacques Cartier, at 26 years old the youngest of the three Cartier brothers, traveled to the subcontinent—that the enormity of India’s heritage in the decorative arts, jewels and gems came to make such an impact on Cartier. It was during this trip that relationships were cemented with the maharajas, who welcomed him into their palaces, intrigued to learn about Western art, European jewels and the highest fashion statement of the time: pocket watches.

India made such an impression on the younger Cartier that when he returned to London with his Eastern gems, he and the company’s head designer, Charles Jacqueau, created exotic Indian-inspired jewels that all of high society, from the Vanderbilts to the Rockefeller, wanted to own.

Since the late 17th century up to the early 20th century, large Colombian emeralds had been imported into India, where they were carved with floral designs on the front and reverse. These were greatly revered by the Mughal emperors and the maharajas.

Cartier acquired some exquisite carved emeralds, which were the inspiration for showstopping necklaces first exhibited in the pivotal “Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs

et Industriels Modernes” in Paris in 1925. With the color green came the complementary blue—emeralds and sapphires forged Cartier’s favorite color combination of the 1920s. The pairing represented the colors of the peacock, an emblem ubiquitous in Indian art, and also the country’s national bird. Even before Jacques Cartier’s Indian journeys, the awareness of Lucknow’s 18th-century blue and green enamels had already fired the imagination of the company’s designers.

Cartier was always careful not to overshadow the carved emeralds, so used paler sapphires that, unusually, came from deposits in Kashmir, which, through inaccessibility and rarity had seen very little production since the 1880s. (Most pale blue sapphires at the time came from Ceylon.)

When Cartier produced a necklace with an engraved 105-carat emerald and a 70-carat sapphire for J.P. Morgan in the mid-1920s there came a rush of orders for something similar from Baron Eugène de Rothschild, for his wife (the Baroness’s necklace sold in April 2015 at Sotheby’s New York for \$2.59 million), the Aga Khan, Mrs. Walter Burns (née Evelyn Cavendish-Bentinck) and Lillian Timken, who all desired the latest Cartier iconic jewel.

To this day, Indian-inspired jewels that use blue sapphires are usually made for the Western market, as the stone, associated with the planet Saturn in Indian culture, can be unlucky. It is mostly reserved for those—more often royalty—who have the “correct energy.”

Baroness Rothschild’s necklace was featured in a 1927 Vogue magazine article, “Vogue Sketches: The Beautiful New Jewels of the Smartest Women in Paris.” It explained: “These beautiful jewels have been created especially for the women who wear them and they are individual expressions of what is newest and smartest in the jewel mode as it is seen today on the chic women of the Continent.”

Cartier was clearly influenced by the juxtaposition of unusual colors, but if it had not been for the stunning gems themselves, these creations would never have materialized. The fact that such seminal necklaces, almost 90 years on, are the pièce de résistance for any discerning connoisseur is testament to the jeweler being ahead of its time.

LILLIAN TIMKEN'S NECKLACE:
Admired by Art Deco aficionados; its emeralds and Kashmir sapphires caught the eye of Lee Siegelson, right

JAR'S FLAWLESS:
The 'Tulip Brooch' sold by Martin Travis at Masterpiece London 2016

TIME TO SEE RED:
A Van Cleef & Arpels Art Deco necklace from 1929, uniquely using engraved Indian rubies, with diamonds set in platinum

CLIP ART: Emerald, ruby and diamond 'tutti-frutti' Cartier clips (about 1930), at Siegelson

WATCHING THE JEWELRY DETECTIVES

by **JEMIMA SISSONS**

For some, it’s about unearthing an elephant-head Van Cleef & Arpels bracelet with emerald eyes and real elephant hair. For others, it’s about scouting the largest gemstone of its generation. What drives the jewelry scouts is a desire to source some of the most beautiful stones and pieces from the hardest-to-reach corners of the globe.

Each has its own story, something that former Graff PR and now scout Josie Goodbody knows about: She helps friends and family find treasures. For one mission, she had to track down a ruby of a certain age and size.

“The mother of a friend had a large sapphire ring surrounded by diamonds in the style of the [Diana] Princess of Wales ring, but much older,” she explains. “Since the Royal Wedding the lady had become tired of people always comparing it, so she decided that she would change the sapphire to a ruby.” The stone had to be a similar age to the old-cut diamonds that surrounded it.

“Now that sanctions regarding stones from Burma have recently been lifted [by the EU], we could get a beautiful ruby from there that had been with a family for years but who [now] needed to sell their jewelry. We found an almost perfectly sized ruby to fit,” explains Ms. Goodbody.

“I think part of scouting is the challenge, most particularly if it is an estate or vintage piece,” she says. She’ll sometimes head for Buenos Aires, where crumbling estates provide a wealth of opportunity for magpies seeking robust emeralds and paraiba tourmalines from neighboring Brazil at rock-bottom prices.

“You might know someone has a particular piece of jewelry but are unsure whether to sell it—then you meet someone who’s looking for that precise piece or style. I guess it’s a bit like high-end matchmaking,” says Ms. Goodbody.

Lee Siegelson is a third-generation jeweler based in New York. He entered the family

business in 1992 and two years later took the helm. “It was a sink or swim moment,” he says.

By the time Lee Siegelson joined the business, his father, Hy, owned the largest storefront on West 47th street offering specially designed jewelry and estate and antique pieces. Within a few years of taking over, Mr. Siegelson had changed the company’s focus from retail to sourcing masterpieces. One of his noteworthy early purchases was an Art Deco ruby-and-diamond necklace by LaCloche Frères. The necklace was composed of various cuts and shapes of stones arranged geometrically with long diamond fringes terminating in Burmese ruby drops.

The piece he is particularly proud of, however, is The Timken Necklace: an exceptional Art Deco Cartier necklace of engraved Indian emeralds, with diamonds and sapphires.

“I had the image from an old catalog set as my screen saver,” says Mr. Siegelson, “and then one day a current picture of the necklace came across my desk from a dealer. I bought it sight unseen. A few such necklaces were made for top collectors including [John Pierpoint] J.P. Morgan, Baron Eugène de Rothschild and the Aga Khan. I was familiar with the piece from perusing old catalogs so as soon as it was offered, I purchased it.”

Mr. Siegelson can still be surprised: A client recently came to him with a Van Cleef & Arpels Art Deco ruby-and-diamond necklace. His researcher discovered it was the only Art Deco necklace that Van Cleef had made that used engraved Indian rubies.

At the moment, his clients are looking for wearable pieces of Art Deco. There is particular interest in the Art Moderne or Machine Age pieces (a subset of late Art Deco). The fine French houses are always at the top of the list: Belperron, Boivin, Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, and increasingly Jean Després and Georges Fouquet.

The hardest piece to acquire was The Cole Porter Necklace by Paul Flato. “I always wanted it,” says Mr. Siegelson, who had to wait for the previous owner’s circumstances to change (for the worse) before he was able to jump in and buy the piece.

And what has been the hardest piece to part with? The Vanderbilt Rose brooch made for Princess Mathilde Bonaparte, which Mr. Siegelson sold in 2012. “It is an important and storied piece that changed the way I understood great jewelry,” he says. >



Martin Travis is the owner of Symbolic & Chase, a London-based atelier dealing in estate and antique jewelry and gems. Previous to this, he worked sourcing pieces for Christie's.

For Martin Travis, selling is the easy bit; it's finding the pieces that's tricky. "We always have more collectors and buyers than pieces to offer so it can become stressful when there is nothing around," he says. The biggest surprise for him was when, in 2015, a yellow diamond "the size of a hen's egg" was delivered to his central London office to see if the company was interested in acquiring it. It turned out to be one of the larger old-cut fancy vivid yellow diamonds on the market. It's about the slow game. In 2004, the year he set up in Bond Street, Mr. Travis persuaded a client to purchase a natural pearl drop for around \$250,000. It took nearly 10 years, but eventually it was widely recognized to be from the 16th century and linked to Mary Tudor. The 64.5-carat pearl was subsequently sold for considerably more than the initial investment.

Today, enigmatic Paris-based jeweler JAR is by far the most requested name. His pieces are rarely on the market, although this year Symbolic & Chase sold an important piece—a flawless diamond and colored sapphire "Tulip Brooch"—at Masterpiece London. Most of the time, Mr. Travis has a shortlist of key pieces and stones which clients have requested, yet these requests are hard to fulfil as there is only ever one example out there. "It's much easier when a client is a little more vague and asks for a great pair of Cartier Deco earrings," he says.

But the hardest thing remains letting go: "I remember in May this year having to part with a ring of superb style by Jean Després... sometimes it is necessary to keep the bank manager happy."

Karine Zacharias is the proprietor of Faubourg Saint-Germain, which sources gems and rare pieces for clients in Paris, New York and London. Karine Zacharias was first inspired

by a great aunt who was a jewelry collector in the Faubourg Saint-Germain district of Paris. Ms. Zacharias's collection started with a gift from this aunt: a gold Van Cleef & Arpels elephant-head bracelet from the 1960s, adorned with emerald eyes, turquoise and real elephant hair.

Ms. Zacharias describes the older woman as her muse, and in her collection "each piece had a story and bore witness [to] her adventurous life," says Ms. Zacharias.

Fifteen years ago, after living in Jaipur for two years, the young collector acquired a piece for herself that had belonged to a maharaja—a Cartier "tutti-frutti" brooch.

Following this she started to chase gems and jewels from the old Indian aristocratic families, who kept stunning collections in secret.

Later, in Rome, she speaks of tracking down a tiara belonging to an Italian principessa for a Chinese businesswoman, who, having made her fortune, had decided to start collecting.

"It was her dream, and it was very moving to see her sparkling eyes when she put the diadem on," recalls Ms. Zacharias of her first client.

Her searches take her all over the world, and she recalls in April finding a maharaja's turban ornament (a 30-carat emerald, worth about \$1.2 million) in Mumbai for a client in Dubai before flying straight to South Asia to

buy a 6-carat Burmese pigeon's-blood ruby, worth about \$4 million, for a private collector in Venice. The most significant piece she acquired for a client was a pair of earrings that belonged to the Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III of France. Another notable find was a 1-carat red diamond: Red diamonds are extremely rare, and can be worth more than \$1 million.

For Ms. Zacharias, it is better for families to sell untouched pieces at a good price, realizing their full value, rather than break them up. "Tiaras which remain in the safe of the old European families are very appreciated by Chinese and Middle East women," she says.



FINDS:

The Mary Tudor pearl, above, and a 1960s Van Cleef & Arpels elephant-head bracelet



A STRAP AS RECOGNIZABLE AS THE WATCH

by RICHARD HOLT

The Hermès double-wraparound watch strap first appeared in 1998, on the wrists of catwalk models at a Paris fashion show. The company had no immediate plans to sell the strap, according to Philippe Delhotal, creative director at La Montre Hermès, but it was quickly inundated with requests from potential customers. As fast as they could be lovingly crafted, the straps became an option in that same year on Hermès's Cape Cod watches. Although the Cape Cod—this year celebrating its 25th anniversary—has always been available on a conventional strap, it is, to this day, closely associated with the now-famous Hermès "double tour."

Mr. Delhotal describes the strap as "an unexpected success," but what is perhaps most surprising is that it was ever made in the first place. It was the product of the unlikely pairing between the prominent Parisian maison and the renegade Belgian designer Martin Margiela.

Mr. Margiela, a graduate of Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, made a huge impact on the fashion industry. In 2007, when fellow designer Marc Jacobs was accused by Suzy Menkes of the-then International Herald Tribune of producing work that was derivative of Mr. Margiela's back catalog, Mr. Jacobs retorted by saying that "anyone who's aware of what life is in a contemporary world" was influenced by Martin Margiela, among others. But despite achieving such prominence in an age of celebrity fashion designers, Mr. Margiela—whose quiet departure from his eponymous fashion label was announced in 2009—never gave interviews, or even allowed himself to be photographed. He made his name in the late 1980s and early '90s with challenging collections. So the surprise was understandable when the creator of unhemmed rebellion

teamed up with Hermès, the most finely stitched of fashion houses.

The relationship was a fruitful one, with Mr. Margiela as creative director for Hermès's women's ready-to-wear from 1997 until 2003. And the double tour—made from alligator, or calf, or goatskin—is one of the partnership's lasting legacies. As well as being fitted to the brand's own watches, the strap is also the subject of another surprising collaboration, this time with Apple. Hermès has a long history of working with some of the finest Swiss watchmakers, enjoying retailing and co-branding partnerships with the likes of Jaeger-LeCoultre and Universal Genève. To work with the Cupertino giant, a company brazenly wrestling for wrist space with Switzerland's finest, may seem like another unlikely pairing.

Hermès has not done it half-heartedly. The face of the Apple Watch Hermès was co-designed by the two companies with a digital face that resembles Hermès's own watches, and is offered with a choice of Hermès straps, including the double tour. There are, however, some inescapable differences between the two industries: With the pace of change in Silicon Valley, the strap is likely to last a lot longer than the watch.



LET'S TWIST AGAIN:

The Hermès double-tour strap started life in 1998 and is synonymous with the Cape Cod

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