



Romancing *the stones*

Tourmaline silver and gold necklace,
James de Givenchy for Taffin

Jewellery designer James de Givenchy is a firm believer that you should follow your own star



Pink sapphire, garnet,
diamond and gold ring,
James de Givenchy for Taffin

James de Givenchy grew up in Beauvais, outside Paris, where Parfums Givenchy had its factory and where his father and uncle, the famous fashion designer, were born. After a degree in fine arts and training in graphic design, he found himself working for the auction house Christie's in New York. It is there that he says suddenly everything made sense – the combination of a love of design and a passion for gemstones resulted in a career in jewellery, and the house of Taffin was born.

One-of-a-kind pieces

When it comes to his inspiration, for De Givenchy, 'Cartier is the greatest of them all. A master,' and this influence, as well as his love of the Forties and Fifties,

led him to create his own stunning one-of-a-kind pieces. De Givenchy fans would say that he, too, is a master, and that his talent, his love of stones and the stunning settings he devises for them make his jewellery very special.

So which comes first, the stone or the setting? According to De Givenchy, it can happen both ways: 'Sometimes the stone will dictate the mounting and sometimes I think of a design and look for a stone to build it with. The more expensive the stone, the more likely it is to build its own castle.'

Quality is key

When it comes to finding gems, he says, it is the quality of the crystal, the sharp, clean faceting that is most important, and the colour is almost secondary.



James de Givenchy



Spinel, orange garnet, steel and gold bracelet, James de Givenchy for Taffin



Peridot, cocobolo wood and yellow-gold earrings, James de Givenchy for Taffin

'I like to work with anything that is beautiful,' he says. 'Except for a few bands here and there, I never repeat a piece of jewellery.' Of course, the gemstone may be the highlight but each of his settings is unique and a true expression of this talented jeweller. 'I would love to set the gems in a setting that will last forever, but I cannot presume that they will not be taken out one day. I just have to hope that, if that happens, the person will keep the mounting and replace the gem with another equally beautiful stone.'

Steel from AK47 rifles

And the most unusual element that De Givenchy has used in his jewellery? 'So far it would have to be the steel from AK47 rifles.' De Givenchy has collaborated with Fonderie 47, a company that removes AK47s from war zones and transforms them into rare jewellery and accessories, to make limited-edition pieces that are crafted from the AK47 steel, sustainably sourced rose gold and platinum and conflict-free diamonds.

So, is it projects such as this that continue to keep De Givenchy motivated? 'The art of designing new things that do not exist yet. Nothing matches the pleasure it gives me to see them realised.'

Those lucky enough to own his beautiful creations would agree, wishing him a long and fruitful future. ❖

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Necklace from the Phoenix collection in steel, diamonds, rose gold and platinum, James de Givenchy for Fonderie 47



Earrings from the Phoenix collection in steel, diamonds, rose gold and platinum, James de Givenchy for Fonderie 47



Ring from the Phoenix collection in steel, diamonds, rose gold and platinum, James de Givenchy for Fonderie 47



Bracelet from the Phoenix Collection in steel, diamonds, rose gold and platinum, James de Givenchy for Fonderie 47

