

RACHAEL TAYLOR

Cartier

The Story Behind the Style



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FSC DUMMY

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RACHAEL TAYLOR

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LEFT: A Cartier Love ring in the maison's signature red box is offered by a figurine of its iconic bellboys.

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Welcome to the Maison

Cartier is the epitome of French luxury. The maison has captured the hearts of shoppers across the globe with its chic bellboys, plush boutiques and expertly crafted jewels and watches in signature red boxes. The brand's instantly recognisable designs – such as the iconic Love bracelet and Tank watch – have become must-haves for followers of luxury fashion; unspoken codes to communicate sartorial savvy. Stars, too, have fallen under the spell of Cartier. Its designs are regularly seen lighting up the face of an actress on the red carpet, or flashing just beneath the cuff of a tuxedo on a famous wrist.

Cartier very much feels like a contemporary brand, but it is one that has a long history, dating back to 19th-century Paris. It emerged as a brand of repute in an era when tsars, emperors and maharajas were the influencers of the day, and when a store on New York's Fifth Avenue could be bought for a string of pearls. Its origin story is one that is intertwined with the history of the family that named it. A tale, quite literally, of rags to riches.

It is also a story of pioneers and firsts. Driven by a desire to always create and never follow, the Cartiers would break ground that would not only set their own business on a new trajectory, but the entire watch and jewellery world. It spearheaded the use of platinum, helped shape the Art Deco jewellery movement and even created what can be considered the first commercial men's wristwatch.

As Cartier's global empire took shape, its innovation did not falter – nor did its loyal clientele, which has long



included royal families. This luxury shapeshifter has seemed to effortlessly move with the times, finding fresh relevance and ensuring its creations are just as desirable in the 21st century as when it took its first tentative steps in the 1840s.

ABOVE: A classic Cartier bag in the brand's signature red.



The Beginnings of Cartier

The house of Cartier started with one man, Louis-François Cartier, but it would take a family to make it one of the most recognised and respected jewellers in history.

It was, in fact, Louis-François' father, Pierre Cartier, who set the dynasty in motion, although he could never have imagined the consequences of his actions at the time. Pierre had fought in the Napoleonic wars and spent time locked in the prison ships docked off the harbour at Portsmouth in Britain. When the war ended in 1815, Pierre returned to Paris, destitute and aimless. He would go on to find employment as a metalworker and have five children with his wife Elisabeth, a washerwoman.

The eldest of the children born into this working-class Parisian family was Louis-François, and when he was barely out of school, his father sent him to work as an apprentice in a jewellery workshop owned by Adolphe Picard on Rue Montorgueil in Paris. It was a tough education – days were long and gruelling and order was maintained with a whip – but he stayed and in 1847, at the age of 27, Louis-François bought the business from Picard, renaming it Cartier.

OPPOSITE: Cartier founder, Louis-François Cartier.





PREVIOUS: Staff gather outside a Cartier boutique in Paris in 1918.

OPPOSITE LEFT: An illustration of Louis-François Cartier, c.1848.

OPPOSITE RIGHT: Pierre Cartier playing golf in Miami.

His makers mark – a symbol hallmarked into every piece of Cartier jewellery to authenticate it – was his initials, L C, separated with an ace of hearts playing card, perhaps as a nod to the financial gamble he was taking. Luckily, the risk paid off and the Cartier business thrived and expanded. In 1856, Princess Mathilde, a cousin of Emperor Napoleon III, purchased one of its jewels, and the Cartier name was suddenly whispered among Parisian high society, even reaching the international elite. Three years later, Louis-François bought Gillion, a Parisian jeweller better known than his own, and renamed his business Cartier Gillion.

Louis-François' son Alfred Cartier took over the family business in 1874, but it was the arrival of his own three sons – the highly ambitious Louis, Pierre and Jacques – that would really shake up the jeweller and initiate its ascendance to the global brand we know today. The brotherly revolution started with Louis, who joined the maison in 1898. A year later he spearheaded the renaming

of the business, stripping away Gillion to once again be known simply as Cartier. At the same time, the business opened a boutique at 13 rue de la Paix, just a stone's throw from Place Vendôme, the heartland of luxury jewellery in Paris. This venture was funded by an enormous dowry levied through a strategic arranged marriage to Andrée-Caroline Worth, granddaughter of world-famous couturier Charles Frederick Worth.

Cartier garnered a reputation for innovation, and the trio of brothers would later live by a motto, 'Never copy, only create.' One of Louis' most successful experiments at the close of the 19th century was to use platinum in place of gold. This precious metal is now widely used by jewellers across the world, but at the time it was purely an industrial metal and thus revolutionary in the jewellery market. The white metal, which, unlike silver, does not tarnish, is highly malleable and allowed Cartier to create delicate, diamond-set jewels inspired by those owned by 18th-century French aristocrats; a stark contrast to the heavier, colourful, feminist Art Nouveau jewels popular at the time. A signature Cartier Garland style emerged, swirling across platinum tiaras, necklaces and earrings, that won over well-heeled women, including royals, in Europe and the United States.

Pierre Cartier, the second eldest of the brothers, would be an agitator in his own right, championing the global expansion of the brand's retail empire. He started by opening a Cartier boutique on New Burlington Street in London in 1902, where the brand showcased a new style of geometric, abstract jewels with unusual colour combinations that would lay the foundations for the Art Deco jewellery movement.

The first decade of the 20th century was an important time for Cartier. In 1904, the jeweller received its first royal certificate from King Edward VII of Britain, and soon started to supply many other royal courts including those of Russia, Spain and Siam (now Thailand). In the same year, Louis Cartier created what he believed to be the first ever men's wristwatch for aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont.

Pierre, meanwhile, embarked on a journey to Russia; one that would prove profitable in commissions from its high society, but also as a source of inspiration that would shape Cartier's jewellery designs for years to come.

In 1909, Pierre would focus his wanderlust on America, opening a Cartier boutique on New York's Fifth Avenue; the precursor to its famous flagship store further up the street, the purchase of which he would famously broker a decade later in exchange for a string of pearls. Back in London, his younger brother Jacques stepped in to take over its British branch. That same year, Cartier moved uptown to a prestigious Bond Street address, where it remains to this day.

As Cartier's man in Britain, and, as such, jeweller to King George V, Jacques joined members of the aristocracy on a trip to India for the Delhi Durbar in 1911. It was an event



to commemorate the coronation of the King, with two weeks of festivities, during which King George V and Queen Mary would be proclaimed Emperor and Empress of India. This adventure to a new land would also prove to be a seminal trip for the house of Cartier. Jacques' sociable nature and love of travel would win ground-breaking commissions from India's rich, jewel-loving maharajas and inspire a whole new category of jewellery, pioneered by Cartier and much copied by other companies.

LEFT: Cartier platinum pendant watch set with diamonds, rubies and a pearl, c.1890-1910.





Royal Affiliations

A major coup for Cartier, and one that would win it respect worldwide, was its connection with the British royal family. The relationship started in 1904 with a royal warrant granted by King Edward VII appointing Cartier as his jeweller. Cartier's relationship with the royal family had actually begun two years earlier. Pierre Cartier had opened a boutique in London in 1902, coinciding with the coronation of King Edward VII, and had managed to catch his attention. The palace ordered 27 tiaras from Cartier for the coronation.

More commissions would follow; everything from grand diamond and ruby colliers to silver carriage clocks. Having achieved the British royal seal of approval, demand for Cartier soon came from other royal courts around the world, including Spain, Siam, Belgium and Russia.

Tiaras would prove to be an item that the British royal family continued to turn to Cartier for. The most famous of these is the Halo tiara, a platinum design embellished with graduated scrolls glittering with 739 round



PREVIOUS:
Amethyst and
diamond diadem
created by
Louis Cartier.

OPPOSITE: A portrait of
Her Majesty Queen
Elizabeth II wearing the
Cartier Nizam of Hyderabad
necklace, c.1953.

ABOVE: Platinum
and diamond tiara
made for Queen
Elisabeth of Belgium
by Cartier in 1910.



brilliant diamonds and 149 baguette-cut diamonds. It was commissioned by George VI as a gift for his wife, Queen Elizabeth, in 1936. It would later pass to their daughter Elizabeth II, who never wore the Halo tiara in public but did allow her sister Princess Margaret to do so. In 2011, the Cartier tiara had another moment in the spotlight when the Duchess of Cambridge wore it during her wedding to Prince William.

ABOVE: Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, wearing the Cartier Halo tiara during her wedding to Prince William in 2011.

OPPOSITE: Queen Alexandra of Great Britain pictured wearing the diamond Collier Résille necklace with detachable emeralds and rubies that she commissioned from Cartier in 1904.





"Jeweller of kings and king of jewellers."
King Edward VII of Britain

The relationship between Cartier – which King Edward VII once famously proclaimed "jeweller of kings and king of jewellers" – and the British royal family continues to this day. As well as crafting its jewels, in 2012 Cartier was named the sponsor of one of the Queen's favourite days out, a polo match now known as the Cartier Queen's Cup.

OPPOSITE: Queen Elizabeth II presents the Cartier Queen's Cup to polo player Facundo Pieres in 2013.

ABOVE: Queen Elizabeth II presents the prize for Best Playing Pony at the Cartier Queen's Cup tournament in 2015.



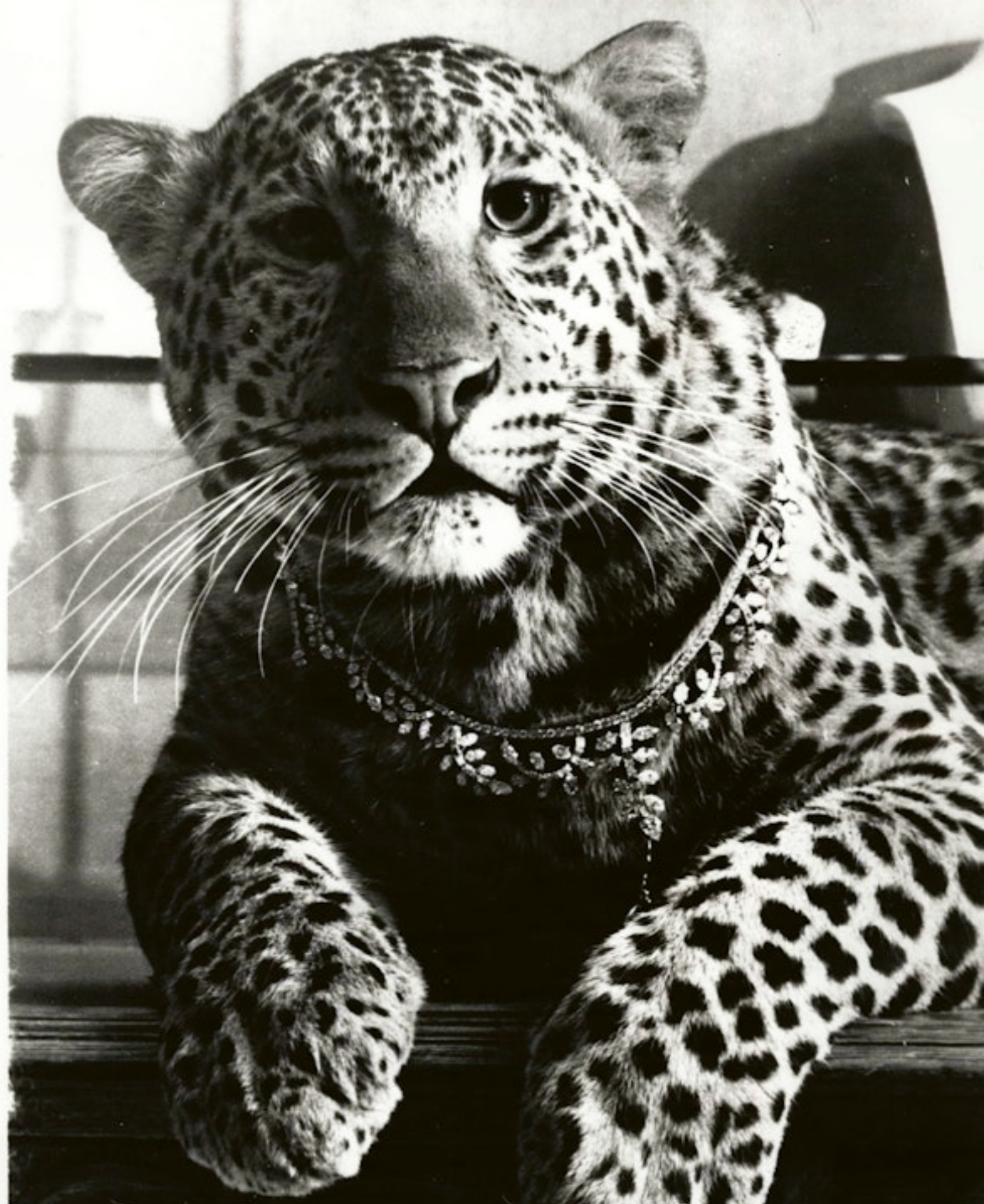
New Ideas for a New Century

While Cartier flourished in the 19th century, it wasn't until the 20th century that it would really set a trajectory to become one of the most famous jewellery and watch houses in history. Much of this was thanks to the leadership of the Cartier brothers Louis, Pierre and Jacques.

The trio leaned into their passions to simultaneously take the brand into new directions and territories, making waves in the world of design and striking up influential international alliances. It is said that the brothers sat down with a map and sectioned off Europe, the Americas and Great Britain, assigning a region to each one of them to conquer.

It would also herald the arrival of Jeanne Toussaint, and with her one of Cartier's most famous motifs of all, the *Panthère*.

OPPOSITE: Cartier has often used leopards in its advertising campaigns, including real ones on occasion.



The First Men's Wristwatch

While Cartier cannot lay claim to inventing the wristwatch, it can perhaps be credited with designing the first men's watch and kickstarting an industry that is now worth billions of dollars.

Wristwatches became a popular accessory among 18th-century women as a way to transport the time. Ladies' fashions at the time did not provide pockets from which to hang a pocket watch, as men did. Swiss watchmaker Breguet claims to have made the first wristwatch in 1810 for Caroline Murat, the Queen of Naples, although historians will point to evidence that shows timepieces being made as early as the 1500s. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I of England received one from her suitor Robert Dudley.



In 1904, Alberto Santos-Dumont, a Brazilian living in Paris, was tussling with the challenge of flight. A year earlier, the Wright brothers had achieved this with the aid of a rail track to jettison their craft, but Santos-Dumont was focused on an unaided ascent (something he would achieve in 1906).

To help his calculations, Santos-Dumont needed

OPPOSITE: A Santos-Dumont watch from 1912, on display at the 2012 Cartier in Motion exhibition in London.

RIGHT: Aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont.



a timepiece, but with his hands busy at the controls of his aeroplane, he could not easily pull out his pocket watch.

His friend Louis Cartier believed he had a solution: why not put the watch on a strap to be worn round the wrist? To differentiate it from the decorative ladies' watches, Cartier adopted an industrial style for the watch, making a feature of the screws watchmakers usually tried to hide. He also fixed it to a leather strap – a material that was unheard of at the time in watchmaking.



This problem-solving innovation would prove to be the beginning of a new chapter both for Cartier and for all watchmakers, as men started to seek out this modern and convenient method of keeping the time. The design would also form the basis of one of Cartier's most popular timepieces, named Santos in honour of the aviator who inspired it.

At the Heart of Art Deco

The mood in jewellery shifted as World War I came to a close in 1918. The styles so popular before the Great War – elaborate Edwardian jewels and Belle Epoque excess – no longer fitted the sentiment of the people. Instead, collectors sought something fresh that would better chime with changing fashions, and so began the era of Art Deco jewels.

Art Deco jewellery could be defined, first and foremost, by colour and contrast. The swirling Garland style that had won Cartier status at the end of the 19th century was replaced with geometric, abstract shapes and bold colour combinations. These jewels favoured semi-precious gems and hardstones over diamonds, and small diamonds in pavé settings over large cuts. Jewels were streamlined to suit modern women's clothing, which had become less fussy and often had an androgynous edge, as pioneered by fellow Parisian Coco Chanel.

Cartier is credited as being one of the leading pioneers of this movement, claiming to have started its transition

OPPOSITE: An Art Deco aquamarine and diamond necklace by Cartier, c.1940, auctioned at Bonhams in 2019.

to this modern style as early as 1900. At the peak of the craze in 1925, Cartier exhibited 150 Art Deco jewels at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris that celebrated the style, which had swept through jewels, architecture, art and design.

It was Louis Cartier who pushed Cartier's Art Deco style forward, aided by head designer Charles Jacques who joined the maison in 1909. As well as the stark lines inspired by Cubism, Futurism and Bauhaus that defined jewels of this era, Art Deco had a more decorative side influenced by Asian artworks.

The Cartiers' love for travel helped set the brand's designs apart from other jewellers. Louis Cartier is said to have amassed an enormous personal collection of Chinese porcelain and objets d'art, while Jacques Cartier's travels to India furnished him with much inspiration, as well as the carved gems required to create one of Cartier's most enduring Art Deco jewellery collections – the highly collectable Tutti Frutti.



LEFT: A 1937 Cartier Art Deco platinum and diamond ring with a movement made by Jaeger-LeCoultre.



TOP LEFT: A 1927 Cartier platinum Art Deco brooch with carved jadeite, diamonds, enamel, emeralds, sapphires and rock crystal.



BOTTOM LEFT: A 1927 Cartier Art Deco platinum and diamond bracelet set with a 46.07ct Burmese sapphire.



RIGHT: A 1914 Cartier diamond and onyx Art Deco necklace once owned by Armenian art collector Calouste Gulbenkian.

Inspiration from India

Cartier's relationship with India, and its rich, jewel-loving maharajas, was one that would propel it creatively and also prop it up financially. It would also lead to a brand-new style of jewellery that added colour and drama to the clean lines of the Art Deco movement. This important chapter of Cartier's history began in 1911 with a trip to India for the Delhi Durbar, a celebration to anoint England's King George V and Queen Mary as Emperor and Empress of India. As royal jeweller, Jacques Cartier travelled with the royal family to tend to their jewellery needs.

A savvy businessman, Jacques also planned to use the trip to drum up some business. There was, however, a flaw in his strategy. His suitcases were packed with elegant Belle Epoque jewels that he hoped to sell to India's society women. He wasn't aware that the real market in India was dominated by men, who liked to buy lavish, colourful jewels for themselves. On that first trip, Jacques sold some gold pocket watches and bought some gemstones from India's famous lapidarists. He also made it his mission to ingratiate himself with the royal families of India. He succeeded in receiving invitations to the palaces of important houses including Patiala, Nawanagar, Kapurthala and Baroda.

Initially, Jacques made the trips by donkey and later in his Rolls-Royce, which he had shipped over for his tours. The terrain in India was tough. On one occasion, in order to cross the Himalayas to meet the King of Nepal, he had to have his beloved car taken apart and carried in pieces over the mountains, to be reassembled on the other side. Jacques' adventures, on which he was often accompanied by his wife Nelly Cartier, would prove fruitful... and not just for his memoirs. The maharajas embraced Cartier's jewellery style,



which was different from traditional Indian jewellery, and enjoyed the prestige of engaging a European jeweller. Many major commissions would follow, including the Maharaja of Patiala who trusted Cartier to reset his crown jewels. Between 1925 and 1928, Cartier's Parisian workshop would use the jewels to create a spectacular bib necklace set with almost 1,000 carats of diamonds, including a 234ct yellow diamond mined by De Beers.

ABOVE LEFT: A portrait of the Maharaja of Patiala in some of his famous jewels.



ABOVE RIGHT: Actress Angie Harmon shows off the necklace Cartier made for the Maharaja of Patiala in 1928.

With great wealth and palaces full of incredible gems, the maharajas and their families would become important clients for Cartier. They became even more important when World War I, the Russian Revolution and, later, the Great Depression cut the spending power of Cartier's best clients in Europe, Russia and the US.

Working with Indian royalty and travelling around the country also inspired Jacques creatively. He would sketch the architecture he discovered and marvel at how different the light was to that of Europe. He would buy gemstones from India's many fruitful mines and fixate on the Mughal jewellery style with its floral flourishes, strings of cabochon beads and carved gemstones.

The Indian influence on Cartier began to diverge. There were the Indian jewels reimagined in a Western style for the maharajas, many of whom would travel to Paris in search of jewellers to work with. Then there were the Western jewels



reimagined in an Indian style for its clients in Europe and the US.

Emeralds and pearls became more prominent in Cartier's designs because of the influence of India, as well as tassels of gemstone beads, smooth cabochon gem cuts without facets, and gemstones decorated with artistic carvings of the type used in its Tutti Frutti designs (a name they acquired long after this period). Brooches designed for Western women would take their form from jewels used to secure turbans in India, while silhouettes of other jewels took inspiration from Indian architecture and nature.

India would also play a role in securing Cartier's position as creator of the most expensive jewel owned by the British royal family. As a wedding gift to Queen Elizabeth II in 1947, Asaf Jah VII, the ruler – or Nizam – of Hyderabad, left instructions with Cartier to allow the bride to select anything she wanted. The Queen chose a tiara and also a diamond and platinum necklace now known as the Nizam of Hyderabad necklace (see page 18). The latter is believed to be worth tens of millions of pounds, and has since also been worn by the Duchess of Cambridge.

OPPOSITE LEFT: A 1938 painting of a Cartier Tutti Frutti necklace, exhibited at The Denver Art Museum in 2014.

OPPOSITE RIGHT: A 1912 carved emerald, rock crystal and diamond Cartier necklace once owned by novelist Vita Sackville-West.





Jeanne Toussaint

Jeanne Toussaint was born in Belgium in 1887, the daughter of lace makers. Growing up in a home surrounded by luxury handcrafting would serve her well when, in 1920, she became Cartier's creative director.

Toussaint lived a bohemian lifestyle that would lead to many fascinating experiences and famous acquaintances, including fashion designer Coco Chanel and illustrator George Barbier. Running away from home as a teenager, Toussaint took up with a French count, Pierre de Quinsonas. The romance did not last, due to concerns from his family, but the encounter did lead her to Paris, where she would meet her next ill-fated lover, Louis Cartier.

Cartier was besotted with Toussaint, who was nicknamed Panther or Panpan for her love of the animals and, somewhat paradoxically, her signature full-length fur coat made of panther fur. Their romance would only last for two years – again, family pressures worked against the self-made Toussaint – but Louis saw in her more than just a lover, and asked her to join Cartier as a handbag designer.

PREVIOUS:
Cartier jewellery on display at
Maharajas & Mughal Magnificence:
A Collection of Extraordinary
Treasures auction hosted by
Christie's in 2019.

OPPOSITE:
A portrait of Cartier creative
director Jeanne Toussaint, taken
in 1946 by photographer Henri
Cartier-Bresson.

Her remit would later widen, and she would eventually become the jeweller's creative director, overseeing not just leather goods but jewels and watches, too. It was unheard of at that time for a woman to be appointed to such a role, marking Cartier out as a progressive employer. Toussaint would repay this loyalty, staying with Cartier until the 1970s.

During this time, she created many collections for the jeweller and helped it secure a celebrity clientele who were entranced by her joie de vivre. But none of her designs would prove as iconic as *Panthère*. Though the panther was already a motif used by Cartier before her arrival, Toussaint elevated it and obsessively returned to it, transforming it into the symbol of the house.

As proof of her legacy, a diamond and onyx panther bracelet designed by Toussaint for Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor, sold in 2010 for £4.5 million. At the time, it broke new records for the most expensive bracelet and the most expensive piece of Cartier jewellery ever sold at auction.



OPPOSITE:
An 18ct gold, onyx and gemstone
Cartier Panthère brooch.

ABOVE:
An onyx and diamond Cartier
Panthère brooch sold at Sotheby's
in 2017 for HK\$2.5 million.



A Watchmaking Pioneer

Cartier kickstarted a watch revolution at the dawn of the 20th century with the creation of a men's wristwatch for Brazilian pilot Alberto Santos-Dumont. It would keep up its early momentum with a steady release of landmark creations and become a major player in luxury watches.

With a focus on aesthetics over horological complications, Cartier became known for timepieces that were a little different from the norm. It offered up experimental case shapes that appealed to both men and women, winning it famous fans throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, from Andy Warhol to Michelle Obama.

The opening of La Chaux-de-Fonds in the Swiss Alps would prove to be a major turning point, accelerating Cartier's watchmaking abilities.

OPPOSITE: Cartier Drive de Cartier chronograph, c.2020.

Watchmaking History

Cartier jettisoned itself into the horological history books by creating a men's wristwatch in 1904, but it started making transportable timekeepers long before this. From its very beginning, the jeweller sold chatelaine watches, miniature dials that hung from decorative brooches to be pinned onto clothing, and also pocket watches.

Pocket watches were a particular Cartier speciality, selling well through to the first half of the 20th century. These ranged from minimalist dials in gold or platinum cases to elaborate pocket watches embellished with enamel, diamonds, carved hardstones and raised monograms. It also created bejewelled travel clocks.

A distinctive style of pocket watch manufactured by Cartier in the early 20th century, alongside other makers including Patek Philippe, Piaget, Rolex and Audemars Piguet, was its coin pocket watches with covers made from real coins.



LEFT:
A 1997 advert for
a Cartier Tank
Française watch.

RIGHT:
A platinum
and diamond
Cartier ladies'
dress watch,
c.1930.



Pierre Cartier gifted one to his friend, the US President Franklin D Roosevelt, in 1939, just months after France had declared war on Germany. It was a Christmas gift, but also a subtle diplomatic nudge for Roosevelt to take up arms in World War II. In the accompanying note, Pierre wrote, "Your Royal Visitors of last summer [King George VI of Britain] foresaw the present war and came to visit The Leader of the Democracies, through whose efforts only a lasting peace will be established. The watch in the coin will mark for you, The President, not only the hour of The Allies victory, but the one of your Triumphs as The Peace Maker."

In 1943, two years after Roosevelt did indeed commit US troops to the war effort, Cartier sent the president another Christmas gift. This time it was a clock titled – in hope – the Victory Clock. The clock was crafted in silver, onyx and nephrite, and showed multiple time zones with the main time set to Washington DC and sub dials synchronised to London/Paris, San Francisco, Tokyo and Berlin. It later sold for \$1.6 million at auction house Sotheby's in 2007 to an American collector.

Gonzalez with a slightly different, more bohemian style to fit the city.

In Hong Kong, Cartier chose to decorate the façade of its store in the city's Tsim Sha Tsui with a tiled design that referenced the roof tiles used in traditional Chinese homes. Within the three-storey boutique, which was also designed by Moinard, there are more references to the city: bamboo motif chandeliers and fixtures, and a bas-relief sculpture of a panther overlooking Victoria Harbour from the top of Mount Austin, a local beauty spot known as The Peak.

BELOW: The Cartier store on Place Vendôme in Paris.

OPPOSITE: Place Vendôme is a hub for luxury jewellery houses.



The New York Flagship

Another of Cartier's flagship stores can be found on New York's Fifth Avenue, and this one has a fascinating origin story.

When American financier Morton F Plant put his property on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 52nd Street up for sale in 1916, it was described by *The New York Times* as "one of the finest and newest of the expensive residences". The Manhattan mansion was built in the Neo-Renaissance style with an ornate façade that has many windows on both sides, decorative balustrades and pilasters, and an attic level hidden by an artistic frieze. It was originally designed as two conjoined residences when it was completed in 1905.

Just as Plant was on the hunt for a buyer for his New York home, Pierre Cartier was scouring the city for a location for a new boutique, and he instantly fell for Plant's grand building. It was on the market for \$1 million.

While Pierre would get his wish, he would not need to write a cheque for the million. Instead, he managed to pay for the mansion with a string of pearls. Plant had a young wife named Maisie who had become enchanted with a double string of natural pearls – incredibly rare

OPPOSITE: Cartier's New York flagship store on the city's Fifth Avenue, known as the Cartier Mansion.



finds. Pierre, noting that the value of the necklace was close to the asking price for the building, suggested a trade.

After the deal was done in 1917, Pierre hired William Welles Bosworth, an architect trusted by the legendary New York family of Rockefeller, to transform the space into the Cartier Mansion. Though the interior changed, the exterior of the building was preserved – and remains so to this day. As other mansions on the so-called Millionaire's Row were levelled and replaced with contemporary architecture, Cartier held firm and the building is now the last of those mansions to remain.

In 2016, the Cartier Mansion reopened after a renovation that had lasted two-and-a-half years. The store still retains the feel of a stately home, with its vast insides split into smaller salons named after some of its most legendary patrons: Andy Warhol, Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor and Gary Cooper. Stepping inside is to find yourself somewhat transported between old-world New York glamour and slick, modern luxury retail.



OPPOSITE: A Cartier store in St Petersburg, Russia.

ABOVE: Cartier's boutique in Tokyo's upmarket Ginza shopping district.



RIGHT: A Cartier boutique near the Monte Carlo Casino in Monaco.

OVERLEAF: The three-floor flagship Cartier store on London's Bond Street.





Cartier's Famous Red Box

Cartier has described its iconic jewellery boxes as the “spirit” of the brand, and, indeed, the red and gold couriers of its jewels and watches have become almost as desirable as what lies within.

The design dates back to the early 20th century. The luxurious leather boxes, square or rectangular in shape, have filed-down corners in the style of the facets of a gemstone. The tops are decorated with a golden frieze of a garland – a signature motif Cartier has used in its jewels since the 1890s.

The most iconic element of these boxes is perhaps their bright red colour. This became the official shade of the house in the 1930s – up until then, its boxes had been available in black, olive or rose hues.

Cartier's red boxes have become so popular that they have inspired myriad branding moments, from filling the window displays of its stores to inspiring the design of its Guirlande de Cartier leather bags. In 2017, the jeweller created an iconic Cartier red box large enough to house a cinema, allowing guests at locations in Australia and Thailand to step within it to watch films about the maison, attended to by Cartier bellboys proffering popcorn.

OPPOSITE: A window display at a Cartier store in Hong Kong in 2016.

Meet the Bellboys

White gloves, red jackets with shiny brass buttons, brimless caps embroidered in gold: this is the uniform of Cartier's legendary bellboys.

Inspired by bellhops at luxury hotels, Cartier created roles within its stores for uniformed helpers who would be on hand to open doors, carry bags to waiting transportation and generally provide a white-glove service for its best customers. For its most important clients, bellboys will even deliver purchases to their homes, and they can regularly be spotted at VIP events bearing trays of champagne flutes. Though such formalities might feel like a hangover from a bygone era, and purposely so, it is a much-loved pillar of the Cartier experience.

The image of the Cartier bellboy has become iconic, and very much part of the brand. Much like the Panthère, you will see caricatures of the bellboys in window displays and marketing materials. You can also buy gifts inspired by them, such as Cartier keyrings in the form of bellboys carrying a diamond on a tray.



OPPOSITE: A Cartier bellboy at an event in Dubai in 2010.

RIGHT: Actress Rosario Dawson hugs a bellboy at the 2007 launch party for the Cartier Charity Love Bracelet, held at the Cartier Mansion in New York.



Beyond Jewels and Watches

In 1972, Cartier Paris was bought by businessman Robert Hocq, backed by a group of investors. At the time, the business was split in three: Cartier Paris, Cartier London and Cartier New York. He would go on to buy all three and reunite them as one.

Part of Hocq's strategy was to launch an affordable sub-brand, called Les Must de Cartier. The name was inspired by a colleague who enthusiastically said one day, "Cartier, it's a must!"

As well as offering more accessibly priced versions of its watches and jewellery, it also included a selection of leather goods. Handbags, wallets, briefcases – even full-sized golf bags – were made in a signature shade of burgundy leather and stamped with an interlocking double C logo.

By the 1980s, Cartier's leather business was going strong, and it decided to expand its lifestyle offering with some new additions. In 1981, it debuted its first perfume, titled Must de Cartier, a sensuous blend of vanilla and jasmine. In 1983, it launched two eyewear collections, Les Must and Vendôme de Cartier.

Cartier has continued to develop its accessory lines, with several scents now available to buy in ornate bottles, including an exclusive line of what it terms 'high perfume'. Its popular sunglasses are sold alongside scarves and belts, as well as homewares, stationery and other gifts.

The leather bags produced by Cartier have proved to be increasingly popular. The classic burgundy Must de Cartier



LEFT: La Panthère perfume is sold in a faceted bottle that pays homage to Cartier's favourite animal.

lines are still available, as well as plain black leather versions. This is supplemented by seasonal collections that take inspiration from some of the brand's archives. One popular leather collection is Guirlande de Cartier, with bright red bags and small leather goods edged with golden garlands in homage to the jeweller's famous boxes. Panthère de Cartier, meanwhile, is a sleek minimalist style embellished with clasps that take their form from its famous Panthère jewels.

Cartier at Auction

Cartier consistently hits the headlines for record-breaking prices at auction. The provenance of the storied maison and its famous collectors tends to inflate hammer prices already driven sky high by the value of the rare gems or exquisite horological craftsmanship.

Famous sales to have whipped up international frenzy include the 2020 sale of a 1930 Tutti Frutti bracelet, an Indian-inspired Art Deco design starring carved rubies, emeralds and sapphires. It had been estimated to sell for between \$600,000 and \$800,000 when it was offered by Sotheby's, but far exceeded this by selling to an anonymous bidder for \$1.3 million.

It was an exciting sale, but by no means the most expensive Cartier jewel to be sold at auction. In 2014, Sotheby's facilitated the sale of a Cartier ring set with a 25.59 Burmese pigeon's blood ruby known as the Sunrise ruby for \$30.4 million. Also that year, Christie's sold a Cartier Belle Epoque-style diamond brooch, featuring several important diamonds including a 34.8ct pear shape and 23.55ct oval shape. The jewel, which was bought as a wedding gift by King Alfonso XII of Spain for his wife in 1879, fetched \$17.6 million.

Cartier watches have also been known to smash records. In 2021, a 1970s gold Cartier Crash sold for close to \$885,000 at Sotheby's. This far exceeds the value of the watch itself, but the price is fuelled by rarity as Cartier only occasionally produces this quirky design, making competition on the secondary market fierce.

A verified famous owner can also drive prices up. In 2010, a Cartier Panthère diamond and onyx bracelet owned by Wallis Simpson sold for a record £4.5 million, making it the most expensive bracelet to ever sell at auction at that time.

La Peregrina is an enormous 50.56ct pear-shaped natural pearl that was cracked from an oyster in the 16th century. It was owned by a succession of Spanish kings, then European aristocracy, including the Bonapartes, before being set by Cartier into a spectacular diamond, ruby and pearl necklace in 1972 for actress Elizabeth Taylor. It sold at Christie's in 2011 for \$11.8 million.



OPPOSITE: Cartier's Victory Clock, gifted to US president Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1943, sold for \$1.6 million at Sotheby's in 2007.



The Art of Living

As Cartier has blossomed into a global luxury power, it has set its sights on so much more than the selling of watches and jewellery. With a build up of financial security has come the opportunity to invest in causes that are aligned with the jeweller's *raison d'être*.

The arts have been a keen focus for Cartier, and it supports many initiatives. But the jewel in the crown is the creation of its own art gallery in Paris. Other philanthropic activities include championing of female entrepreneurs through a dedicated initiative, supporting children in developing countries and protecting the big cat that made it famous.

OPPOSITE: A view of the Fondation Cartier art gallery in Paris at night.



Fondation Cartier

In the 1980s, artist César Baldaccini came to Cartier president Alain Dominique Perrin with an idea. It was a vision for an art gallery in Paris that would be open to all and support emerging artists, collect works and give space to multi-disciplinary forms of artistic expression.

Perrin liked the idea. He saw the opportunity to create a space that championed the arts in Cartier's name by way of corporate philanthropy. By 1984, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain had opened its doors in Jout-en-Josas near Versailles. Early exhibitions included *Les Années 1960, la décade triomphante*, a celebration of the 1960s with works by artists including Andy Warhol, Patrick Oldenburg and Joan Mitchell.

In 1994, Fondation Cartier, as it is commonly known, moved closer to the centre of Paris, opening a new purpose-built space opposite Montparnasse Cemetery. The building itself was an artwork, created by French architect Jean Nouvel, who would go on to design many important buildings including Philharmonie de Paris and One New Change in London.

Nouvel built Fondation Cartier as an ultra-modern space of glass and steel, but this is softened by the lush gardens that surround and envelop it. The gardens are called *Theatrum Botanicum* and are an urban woodland filled with wildflowers.

OPPOSITE: A poster for an exhibition by photographer Malick Sidibé at Fondation Cartier in 2017-18.



Over the years, Fondation Cartier has played host to exhibitions by established artists including Patti Smith, David Lynch, Agnès Varda and Bruce Nauman, as well as lesser-known names. It also seeks to explore a wide variety of mediums, from the photographic work of Mexican artist Graciela Iturbide to Australian sculptor Ron Mueck's enormous, hyper-realistic sculptures of people.

Since moving to Montparnasse, Fondation Cartier has run a series of evening events called *Nomadic Nights*. These invite performance artists to take over the venue for one night only and run immersive experiences that flow through the building and its gardens. In 2021, Damien Hirst used the gallery to show his *Cherry Blossoms* series of paintings that marked the artist's return to solitary painting.



Cartier Women's Initiative

In 2006, Cartier expanded its philanthropic activities with the launch of the Cartier Women's Initiative, which seeks to support female entrepreneurs who are running businesses that make a positive social or environmental impact. The mission statement of the organisation is to highlight the work of these entrepreneurs and then equip them with the "financial, social and human capital to grow their business and build their leadership skills". Since its launch, it has given out grants of \$6 million to women from 62 countries.

A major element of the Cartier Women's Initiative is an awards programme. As well as bringing global visibility to the enterprises of the women who enter, there are lucrative prizes to be won. The awards are split into 10 geographical regions, with top prizes for each region of \$100,000, \$60,000 and \$30,000. In addition, the winners will receive mentoring and training.

There are other special award categories, such as the Science & Technology Pioneer Award, as well as the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Award, which is open to men, too. Prizes are also given to previous winners to mark continued, ongoing successes in three areas: preserving the planet, improving lives and creating opportunities for others. The women who have been recognised by the Cartier Women's Initiative spearhead a diverse range of businesses. Seynabou Dieng runs a food processing company built on inclusive partnerships with farmers in Mali. Basima Abdulrahman is a pioneer of environmentally friendly



construction in Iraq. Corina Huang invented medical candy that replaces pills for those who find them difficult to swallow. While Anna-Sophie Hartvigsen created an educational programme on personal finances and investing for women.

As well as providing support through financial grants and the Fellowship programme of training and mentoring, the Cartier Women's Initiative seeks to bring together a community of likeminded women. Digital spaces and physical events allow past fellows to seek each other out for support and advice.

PREVIOUS: A visitor at Fondation Cartier looks at a sculpture by artist Ron Mueck.

OPPOSITE: Lorna Rutto and Wendy Luhabe, winners of Cartier Women's Initiative Awards 2011.

Philanthropy

Cartier has had a long history of charitable giving, but in 2012 it decided to formalise this with the creation of an independent charitable arm called Cartier Philanthropy. The foundation is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and while it is funded by the jeweller it operates independently to the commercial business.

Cartier Philanthropy functions by funding other non-profit organisations, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable communities in developing countries. It does this by financing charities tackling poverty and driving long-term positive change in impoverished communities.

So far, Cartier has forged partnerships with more than 80 charities operating in 34 countries. Its total donations to date exceed CHF100 million. Some of its partners have included water charity 1001fontaines, the Asian University for Women, the Baan Dek Foundation targeting child



OPPOSITE:
Education is a key
focus for Cartier
Philanthropy.

RIGHT: Cartier
has partnered
with charity
1001fontaines
that provides safe
drinking water.



poverty in Thai slums, and Imagine Worldwide that provides educational tech to refugees.

When deciding which charities to work with, Cartier Philanthropy looks for organisations that are a fit with its four main areas of focus. These are: access to basic services, women's economic and social development, creating sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems, and funding emergency responses.

In its 2020/21 annual impact report, the foundation shared that its donations had helped more than 20,000 smallholder farmers in Mozambique to improve their farms and given more than 52,000 residents in Madagascar's Antananarivo access to clean drinking water. It also helped charities provide 50,000 families in Bangladesh with emergency humanitarian aid after the summer floods of 2020.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Cartier Philanthropy focused on funding emergency response charities,

supporting 21 non-profit organisations tackling the impact of the virus in 22 countries. In Latin America, it teamed up with Techo to mobilise 2,000 community leaders to distribute food and hygiene products to vulnerable families in Mexico, Brazil and Colombia. In the Philippines, donations to Médecins Sans Frontières helped it to provide medical assistance to 200,000 families in Marawi that were already displaced by war and living in temporary shelters.

The Lion's Share

The panther first made an appearance in Cartier's advertising in 1904 as an illustration, sitting at the feet of a Café Society woman dressed in its jewels. Since then, the majestic creature has become a regular feature of its marketing.

In 2012 came one of the panther's most spectacular roles as Cartier released a three-minute-long film titled *L'Odyssée de Cartier* to celebrate its 165th anniversary. The advertisement had taken two years to make and featured live footage of a panther, played by three animals trained by Thierry Le Portier, moving through a collage of scenes celebrating the jeweller's history.

While Le Portier might have been able to spend his earnings from the job at a Cartier boutique, the animals themselves get little more than a scratch behind the ears for their performance. In recognition of this, Cartier is a partner of conservation charity The Lion's Share that allows corporations to make a donation each time an animal appears in an advert. The money is used to protect natural habitats, create wildlife conservation areas and promote animal welfare.



ABOVE: A 1914 Cartier advert created by illustrator George Barbier.



Continuing the Legacy

Cartier has built an impressive legacy. From the early days of Louis-François Cartier making the bold move in 19th-century Paris to buy his master's business, through to the pioneering work of his grandsons Louis, Pierre and Jacques in creating a global empire, it has come a long way.

The jeweller survived World Wars, Revolutions and the Great Depression by constantly adapting and seeking out new opportunities as they came. Through the shifts in ownership over the years, it has evolved and ultimately come out stronger. Now, the challenge is how to retain its crown as the 'king of jewellers' through preserving the past and preparing for the future.



ABOVE: The Cartier name is positioned proudly above its boutique in Lyon, France.

The Cartier Collection

As a rule, jewellery houses tend to make jewels for others to buy, but at an auction in Geneva in 1973, Cartier bid on one of its own pieces. The item was a Portique mystery clock, an ornate design with a dial displaying Cartier's watchmaking flourish of hands that appear to be floating. The jeweller won the bid, and the acquisition would prove to be the beginning of the Cartier Collection.

The Cartier Collection is essentially an archive of Cartier designs that the jeweller has bought back from the public domain. The collection now comprises more than 3,000 pieces, with items ranging from 1860 right through to the late 20th century.

Each piece in the Collection tells a part of the Cartier story, such as the platinum and diamond Scroll tiara made for Elisabeth Queen of the Belgians in 1910 that shows off the Garland style that won the jeweller so many royal fans. Or the bold Scarab brooch from 1924 decorated with antique ceramic wings from Ancient Egyptian times, which captures the Art Deco fervour for motifs from that period.

It has also acquired jewels crafted for some of its most famous patrons. Within the Cartier Collection are several pieces owned by Wallis Simpson, including the 1947 amethyst Drapery necklace and a Panthère brooch with the sleek beast atop a 152.35ct Kashmir sapphire. Other celebrity jewels to have been incorporated into the Collection include María Félix's 1975 crocodile necklace, heiress Barbara Hutton's 1934 string of jadeite beads, and French socialite and editor Daisy Fellowes' 1936 Hindu necklace in the Tutti Frutti style.

RIGHT: A 1925 Cartier vanity case decorated with rubies, turquoise, mother-of-pearl, onyx and diamonds, owned by the Cartier Collection.



The Collection also comprises clocks, watches and objets d'art made with precious materials. As well as rare, one-off creations and commissions, archivists have sought out early examples of some of its famous commercial collections, including a 1969 Love bangle, a 1912 Santos-Dumont, a 1920 Tank and a 1967 Crash.



Maisons des Métiers d'Art

At the heart of Cartier's most special pieces are elaborate techniques that call on skills only a few people in the world possess. It would be easy for these techniques to fade out of existence if they are not passed on, and in recognition of this the jeweller has created workshops where established artisans can pass on knowledge to the next generation.

In 2002, it opened the Cartier Jewellery Institute in Paris, to provide training for working jewellers. Then in 2014, at its La Chaux-de-Fonds manufacturing headquarters in the Swiss Alps, it founded Maison des Métiers d'Art, where craftspeople practise and share the most difficult artistic crafts that underpin its jewels and watches.

Such skills include intricate metalworking. Goldsmiths are taught how to create a type of lace-like openwork called filigree, and how to master minuscule orbs of gold to create texture through a process known as granulation. Engraving – a skill that can deliver so much more than just an inscription on the back of a watch or inside a ring – is another core focus for artisans at La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Enamelling is also mastered here. There are many different types of enamel, such as the stained glass-like plique-à-jour, and cloisonné, which uses a metal framework to hold the enamel in patterns. Cartier has even developed or revived some rare styles of enamel work, including using globules of enamel in place of gold to create granulation.

Whichever method of enamelling an artisan chooses to master, all must be painstakingly perfected by hand with opportunities for error at every stage. To give an insight into

PREVIOUS:
Guests look
at a crocodile
jewel created
for actress María
Félix, now part
of the Cartier
Collection, at the
Cartier Treasures:
King of Jewellers,
Jewellers to Kings
exhibition in
Beijing in 2009.

RIGHT: The
dial of this
Cartier Rotonde
Mystery watch,
c.2014, has been
decorated with
a cachalong
opal Bengal
tiger and 500
lapis lazuli and
blue agate
tesserae.



how delicate the process is, an enamelled watch dial can take up to 30 hours to paint and it must then be fired in a kiln as many as 15 times to achieve the correct shades.

Another artistic skill practised at La Chaux-de-Fonds and used to decorate watch dials and jewels is marquetry. Here, tiny pieces of materials such as wood or straw are pieced together like a jigsaw to create an image. Often during the creation of a watch dial, an artisan must leverage more than 200 tiny tesserae over the course of 50 hours.



Ethical Supply Chain

Customer expectations around ethics and sustainability have changed dramatically since Cartier was first founded in 19th-century Paris. With phrases such as 'dirty gold' and 'blood diamonds' firmly part of today's mainstream dialogue, it is now important that all jewellers have answers prepared should questions around supply chains be asked.

Cartier has been a member of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) since 2005 when it was founded. The RJC aims to act as a jewellery industry watchdog and offer consumers confidence in brands by having them submit to external auditing in order to receive accreditation. These audits assess factors such as responsible sourcing, human rights and safe working conditions.

In a 2021 sustainability report, Cartier claims that more than 97 percent of the gold it purchases is "responsible and traceable". It also states that 90 percent of its gold supply comes from recycled sources certified by the RJC, and that 7 percent comes from artisanal mines. Cartier has been a member of the Swiss Better Gold Association since 2013, which seeks to improve the living and working conditions of artisanal miners.

When it comes to diamonds, the jeweller claims that 95 percent of the value of its diamonds are bought from RJC-certified suppliers. It says that it is currently working on pilot schemes that will improve the clarity it can offer on the traceability and origin of the diamonds it uses.

In 2015, Cartier set up a Coloured Gemstones Working Group to try to improve the supply chain of coloured gems



PREVIOUS:
Feather
marquetry was
used to create
the parrot on
the dial of this
Ballon Bleu de
Cartier watch,
c.2014.

TOP LEFT:
Cartier has
pledged to
improve the
traceability of
its diamonds.



BOTTOM LEFT:
More than
97 percent of the
gold Cartier uses
is responsibly
sourced and
traceable,
according to
the jeweller.

in the jewellery industry. This has funded an initiative called The Gemstones and Jewellery Community Platform that provides anyone working in gems with free tools and resources that aid responsible business practices.

Cartier is also seeking to push green technology within its watch offer with its SolarBeat watch movement. As the movement is powered by the sun, watches fitted with it do not require batteries.

Cartier Today and Tomorrow

While Cartier started out as a family business in 1847 – something that defined the first century and more of its development – the jeweller and watchmaker is now part of one of the largest luxury groups in the world, Richemont. Joining it in the Richemont stable are many other leading watch and jewellery brands including Van Cleef & Arpels, Buccellati, Piaget and Jaeger-LeCoultre.

The maison continues to celebrate its history while pushing ahead. In 2021, Cartier released 150 new high-jewellery designs and launched a campaign titled The Culture of Design to showcase the enduring appeal of its most-loved designs. The Culture of Design paid tribute to its biggest watch and jewellery icons: Santos, Tank, Trinity, Love, Juste un Clou, Panthère and Ballon Bleu.

This was a powerful reminder of the design prowess and storied history of the brand, which has truly elevated its status to become one of the best-known and most-coveted jewellery and watch brands of all time.

OPPOSITE: Cartier jewellery and watches on display at a boutique in Brussels, Belgium.



Cartier

Cartier

Cartier

Cartier

Cartier

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PREVIOUS: A Cartier employee sweeps the pavement outside its Paris store in
2015, ready to open for a new day.

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OPPOSITE: A Cartier necklace with a carved gemstone, one of the maison's specialities.



