

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

# Robb Report



## Taste of Summer

The Return of Molecular Gastronomy  
France Reclaims Malbec  
Porsche's Next-Gen 911 Carrera S



THE DESIGNERS BEHIND MEXICO'S  
CREATIVE RENAISSANCE

JULY 2019



FROM LEFT: Pops of enamel liven up Solange's (solange.co.uk) ruby ring, Selim Mouzannar's (selimmouzannar.com) pink-sapphire earrings and ruby-and-tourmaline ring and Alice Cicolini's chocolate-color diamond-and-spinel ring.

## A Riot of Color

WE LOVE A JUICY gemstone, but lately, the color that pops the most isn't emanating from sparkling rubies or emeralds; it's coming from enamel. Designers are getting into the ancient art of fusing powdered glass to metal to achieve the kind of bold hues that traditional gems just aren't capable of. And the results are mouthwatering—especially when it comes to the painterly works of art that British designer Alice Cicolini (alicecicolini.com) has just released.

The former director of arts and culture for the British Council in India creates graphic enamel designs that are inspired by the sacred architecture and patterns of the Silk Road and juxtaposed with sleek black-and-white geometric shapes and gems. The throwback depictions are complemented by throwback methods: The pieces are made in the age-old practice of *meenakari* enameling by one of Jaipur's last masters in the craft, Kamal Kumar Meenakar, whose singular

technique has been passed down through his family for more than 250 years. Meenakar meticulously engraves Cicolini's hand-drawn patterns in gold, then fills the space with a lump of glass pigment that he grinds into a powdery fluid. It's then fired in a kiln and polished; the process is repeated three to four times to achieve a rich, burnished color.

A single ring takes up to three days to complete, but it's well worth the wait: Cicolini's pieces are deep and lustrous (not to mention lighter to wear than those heavy gemstones) and rooted in a kind of tradition that's hard to come by, even in the steadfast world of high jewelry. For Cicolini, the works are also a means of preserving an endangered technique. "I value the craft over the clarity, cut or carat weight of stone," she says. That's good news for Meenakar—who is already training the next generation—and for us, too. **J.N.**

