

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

# Robb Report

THE FAST TRACK  
TO FALL'S TOP GEAR

*SPEED  
+ STYLE*



SEPTEMBER 2018

## Genius at Work

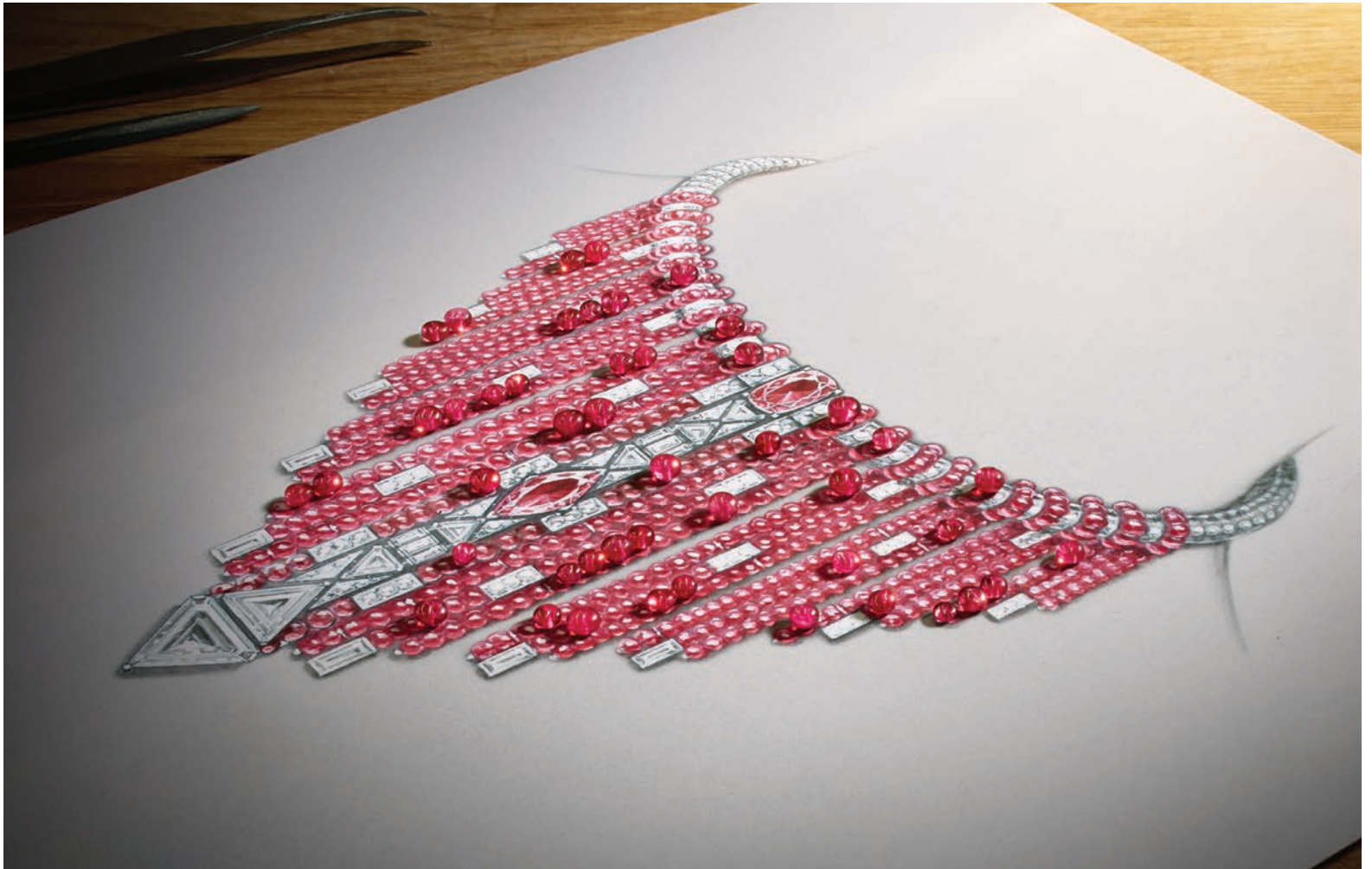
### Modern Heirlooms

The graceful Coloratura necklace, made with rubellites, spinels, and diamonds, confidently drapes the décolletage like soft, silky fabric. Composed of more than 600 stones, the modern piece echoes the house's Art Deco design codes with its geometric motifs, including the two triangle-shaped diamonds anchoring strands of beads on either side.



# Masters of the **CARTIER HOUSE**

BY JILL NEWMAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIEN PEBREL/MYOP



1 ABOVE

#### A Vision in Red

Cartier's *haute joaillerie* begins with rare and unusual stones. The design team experiments with different stone combinations and conveys ideas to an artist who interprets them in finely detailed sketches, or maquettes, from which the final design is selected. "For this collection, it was especially important that the color combinations produce a visual effect to infuse the creations with joy," says Yves Prudent, director of the high-jewelry workshop.

2 LEFT

#### Secure and Set

Stone setting is a tricky procedure because it requires strength to secure the precious stones in tiny metal prongs; but it also takes a light touch, as the gems and metals can easily be damaged in the process. To minimize risk, the metal setting is temporarily secured on a slab of wax adhered to a stick, providing what artisans call a steady "jack."

While technological advancements have infiltrated nearly every aspect of manufacturing, it seems time stands still inside the secretive hallways of Cartier's artisan workshop located above its glamorous Parisian flagship store on Rue de la Paix. Here, in the atelier that Jacques Cartier established in 1929, 50 highly skilled jewelers rely only on their hands to transform stones and metal into imaginative, artistic, and graceful jewelry. This is where Cartier creates its *haute joaillerie*, or high jewelry—considered the brand's most exceptional and elaborate pieces of art—using techniques and tools that have been applied to jewelry making for centuries. It can take weeks, months, and even years to collect the perfect stones and execute a single piece, and that is why only about 80 jewelry designs were made for this year's Coloratura *haute joaillerie* collection, which was unveiled to press and VIP clients with great fanfare in Paris in July. We had a rare visit to the workshop and followed the production of an exceptional Coloratura necklace made with more than 600 mouthwatering red rubellite beads, two large orangey-pink spinels, and numerous diamonds.



3 BELOW

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**Practice Makes Perfect**

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Only a few artisans have the skills to hand-carve the wax models used to cast the gold or platinum settings. This step requires exceptional skill—if the hand slips even once and the wax is broken, the craftsman must start again.



4 ABOVE

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**Sparkle and Shine**

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During production, every angle of a piece is continuously polished to ensure a high-shine finish. Artisans employ an array of implements to achieve a lustrous result—from traditional polishing wheels and cotton strings to delicate feathers to reach narrow crevices without damaging the jewelry.



5 ABOVE

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**Rough to Remarkable**

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Each stone is chiseled and faceted by experts, with every facet positioned to maximize the light passing through the stone for optimum reflection and color.

6 RIGHT

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**Sort, String, and Style**

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It can take weeks or months to assemble stones of matching color, quality, and shape. Once the stones are sorted by Cartier specialists, they are strung on high-resistance micro-braided Kevlar.





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#### Historical Treasures

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The final pieces are signed and numbered, and each is chronicled in Cartier's records, as they have been for more than 150 years. Nearby in the archives room, the records of every French-made piece are documented. These details are cataloged so that perhaps one day, if an heirloom is passed down or sold at auction, the owner will have verification of every element in their specific work of art. 