

# Robb Report

35th ANNUAL  
**BEST  
OF THE  
BEST**

REAL ESTATE • GEAR • SPIRITS • DESIGN • MARINE • AUTOS • STYLE • WATCHES • AVIATION • JEWELRY • CIGARS • PHILANTHROPY • DINING • ART • WINE • TRAVEL

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE



# JEWELRY

By Paige Reddinger and Jill Newman



The trend of looking backward for inspiration is so prevalent that even independent jewelers with slimmer archives are going back to their roots. James de Givenchy of Taffin made his name pioneering the use of ceramic paired with precious gems, as well as combining marble, rubber, wood, and pebbles with fine stones. His latest mélange is a bracelet of platinum wrapped in plastic and topped with a 12.3-carat kite-shaped diamond. The piece is reminiscent of the company's instantly recognizable rings featuring colorful ceramic curling, encircling, or twisting around hefty white and colored diamonds. And New York City-based Brazilian designer Ana Khouri pumped up her signature sculptural designs with bigger and bolder gems, including a 20.65-carat yellow diamond and a 5.54-carat pink diamond, which debuted at TEFAF, the European Fine Arts Foundation, in May 2022.

But at Tiffany & Co., a design shift was entirely unnecessary for the famous Bird on a Rock brooch. Designed by Jean Schlumberger in 1956, it has remained a status symbol for 67 years. Among the first to purchase one was the late socialite Bunny Mellon, and it has since been regarded as a must-have collector's item among the well-heeled. Recently, though, Tiffany has made an effort to lift its bird to new heights by courting a new demographic: guys. In February 2022, Odell Beckham Jr. was spotted sporting a large citrine Bird on a Rock when he arrived at Super Bowl LVI. A month later, Jay-Z—a Tiffany ambassador—pinned one to the lapel of his tux at the 94th Academy Awards. Michael B. Jordan upped the ante at this year's Oscars by wearing not one but two of the brooches, with one bird perched atop a 32-plus-carat pink morganite and another standing on a green tourmaline of over 58 carats.

Not to be outdone, if rumors are to be believed, Bulgari may be planning a men's-size Serpenti watch. Which just goes to show that everything old is new again—and vice versa.

## THE BIG IDEA

# Resetting the Archive

**For jewelry houses** with long histories, digging through the archives and paying homage to established icons is a perennial practice. These reinterpretations are done with such frequency that connoisseurs and enthusiasts alike can easily match legendary motifs—Serpenti, Anchor Chain, Bird on a Rock—to the brands that created them (for the uninitiated, that would be Bulgari, Hermès, and Tiffany, respectively).

But recently, the industry's biggest names haven't just tweaked decades-old designs but instead have looked to reinvent them.

At Bulgari, the snake-shaped Serpenti—applied to everything from chokers to watches—is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The latest iteration eliminates the head and tail, allowing the eye to focus on the serpent's body in a new necklace, which creates a sleek, slithering form around the neck, adorned with onyx, emeralds, and diamonds.

At Hermès, the Chaîne d'ancre, or Anchor Chain—available as a bracelet or a single drop earring, among other pieces—is currently in its 86th year of service. This time around, the French *maison* engaged in dramatic shadow play to design its Chaîne d'ombre, in which white-diamond segments are offset by larger versions pavé-set with a *dégradé* of black spinels and blue sapphires. The high-jewelry piece is a tour de force, despite recycling a design predating WWII.

ILLUSTRATION BY SHOUT



JEWELRY OF THE YEAR

## HERMÈS

### Collier Chaînes d'ombre

While most Hermès products have their roots in the equestrian world, its 86-year-old Robert Dumas–designed Chaîne d’ancres (anchor chain) motif was inspired by the sea. Since 1937, it has adorned everything from bracelets to belts to flatware. But the most magnificent take was unveiled with the Parisian firm’s latest high-jewelry collection: a white-gold necklace whose links are set with an intricate pavé of diamonds or a *dégradé* of black spinels and blue sapphires.

The French house is known for its restraint, but jewelry is a medium where it can be good to let spectacle go unchained, so to speak. Not to be overshadowed by a Kelly or a Birkin, these works manage to blend classicism with an edgy appeal. As a result, the exclusivity of these one-of-a-kind creations makes them just as difficult, if not more, to add to your collection.

RING SETTING

## DIOR



Since the beginning of Victoire de Castellane’s 25-year career at Dior, where she reigns as the longtime creative director of jewelry, colored stones have always been a focal point. Many of her collections have been punctuated by sizeable emeralds, from heavyweight, pear-shaped versions mimicking leaves in the rose-shaped Bal de Mai necklace from 2011 to 2019’s Vert Prairie emerald

choker sprinkled with offset Asscher-cut emeralds next to multicolored sapphires and chrysoberyls. The stunner of Dior’s latest Dearest Dior collection is set in white gold with prongs accented in green lacquer to further accentuate its size. On each side, 2.43 carats of white diamonds are set in white gold and contrasted with electric-blue lacquer for a stunning effect.



CASUAL CHIC

## LORRAINE SCHWARTZ

**Lorraine Schwartz** is known for creating over-the-top jewelry for divas including Beyoncé and Adele, but her new designs are remarkably discreet. You might not even notice the designer's 10-carat D-flawless diamond ring on the finger, which is the point. It's an ultrathin, smooth portrait cut without the traditional facets that create a stone's sparkle. "It has a beautiful glassy shine and looks almost like running water," says Schwartz. "It's pure elegance." And it delivers the understated luxe that people seem to be craving now.

The unassuming cut is also exceptionally rare. It originated in ancient India when Mughal emperors used the flat gems to cover hand-painted miniature portraits. Few artisans today possess the skills to produce such cuts. But rather than shout about the achievement, Schwartz showcases the stones' subdued beauty in minimalist gold settings. Forget whispering versus shouting: This is a silent and supremely self-assured nod.



TECHNIQUE

## ANA KHOURI

Ana Khouri began her career as a sculptor, and her jewelry designs begin as small versions of the final product, which she furnishes out of wood, metal, and sometimes plaster, so she can feel the shapes, heft, and finish. The sculpture is then transformed into a gold or rose-quartz piece—or, for her latest series, into rare Brazilian-rosewood designs set with rounded oval- or pear-shaped diamonds and gems.

The collection includes a bold wood collar that conforms to the wearer's contours and wide cuffs that wrap around the wrist like a swath of fabric. "When you take your time to make each unique piece, you find your own way, your own language," says the designer. That language is tactile, curvy, and sensuous—nothing she creates has hard edges. It's sculpture for the body.

## TAFFIN

It takes a gutsy designer to combine extraordinary diamonds with something as mundane as plastic tubing—and a talented one to produce an irresistibly chic final result. That’s precisely what James de Givenchy, of Taffin, has done, finding inspiration in copper electrical wiring for his latest innovative jewelry. Take his malleable platinum bracelet inserted in a clear plastic tube and appointed with a 12.3-carat kite-shaped diamond that seems to float at its tip, thanks to an invisible metal setting. “People want to wear big

diamonds, but they don’t necessarily want a big, heavy ring,” says Givenchy. “The bracelet is a great way to wear a big diamond every day and make it look casual.”

Considered one of today’s most influential jewelers, Givenchy has long prioritized aesthetics above what’s deemed precious. He has nestled gemstones in ordinary pebbles and casually balanced large diamonds on skinny, brightly colored ceramic bands. The results are modern, stylish, and always unexpected.



HOMAGE

## CARTIER Rituel Necklace

When Cartier unveiled its Beautés du Monde collection in Madrid last June, one of the most exceptional pieces included in the dizzying array of gems was inspired by Mesoamerican jewelry. The Rituel necklace combines two strands of glacier-blue chalcidony beads separated by diamond-and-onyx beads, some with diamond-set triangle tips. Between them is a matrix of rich fuchsia-hued rubies and diamonds interconnected by white-gold stems. In 2018, a piece with similar architecture, made in 7th-century Mexico from pink shells, was displayed at the Met’s *Golden Kingdoms: Luxury and Legacy in the Ancient Americas* exhibition—needless to say, Cartier’s version offers a bit more sparkle.

35 YEARS  
OF BEST OF  
THE BEST

**2004** This year isn’t the first time we’ve honored jewelers for going back to their archives. In ‘04, Cartier’s Collection **Panthère de Cartier** won the award for best high-jewelry line. *Robb Report* noted that the house had introduced its first feline-themed bauble, a brooch, in 1923 and credited its artisans with “reinterpreting” the original panther designs to make them relevant for today.” The more things change...

COLOR STORY

**HARRY  
WINSTON**  
Majestic Escapes  
Fiji Necklace



**High-jewelry collections** push the boundaries of what's possible with extraordinary stones, showing off a jeweler's unbridled creativity and technical prowess. A prime example is Harry Winston's Majestic Escapes, a collection of eight unique suites inspired by picturesque landscapes, which was unveiled last June. For the Amalfi necklace, richly hued rubellites, Paraiba tourmalines, and turquoise evoke the vibrant bougainvillea and clear waters off the Amalfi Coast, while the

blue domes of Santorini are referenced with that necklace's aquamarines and sapphires. The designs showcase the founder's pioneering techniques from the 1940s: Every piece is executed so that the metal virtually vanishes and the gems appear to float on the skin. The Fiji necklace, seen here, is our favorite example, with vivid cabochon-cut turquoise appearing suspended over the diamonds and sapphires, all set on an open-work, flexible collar.



UNISEX MOMENT

**TIFFANY & CO.**  
Bird on a Rock

**Jean Schlumberger's Bird on a Rock** brooch has been a staple of Tiffany & Co.'s high jewelry since its creation in 1956. Once seen as a must-have for the socialite set, the diamond bird—perched atop sizeable, colorful stones such as citrine, tourmaline, and morganite—has recently been seen on an entirely new set of A-listers. Everyone from Odell Beckham Jr. to Jay-Z to Michael B. Jordan has worn Tiffany's birds, affixed to both tuxedos and sportswear. What was once viewed as a piece for ladies of a certain age (and status) has now become the hippest accessory for guys on the red carpet, pinning an ultracool new perspective on the heritage design.



WHIMSICAL  
JEWELRY

**HARWELL  
GODFREY**

**Lauren Harwell Godfrey** doesn't think fine jewelry should always be so serious. Take her Menagerie collection of eight unique, animal-shaped jewels. A playful spirit shines through in the owl cuff seen here, with its kaleidoscope of hundreds of sapphires and diamonds. "With something as luxe as jewelry, it's fun to take the piss a little," says Harwell Godfrey, who lives in Northern California. It's also a way to surprise her collectors, who, she says, increasingly want expressive statement pieces.





DIAMONDS

## VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

**Van Cleef & Arpels** made jewelry history when it acquired the Lesotho Legend in 2018. At 910 carats, the D-color Type-IIa diamond—the highest grading of purity and clarity—was the fifth-largest rough diamond ever mined. Over four years, the house cut 67 stones from the historic rough and conjured a stunning high-jewelry fantasy.

Unveiled in Paris last summer, the Legend of Diamonds collection featured 25 showstopping jewels with the brand's signature Mystery Set technique (setting gemstones so close together that no metal is visible to the eye) in curvy, undulating shapes with rubies, emeralds, and sapphires

creating an intense interplay of color and light.

There's more to the jewelry than meets the eye. Designs such as the Chevron Mystérieux necklace, seen here, are transformable and can be worn in six ways. Inspired by the crossover neckline of a 1956 Pierre Cardin dress, the necklace has a trio of pear-shaped D-flawless diamonds that can be removed and added to a ring and earrings or worn as one, three, or no stones on the necklace. The pendant stones can also be slipped onto a chain, as can the central 31-carat diamond drop. Which is fitting: Diamonds this important deserve to live multiple lives.

EAR CUFF

## BOUCHERON Octopus Earring

**Boucheron's creative director**, Claire Choisne, is one of the greatest talents of her generation. Every year, she manages to conceive ideas never before seen in jewelry, and this Octopus ear cuff earring is no exception. Designed to look like a tattoo, the single earring's white-gold tentacles, decked in 443 brilliant-cut diamonds interspersed with 178 mother-of-pearl pastilles, curve up toward the temple, encircle the outer ear, and then seem to penetrate the lobe. Although set in stone and metal, the tentacles appear to undulate with life—a fittingly imaginative interpretation of one of the sea's most intelligent creatures.





ELLY SUH, VIOLINIST

# SAVOIR

EXTRAORDINARY BEDS

[savoirbeds.com](http://savoirbeds.com)



ONE TO WATCH

## Sarah Ysabel Narici

Sarah Ysabel Narici's designs have a secret. Take her Elixir of Life ring: The inside of the band is engraved with the six peaches of immortality—which in Chinese folklore grant everlasting life—and three auspicious bats, characterizing good luck and longevity. She encodes every piece with similar significance, employing archaic icons, sci-fi references, and specially cut stones in propitious shapes, from crescents representing femininity to cabochons evoking fluidity. "The merging of past civilizations and hyper-futurism is what sparks my imagination," says the 32-year-old jeweler.

Narici, who is British Italian, earned her degree in jewelry design from Central Saint Martins in 2013 and spent nearly a decade in some of the industry's top workshops—including Stephen Webster, Marina B, and Lorraine Schwartz—before establishing her collection, Dyne, last year. She began with a custom line called

Loverglyphs, inspired by ancient Egyptian signet rings, which uses engravings and stones to reflect the wearer's unique identity, favorite colors, birthstone, or good luck symbols. Her expressive pieces soon caught the eye of fashionable New Yorkers; more than a few commissioned engagement rings.

While her eclectic allusions might not always be obvious, what is noticeable is her choice of unusual gems and the creativity of her compositions. She prefers stones that have already lived another life and likes showcasing the imperfections inherent in natural objects. As a result, she tends to avoid new brilliant cuts because, she says, they "lack soul." Never satisfied with traditional settings, Narici spends days sitting beside lapidaries challenging them with new concepts that require minimal amounts of metal. "Not everything works out as initially expected," she says, "but it always leads to a new discovery."



## BULGARI Serpenti Choker

The first **Serpenti**, produced in 1948, used a square-cased watch at the tip of a coiled bracelet that wrapped around the wrist—versions with a snake-shaped head didn't appear until the '50s—and in the 75 years since, Bulgari has reinterpreted its coveted design into an array of lust-worthy creations. But this year, the Italian jeweler went back to its roots to unveil a less literal representation. Using just the shape of the body slithering around the neck, the house's choker features a mix of diamonds, onyx, and cabochon-cut emeralds set in platinum, creating one of the most striking renditions of the motif yet.



### CUFF BRACELET

## LOUIS VUITTON



For Louis Vuitton's Radiance collection, artistic director of watches and jewelry Francesca Amfitheatrof cleverly incorporated the "V" from the founder's surname, crafting a diamond-set platinum centerpiece and using it to frame a 7.86-carat spessartite garnet. Surrounding this angular talisman are pointed, mirror-polished yellow-gold scales (each also tipped in platinum-set diamonds) that echo its shape, which creates a mesmerizing effect on the wrist. The result is a contemporary Cleopatra vibe that only gets stronger when you add the matching collar necklace and earrings. It's a suite fit for a modern-day queen.