Lapis Lazuli: Symbolism + Meaning

Wednesday, December 23, 2015

Lapis Lazuli: Symbolism + Meaning
Blue on blue - stunning! This gorgeous cocktail ring features a bezel set deep blue lapis lazuli cabochon surrounded by light blue turquoise half beads mounted in twisted yellow gold. This vintage ring features cathedral shoulders with a classically rendered wire work gallery underneath the stone. When it comes to celebrating the symbolism and meaning of December's birthstone, this ring is the perfect choice.

For over 6,000 years, this deep blue gemstone has been mined around the globe, most prominently in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Siberia, Chile, and North America. As seen in the upper portion of this 10-carat cabochon, the lazurite that comprises the main bulk of lapis lazuli is often shot through with shimmering golden pyrite and other compound minerals, including calcite which appears white and sodalite which appears light blue. The mineral compound called lapis is found most often in crystalline marble, where heat has caused the lazurite to intrude upon the marble.

Imagine yourself standing on a desert hillside where bulldozers cut away at the soil, exposing giant slabs of brilliant blue all around you. It must be so magical to be in the presence of raw lapis, particularly for those ancients who discovered the gemstone thousands of years ago.

Because of its bright blue hue and its suitability for carving, lapis is one of the first recorded gemstones to be worn as jewelry. Ancient Egyptians used it to fashion their all-important seals, their version of the modern signature required to transact business. They also carved it into sacred vessels, vases, and sculpted figurines. Its color invoked the essence of divinity, inviting its association with the gods, royalty, power, and spiritual insight.

Ancient Persians and pre-Colombian societies, as well as Europeans during the Middle Ages, revered lapis lazuli for its
representation of the starry evening sky, and in the Orient it was relied upon for protection from the evil eye. It has been hailed throughout history as a stone of truth, wisdom, and recompense for sin.

The Ancient Egyptians also ground it down to use for eye makeup, a precursor to its use by Middle Age artists as the foundation for the first Ultramine blue paint used to capture the color of sky and sea. Ancient Romans ground it into powder which they mixed into their drinks as an aphrodisiac. Lapis lazuli can be seen in art the world over, from the mosaics of the Middle East and Africa, to paintings in Europe, to body ornamentation in cosmetics and jewelry across the continents.

Through the ages it has retained its symbolic meaning as a stone of wisdom and truth, believed to promote insight and even psychic ability. It is believed by crystal healers to stimulate the higher mind, elevating the thinking centers of the brain and enhancing the intellect. Thereby, it is a stone of learning, believed to spark a thirst for knowledge, truth, and understanding.

It is also a stone of truth, known to promote honesty and harmony in relationships. It brings about a clarity about oneself and aids a person in acceptance of her strengths and weaknesses. It is a stone of communication, believed to aid both writers and speakers in broadcasting their messages with clarity and authenticity.

Finally, lapis lazuli is believed to be a stone of joy, evoking positive feelings and thoughts. As such, it may bring a level of tranquility and peace to the person who wears it. Optimism and hope are the key to peace, after all. It is the stone of friendship, believed to strengthen the bonds of love and fidelity, inviting a deeper level of intimacy.
This makes lapis lazuli jewelry the perfect choice for the special person in your life born in December, be it a dear friend, a lover, or your brother or sister. We'd love to show this ring to you, as well as our other lapis lazuli jewels, and allow you experience the beauty and tranquility of this ancient stone for yourself. Call today to schedule a visit to our Bellevue showroom.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer

Wed, Dec 16, 2015

Designer Spotlight: DeVroomen
This spectacular guilloche and enamel ring makes an imposing statement. Worn by man or woman, this jewel says, "I mean business."

It says, "I know who I am and what I'm about."

Featuring a powerful combination of classic white round diamonds, 18k yellow gold, and striking blue enamel overlaying intricate guilloche engravings, this striking designer ring was fashioned by the renowned UK designer Leo De Vroomen.

De Vroomen is most highly appreciated for his use of enamels in a broad array of bold and beautiful colors. Sometimes subtle, sometimes loud and ostentatious, his color choices always make a clear statement. In many of his pieces, Leo adds more interest with sculpted repousse work. His careful attention to detail and form lends his pieces an artful elegance worthy of attention.

His use of diamonds is typically understated. Even in this piece lined with diamonds, their brilliance is balanced with the deep blue enamel background and the prominence of the yellow gold lines surrounding the stones. Indeed, the longer you stare at this particular ring, the more evident it becomes that De Vroomen is a master at achieving balanced, striking designs.

That this ring was fashioned in 1986, at the height of big and bold, it is clear that although perhaps emboldened by the such demands in the markets of that decade, De Vroomen brought a subtlety to the table with this ring.

This is in keeping with his philosophy that the woman (or man in this case) who wears this ring is the one who truly makes the impression, not the stone or the jewel.
In the realm of creative design, it is Leo's uncompromising commitment to freedom that infuses every De Vroomen piece with subtle elegance that transcends time and defies, and yet defines, the trends of the day.

Leo describes his work as far more than a career. "It's about being true to yourself and enjoying the freedom of doing what you love," he told the *Spectator*.

While he does not adhere to what he calls "the vagaries of fashion," De Vroomen does adhere to a standard of excellence that some describe as bordering on obsession. "[The] pieces are not just beautiful in terms of proportion, shape and colour combination or quality of finish, they are perfect engineering machines with all kind of cleverly hidden mechanisms that make them truly special to wear," says Alicia Reyes, author of the blog *Collecting Fine Jewels*.

Leo crafts his wondrous jewels at his atelier in London, focusing his energies on creating one-of-a-kind pieces that could be categorized as haute couture, though he would not do so himself. Mr. De Vroomen grew up in Holland, the youngest of eight on a tulip farm. Surrounded by such beautiful colors, but perhaps weary of the daily grind of farming, Leo longed for a world of artistry away from the soil. He followed his heart to Switzerland, where he was qualified as a Master Goldsmith.

In 1965, he moved to London, where he met his wife Ginnie, who has served him faithfully as design partner and muse for their established atelier De Vroomen Design. Together, they conceptualize and manufacture every single piece in accordance with their unique vision.

In discussing their perfect De Vroomen patron, Leo states on his
website, "My jewelry is for grownups...it's not for the fainthearted. It's for women who have confidence and are as careful about their jewelry as their clothes."

He goes on to say, "I am deeply passionate about my jewelry. To create something innovative, dynamic and beautiful without compromise is always exciting. But the real pleasure comes from seeing it worn by the right woman with confidence and pleasure."

Are you that woman? Does this ring speak to your soul?

If you must have it, then please do not hesitate to call on us. We are more than happy to assist you in making this striking, bold, and alluring De Vroomen ring yours.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer
Your office holiday party looms on the horizon. You're moving up in the world, hoping for that promotion, and you want to impress all the right people. You've chosen your perfect black dress, and you have a gorgeous Indian yellow silk scarf, which you've learned just how to wrap so you look stunning. You've consulted your makeup artist, and you're set for understated glam. You've got tasteful diamond drop earrings, and you're leaving your neck bare in red carpet style. All you need to complete your look is a scintillating left hand ring.

Why not consider this magnificent and massive 80-carat citrine cocktail ring? You can wear it on your power finger (that is, your index finger), so that whenever you point something out, your colleagues will see that not only do you make a good argument, but you also have brilliant taste.

Rest assured, you'll be in good company with citrine, classically
referred to as the Merchant's Stone or as I like to call it, the Stone of Sweet Success. Medieval merchants kept citrines in their money purses, believing their financial pursuits would be blessed by its power and presence. The ancients believed citrine harnessed the power of the sun, carrying its radiance and warmth into everyday life. The mystics of old believed it would dispel sadness, anger, and fear, opening the space around them to the abundance of the universe, ensuring that good things come their way.

Do you want that promotion? Then count on the Merchant's Stone to energize you into full expression of your natural talents and gifts. Long believed to enliven creativity and spark the imagination, citrine just might aid you in transforming your dreams into tangible realities, resulting in a solid plan you can follow to reach your goals. You can choose to believe, like those who practice crystal energy healing, that citrine encourages fresh starts and brings fullness of life to those in pursuit of new horizons.

Practitioners of gemstone healing and magic count on citrine to enhance mental clarity, personal discipline, and confidence, making it the perfect stone to wear when pursuing that promotion. Not only that, but citrine has long been hailed as a stone of joy. Who wouldn't want to pursue the next level in their career with joy, imparting enthusiasm to those around them, as well?

Why not make your mark on your company and bring those around you along with you? Citrine is said to promote generosity. It could be called a Share the Wealth stone, as well as the Merchant's Stone.

With all this latent positive energy connected to your power finger, you might just find yourself overcoming obstacles and blocks to your creative expression. It might just give you that leg up in winning over even the most stubborn of associates to motivate
action and teamwork. Since every promotion is a team effort, why not allow the generous nature of citrine to encourage your acknowledgement of those who are supporting your promotion? Then, you'll have the loyalty of your team as you move into your new position.

This beautiful ring might just be the motivation you need to get to work and make that promotion a reality. If you'd like to feel its power, we invite you to make an appointment with us today. Try it on, see what 80 carats of citrine can do for you.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer

Wednesday, November 11, 2015

Designer Spotlight: Jose Hess
Are you in search of brilliant color for your engagement ring?

Do you appreciate clean lines, modern styles, and American-made jewelry?

If so, may we recommend this magnificent Jose Hess tsavorite garnet wedding set?

Crafted of solid 18k white gold, this gorgeous wedding set features rounded bands lined with nearly 40 flush-set, round brilliant white diamonds. Geometrical engravings add luster and interest to the bands. Mounted in a four-prong claw setting, a single green tsavorite garnet weighing 1.61 carats takes center stage. The gemstone is a beautiful oval cut. This designer ring demonstrates the modern elegance closely associated with the Jose Hess brand.
Jose Hess jewels are best known for their inclusion of fiery brilliant white diamonds, contemporary styles, dazzling brilliance, and masterful designs. Each Jose Hess ring is guaranteed to please with modern lines, excellent craftsmanship, and a superior use of white diamonds.

Jose Hess began his career in Colombia, South America, where his parents relocated during the Nazi invasion of his birth country Germany. After serving alongside his parents in the family’s bakery throughout his early childhood, Jose went on to sweep floors in a nearby jewelry factory.

Before long, he learned to melt gold and hand-set jewelry. To him, this was just rote work, a job to keep him busy and earn some pocket money. That is, until he discovered the artistry behind the jewelry. By the time he turned 17, Mr. Hess had caught design fever. Soon after, he left Colombia, arriving in New York in 1951.

At night he went to school, taking classes in everything from accounting to art. He also took a correspondence course with the Gemological Institute of America. During the day, he worked for various jewelry firms, learning the techniques and practicing the skills he would later use to launch his brand into the forefront of American jewelry design.

Eventually, he landed a position with accredited jewelry designer David Webb. After two years with Mr. Webb's firm, Jose Hess launched his own brand, fighting tooth and nail for American designers to be noticed and respected by retailers and consumers alike.

At the foundation of Mr. Hess's design philosophy is his attention to the needs and interests of his retail jewelry customers. During the 1980s, his designs catered to sophisticated business women
who loved lavish pieces heavy with diamonds. Today, his pieces tend to be more subtle, favoring the simple elegance of everyday jewels that can be worn by day or night by almost any woman.

Jose Hess is celebrated as one of the first designers in what is today known as the American Jewelry movement. At its core, American Jewelry is largely defined by the absence of a set of design standards. Whereas European jewelers follow a certain code, using techniques handed down for hundreds and hundreds of years, American jewelers are afforded a higher level of creativity in the application of their techniques. While many of these traditional techniques are mastered by American jewelers, the US jewelry industry allows designers the freedom to apply these age-old techniques to new materials and to refine the techniques to bring a decidedly contemporary feel to the old ways. Jose Hess has distinguished himself as a master in the art of contemporary American design, using clean lines, lots of brilliance, and statement color (if color is used at all).

If you are a modern woman, ready to walk down the aisle wearing only the finest in American craftsmanship, then we suggest you look no further than this Jose Hess tsavorite garnet bridal set.

Call today to make your appointment to visit our Seattle-area showroom.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer

Posted by Angela Magnotti Andrews at 3:30 PM  No comments:
When I think of France, I think of refined elegance, romantic interludes, and stunning architectural wonders. I think of rows of airy lavender bushes, fields of dainty wildflowers, and happy children wearing white sundresses or knickers. I picture a serious people committed to their customs and traditions. And I remember that the French do things well, with dedication and discipline. All of this beautiful imagery is a fitting backdrop for a discussion of French wedding customs.

The seriousness comes into play right from the start. According to *NY Magazine*, the French do not play the field as we Americans are wont to do. The moment a man and woman sit down for a drink, a contract of relationship has been sealed. These relationships can last a moment or a lifetime, but the French are serious about commitment.

This does not meant that engagements happen immediately. In fact, a relationship can go on for years without a proposal. In the event that a proposal is imminent, however, the first step is not to
buy the ring. Instead, the first step is for the man to ask his sweetheart's father for permission to marry his daughter.

With his consent, the man then proposes marriage to his sweetheart in private. No public announcement is made, no public spectacles are filmed for YouTube. The French are nothing if not subtle. Rather, the couple begin the process of telling each of their family members in person of their betrothal. Following the family announcements, a series of small dinner parties are arranged with their friends. The couple pops a bottle of champagne and announces their news in the intimacy of a home dinner setting.

Once the announcements have been made, the families of the bride and groom come together for the *fiancailles*, a special meeting with the parents of the bride and groom, as well as other important family members, where the ring is formally presented. Prior to this, even if the ring was presented at the proposal, the bride-to-be has not worn it yet. After this night's events, with the blessings of their family members formally extended, she may wear the ring in public.

From here, the wedding is planned. Every wedding must begin with a city hall ceremony, since the separation of church and state is regarded as sacrosanct in France. The city hall wedding is the only officially recognized union of a man and woman. Many French brides and grooms attend to their civic wedding right before a church wedding, necessitating two guest lists.

City buildings are typically small, so only a handful of people will be invited to this first ceremony. From there, the couple may walk or ride together to the church for the more elaborate, all-white affair. Yes, weddings in France are decorated all in white; white flowers, white dresses, white candles, white everything!
There is one spot of color allowed, and that is in keeping with the French tradition of the four elements: something blue, something new, something borrowed, and something old. The spot of blue symbolizes fidelity and purity between man and wife, the something new celebrates the new beginnings for the couple, the something borrowed symbolizes the happiness that others share in the event, and the something old reminds the bride and groom that their marriage not only links two individuals, but two families with all their traditions and heritage.

In smaller villages and towns, the couple will walk to the church. The bride walks with her father, led by a band of musicians, and guests and family members are allowed to walk behind them in procession. The groom and his mother tarry at the very back of line. Village children will flock to the procession bearing white ribbons which they stretch across the road in front of the bride. She is expected to cut the ribbons as she passes, symbolizing her resolve to break through any barrier between her and her intended.

Once they arrive at the church, the groom walks down the aisle first, leading his mother to her seat at the front. Next come the les enfants d'honneur, the flower girls and boys, and then the father of the bride escorts his daughter to her fiance's side.

The couple may stand before the priest, or they may be seated in red velvet chairs as they exchange their vows. The priest may invite a few close friends to raise a silk canopy (carre) over their heads before giving the couple his final blessing. At the end of the ceremony, the priest will make no formal announcement, nor will he call for the groom to kiss his bride. The couple's first kiss is reserved for the top of the outer stairs, beneath a happy shower of wheat and rice (symbolizing prosperity and fertility).
From here, the wedding party makes its way to the reception venue, where a towering pyramid of cream-filled pastries drizzled in honey and nuts stands in as the wedding cake. Champagne and wine are served before, throughout, and after a formal dinner. And it is from here on that the traditionally acknowledged refinement of the French seems to fly out the window.

If there is one thing the French do irreverently, it is weddings. The hoopla begins with a presentation, typically a PowerPoint which includes numerous embarrassing photos of the bride and groom in their awkward teenage phases. Family members and friends may sing a song or two, and the couple will drink from *le coup de mariage*, a special heirloom toasting cup with two handles that is handed down from generation to generation.

And then, the DANCING begins. The French love to dance, and this portion of the party may last from midnight until 4 or 5 the next morning! During this raucous stage of a French wedding, many pranks can be played. For one, the *jaretere* (*garter*) may be extracted from the bride's thigh (hopefully by her new husband) and offered for sale to the highest bidder. The bride might throw her bouquet into a crowd of marriageable young ladies, toasts will be made, and more jokes will be played. Ribbons and umbrellas are held up over the couple as they dance, elevating the gaiety and reminding the couple of the covering their friends and family offer them as their new life together begins.

The final joke of the night is *le charivari*. While the party may last until well into the next morning, the newly wed couple will surely attempt to sneak away at some point, hopefully unnoticed, to their honeymoon suite to enjoy their first night alone together. If they are unsuccessful at sneaking away, they may soon hear a loud ruckus in the hallway. Arriving outside the couple's door, a group of drunken revelers will begin loudly banging on pots and pans,
making a riotous racket until the couple appears at the door. At this point, it is expected that glasses of chilled champagne and sweet treats will be offered in exchange for a promise of peace and quiet for the rest of the night.

And from there, their first day begins with married bliss in the peaceful quite of a Provencal sunrise.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer
Set with over 100 black and white diamonds, this spectacular watch is fashioned out of solid 18k white gold. The pave-set band is inlaid over a stingray leather de Grisogono strap, and the mechanism is visible through the glass case on the backside of the watch. This masterpiece in time technology was crafted by the jewelry firm de Grisogono as part of their Grande Collection.

Founded by Fawaz Gruosi, de Grisogono has been dedicated to absolute perfection and continual innovation in jewelry and watch design since 1993. De Grisogono jewels are characterized by bold and exuberant designs executed with cutting-edge techniques, creative twists, and absolute perfection.

Every de Grisogono jewel features bold and often neglected gemstones, asymmetrical design elements, and breathtaking glamour. This particular watch is a testament to de Grisogono's signature use of the previously ignored black diamond. Historically, until Fawaz Gruosi began integrating black diamonds into his creations, they were largely overlooked by designers in the luxury industry. Thanks to Mr. Gruosi’s passion for overlooked beauty, today black diamonds firmly hold their place in court with majesty, mystique, and allure.

Fawaz Gruosi is a man of intense curiosity, adventure, and passion. His Mediterranean roots shine forth in his bold use of color and his infinite reinterpretations of form and line. He approaches everything with emotion, purpose and intensity, and this shines forth in every piece his firm produces.

Mr. Gruosi puts great stock in his intuition, and while paying tribute to the esteemed traditions of jewelry design at all times, he continually pushes the boundaries of the industry, propelling his
jewels into the most elite of haute couture style. In the area of watchmaking, de Grisogono has taken tradition and built upon it, inventing never-before-seen complications that set de Grisogono far apart from its watchmaking competition.

While de Grisogono is fully committed to Swiss watchmaking heritage, they have pushed the boundaries of tradition to create exclusive in-house movements with ingenious complications. With these innovations, Mr. Gruosi and his team of skilled watchmakers have added value and exclusivity to their Swiss watches. Mirroring the ingenuity on the inside, they've brought to light the mystical allure of never-before-seen materials, including stingray leather, black diamonds, and icy phosphorescent diamonds, gemstones that have become the signature of de Grisogono's watches and high jewelry.

de Grisogono's watches are a testament to Fawaz Gruosi's impeccable design philosophy. "I design out of instinct and express my inner passion into unexpected and extravagant creations," says the legendary designer on his website.

The origins of his philosophy grew out of his childhood experiences in Florence, Italy. Born in Syria in 1952, Mr. Gruosi eventually moved with his Italian mother and Lebanese father to Florence where he lived until he was 18 years old. His first jewelry-related job was as a janitor in a Florence jewelry store. Following his passion for gemstones and design, he was soon promoted to store director in London. From there, he became Harry Winston's representative to the Alizera family in Saudi Arabia, and from there the doors to Europe's most esteemed jewelry houses opened for him.

By the mid-1990s, Fawaz Gruosi was ready to take his mastery to the next level. He opened his first solo boutique in Geneva, where
he established the adventurous de Grisogono brand. His commitment to excellence and his courage in pushing the boundaries of design tradition quickly catapulted the brand into high jewelry fame. Today, de Grisogono continues to draw from Fawaz's pursuit of technical virtuosity and vanguard design.

Mr. Gruosi's designs are inspired by his unique experiences and everything in the world around him. Whether inspired by "the shape of a lampshade or the color of the sea," he expressed to Huffington Post writer Yvonna Russell, Fawaz aims to highlight the natural beauty of the men and women who wear his pieces. "I do not have a particular woman in mind when I design. I make the piece, and the right woman will be drawn to it," he told Ms. Russell in the same interview.

Are you drawn to the lines of this de Grisogono masterpiece?

Are you inspired by the unconventional use of rapturous gemstones in traditional settings with an edge?

If so, we cannot recommend more highly the high jewelry and timepieces created by the masterful designer and artisans at de Grisogono.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer
This spectacular white gold halo ring features a magnificent blue oval sapphire weighing 4.02 carats. Centered on the edges of its shoulders are two trapezoid cut diamonds nestled amid two stunning halos of brilliant round cut diamonds. It is these round cut diamonds and their settings that we are most interested in today.

While the large sapphire is held in place by four metal prongs, the white diamonds are held in place by a traditional grain setting. Grain-set jewelry was historically created with a handful of beading (or graining) tools. The technique is typically employed when setting a number of equal-sized stones in lines.

This setting is a highly specialized technique and therefore requires the skills of a seasoned master stone setter. It first gained popularity in the late 1800s and early 1900s, carrying through the
Georgia, Victorian, Edwardian, and Art Deco periods of jewelry.

All these grain-set jewels were crafted by hand, using a drill to cut all the holes in the metal and a beading tool to raise a bead of metal up and over the stone's four corners to secure it in place. Today, CAD jewelry design makes it possible to create grain-set designs without the labor-intensive process known in the 20th century. Thus, bead-set jewels are returning to contemporary style.

While as many as six beads, as few as three, can be used to set a stone in place, four is the most common number of beads for a grain setting. Sometimes, a five-grain setting is chosen, in which four beads are placed at each "corner" of the stone and a fifth bead is set in between to give a visual distance between each stone in the row.

Probably the most popular form of grain setting is the pave setting, in which a carpet of small diamonds cling to the surface of a setting to create a sea of bling. Each tiny diamond is set with beads, adding more shine and brilliance to the overall look of the piece. With this technique, the small stones are sunk to their girdles, set to nearly touch each other. With the aid of a hand tool called an onglette graver, each of the beads is cut and fashioned. After which, the stone setter uses a round graver is to roll the metal into position and lock the stones into place.

A grain setting works best for small, calibrated brilliant-cut stones, though it can also be chosen for any flat-backed stone: cabochons, rose cuts, or half or three-quarter cut pearls. According to writer Anastasia Young, the grains of metal trick the eye, maintaining the visual texture across the entire setting. In some cases, the grain setting is used without stones. This is a particularly useful technique on pieces that have areas of metal
that are too small to mount with stones. Millegrain is a variation of this technique which adds interest and beauty to what would otherwise be a smooth, blank area on a ring or brooch.

When purchasing a grain-set jewel, you'll want to inspect it carefully for quality. Well-crafted jewelry will always feel smooth to the touch. Any rough or splintery edges indicate poor craftsmanship. Inspect pave and micropave jewels under a loupe to ensure that stones are set tightly. Loose stones are an indication of amateur workmanship and should be avoided in the purchase of high-end jewelry. While inspecting it under the loupe, ensure that none of the diamonds or gemstones were chipped during the setting process.

We cannot stress enough the importance of being willing to request of your jeweler that they demonstrate the quality and workmanship of every jewel they sell. Whether you're purchasing a new, vintage, or estate jewel, the quality of your investment should matter to you and to your jeweler.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer

Notes


Saturday, October 10, 2015

Designer Spotlight: Buccellati
This exquisite designer ring is set with 39 brilliant-cut diamonds in white gold rhombs. The scalloped border is molded in an openwork design with frilled yellow gold, fashioned in the likeness of Venetian lace. In all of its magnificence, this ring sings with the hallmarks of its high-class designer, Buccellati.

Buccellati is the trade name for one of the most prestigious jewelry design firms in the world. Its headquarters are located in New York City, but this family-owned dynastic jewelry house owes its beginnings to the influence of its birthplace, Milan, Italy.

In 1919, Mario Buccellati opened his first jewelry boutique on Largo Santa Margherita in Milan. Having learned the secrets of the Italian goldsmiths, Signori Buccellati put his acquired skills to use. Drawing upon the inspired works of the Italian Renaissance, Buccellati infused every jewel with imagination and inspiration. Striving for perfection, he developed a meticulous approach which
has now brought forth signature designs that look almost like the delicate lace that inspires them.

True to form, this particular Buccellati jewel features the signature pairing of gold and diamonds. When their work is not inspired by fine textured linens, it is inspired by flowers and leaves. Every Buccellati piece is completely hand engraved. A smooth surface is rarely found in this designer's work, as that would be boring. And Buccellati is never boring, never predictable, never run of the mill.

In all their pieces, an elegant simplicity can be found. Recurring patterns, recurring themes, reinvented from one year to the next. Every piece is made by hand, drawing upon centuries of trade secrets passed down from father to son/father to daughter.

Today, Buccellati is in the capable hands of four Buccellatis. Gino manages the silver goods, Maria Cristina oversees marketing, and Andrea serves as president of the firm. These three men inherited the firm from their father, Gianmaria, who in turn inherited it from his father, Mario. The fourth Buccellati, Lucrezia, is the first female to hold the prestigious position of designer alongside her father, Andrea.

Lucrezia represents the new age of Buccellati in what she calls "a soft passage from old to new."[1] She explained to Galena Mosovich of Ocean Drive that the house has always aligned two generations to work together in conceptualizing the firm and its designs. In this way, the secrets of the trade are passed down without interruption, and tradition is always influenced by the now.

With a current focus on engagement rings and jeweled electronics cases, Lucrezia continues to draw on the Italian Renaissance for her cues. Techniques passed down for over four centuries have been enhanced with the introduction of more sophisticated tools
which are used to wrought decidedly classic designs.

Buccellati jewels are inspired by many things, including nature's beauty, elements of dreams, Venetian lace, the works of Benvenuto Cellini, Italian architecture, and of course by the woman who will wear their jewels.

Buccellati believes this woman is a feminine wonder, naturally elegant and beautifully spontaneous. This woman infuses every aspect of her life with a joyful flair. Her beauty is timeless, and her style is inimitable. She is one of a kind.

If you are this woman, then may we invite you to visit our Seattle-area showroom and try on this magnificent Buccellati gold and diamond ring?

Notes

Do you appreciate nature's treasures: sand dollars, serpentine, and nephrite jade?

Do you love sweeping vistas, majestic sea cliffs, and breathtaking ocean views?

Are you in search of the perfect California honeymoon destination?

Are you up for trail blazing, beach combing, and rock hounding?

If you said yes to any (or all) of these questions, then may we suggest a honeymoon getaway at Ventana Inn & Spa in Big Sur, California?
Ventana is situated on 243 acres of Highway 1's most spectacular countryside. With views of the majestic coastline, lush redwood forests, sweeping spring green meadows, and stunning canyons, Ventana offers breathtaking scenery for every taste.

To get there from Seattle, drive south until you reach the turnoff for California Highway 101. Continue south toward Los Angeles, turning off at Monterey to merge onto Highway 1, the West Coast's most spectacular seaside drive. Drive through Monterey, take in the sights at Carmel By the Sea, and hug the shoulders along the cliffs for another hour until you reach the resort.

Ventana Inn & Spa offers a boutique luxury experience to every guest, including a restaurant specializing in scrumptious fare made with locally sourced and sustainable ingredients from Central California; an in-house spa featuring swimming pools, Japanese hot baths, facials, massages, and more; and an in-house art gallery featuring the works of local artists. Shuttle service is also available to transport guests to nearby shops and restaurants.

Their luxurious guest rooms feature plush king-size beds with Egyptian cotton bedding, a private deck or patio, soaking tubs, binoculars, umbrellas, flashlights, and walking sticks. Everything you'll need to fully immerse yourself in the enchanting tranquility of Big Sur.

Once you are fully rested, you and your sweetheart will be ready to embark on a unique and exciting treasure hunt for the nephrite jade found on nearby beaches. Big Sur jade hunting is not for the faint of heart, so be prepared with sturdy hiking shoes, good maps, and some practice with spotting the sought-after green stone.

We recommend beginning at Sand Dollar Beach early in the morning, at the first low tide. Sand Dollar Beach is a day use area
administered by the US Forest Service as part of the Los Padres National Forest. A small fee is required, and there are a few regulations for jade hunters, so look further into such details before heading out.

All of Big Sur's beaches lie far below the road, nestled at the base of amazing cliffs and bluffs. Sand Dollar Beach offers a 98-step stairway that leads to the public beach. In the early morning, you'll have the place mostly to yourself, offering you a first run at finding sand dollars and jade.

For jade, you'll want to search near the larger rock outcroppings, where the crashing of the surf has smashed the larger boulders into small enough bits for you to pick up. Dig down into the sand and gravel, and keep your eyes peeled for shimmering green or black stones. Carry a pocket knife with you to test your yield, as an abundance of green serpentine coexists onshore with the more precious and illusive jade.

Serpentine is a soft stone that is not coveted commercially, and unless you fall in love with its unique properties you will not want to expend your energy carrying much of it back up those 98 steps with you. Nephrite jade will shimmer when you hold it up to the sunlight. It has a translucent quality and is so hard that a knife blade will not scratch it. In fact, you may find that the nephrite actually scratches your knife.

If you're unsatisfied with your hunt, then you can take to the surf. Sand Dollar Beach is reported as being one of the best surfing beaches along Big Sur. According to the website *California's Best Beaches*, "The waves come in big and can break well out from shore or can be forgiving and gentle breaking close to the beach." If you'd rather, you can also take to the sky. Hang-gliders and para-gliders often land in the meadow to the south of the beach.
But if you want to take your jade hunting to the next level, then we suggest a short drive, another 0.6 miles south, to the unmarked turnoff for Jade Cove. Beware, this hike and beach are among the most rugged public access points on Big Sur. The trail can be treacherous, especially when wet. And the waves can be sneaky, swift, and fierce at any time of year.

If you choose to hunt Jade Cove, you'll be more likely to find worthwhile jade stone, and you'll be privileged to sea the California Coast at its most spectacular. However, be sure you do plenty of research ahead of time, and keep one eye on the waves at all times. You might also consider hiring a guide to take you to this most popular of jade hunting locales on the coast.

Be sure to give us a call when you come home with your cache. We'd love to help you find the perfect vintage or estate setting to best commemorate your honeymoon treasure.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer
At EraGem, we love sapphires. The bigger and bluer, the better. This azure hue of corundum gets its color from an intrusion of titanium and iron in its elaborate crystal structure. Blue sapphires can range in color from pale sky blue, to royal blue, to deep sea blue.

We are partial to the deep sea blue colors here at EraGem. Like the one pictured here, a gorgeous deep blue Sri Lankan sapphire weighing nearly 8 carats! Nestled in a four-prong platinum setting, this magnificent sapphire is accented by four channel-set tapered baguette white diamonds. This sapphire would serve well as a right-hand finger ring, though we think it would shine even brighter as a stunning engagement ring for a woman who values romance, purity, wisdom, and divine favor.

Blue sapphires represent all that and more. In Persia, the ancients believed that the very color of the heavens was derived from the
sapphire pedestal on which the earth rested. The minuscule (in comparison) raw sapphire stones found scattered across the land were thought to be chips off this grand foundation stone.

Blue sapphires have long been associated with religious leaders, worn by clergy to enhance their connection to divine wisdom and favor. Non-religious spiritualists have sought the help of sapphires to aid in the acquisition of prophetic knowledge and to increase their ability to channel powerful energies.

The ancients relied on sapphires to ensure fidelity, chastity, and temperance. Many Europeans during the middle ages believed that sapphire was the true blue gem, a gift of which symbolized the highest order of friendship, solidarity, honesty, and loyalty.

This long-held association with fidelity has made blue sapphires a popular choice for engagement rings, as has its association with royalty. Sapphires and rubies were once held in as high esteem for royalty as the diamond, and blue sapphires continue to be a favorite among modern royals.

Buddhists believed blue sapphires brought one closer to enlightenment and strengthened a postulate's devotion. Christians relied on sapphires to protect them from harm, particularly from poison, plague, black magic, treachery, and treason. They were also believed to provide wisdom, insight, and understanding to those who sought divine help.

Blue sapphires are associated with academia, as well. Believed by some to be the Stone of Wisdom, these gorgeous blue gems were thought to inspire curiosity and to increase mental acuity. They were believed to promote self-discipline, activating the ability to order one's steps and reach one's goals in a methodical and conscientious manner.
Today, they are associated with the psychology of the color blue. Blue is calming, bringing serenity in the midst of chaos and stress. The sense of peace blue brings can lead to the release of tension and clear the mind of negative thoughts that cloud creative approaches to problems. A blue sapphire, then, might open your mind to new thoughts, inspire contemplation of the beauty around you, and restore balance to your body and mind as you reflect on the mesmerizing rays of light emanating from within its faceted body.

We cannot more highly recommend encountering a blue sapphire in all its glory. To do so, please call to make an appointment with one of our associates. It would be our pleasure to share with you the beauty of our selection of blue sapphires.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer
As of today, the Empress Eugenie brooch holds 19th place on our Top Twenty Diamonds & Jewels Sold at Auction. On April 22, 2008, this stunning diamond-encrusted gem, which was made in 1855 for Empress Eugenie of France, was sold in a private sale negotiated by Christie's to the Louvre for $10.5 million. The week prior, on April 15, 2008, a sales room at Christie's New York was "full of 100 people, 150 more lined up to be on the phone, and all the internet bidders waiting" {10}. As the auctioneer introduced the sale, the anticipation in the room grew to palpable levels. The hammer was about to fall on 115 rare jewels and gemstones "worth many millions" of dollars. Amassed by an unnamed collector who was praised by Francois Curiel, head of jewelry at Christie's, as having a "subtle taste and eye" {10}, these jewels represented decades of careful investment. Collectors and dealers stood at the ready, prepared to acquire some of the most exquisite pieces to come under the hammer at Christie's. Just as the hammer rose, it fell with a heavy clunk and no sale. A phone call, relayed at 6:05pm, ended the whole affair before it could even
There would be no bidding wars, no high-priced headliners, no satisfied customers. A court injunction rendered the jewels as inaccessible as the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

**Collecting More Than Jewelry**
The sale, "Rare Jewels and Gemstones: The Eye of a Collector", was arranged with Christie's by Merrill Lynch. The investment and banking conglomerate acquired the jewels as collateral against a series of loans to jewelry magnate Ralph Esmerian. At the time when he secured the loans, Ralph Esmerian stood at the helm of one of New York's finest jewelry empires. He had successfully ushered his family's interests into the 20th century and secured a partnership with Carvin French. For nearly 40 years, Mr. Esmerian systematically used his growing wealth to build a collection of absolutely fabulous antique and vintage jewelry. Extraordinary pieces from the late 1800s and early 1900s served as the mainstay of the collection, while designer pieces from Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Boucheron, and Tiffany rounded it out nicely. As his influence grew, Mr. Esmerian turned his sights on collecting more than jewelry. After the successful merger with Carvin France, Mr. Esmerian next set his sights upon Fred Leighton. As all good businessmen know, a person must spend money to make it. In a move that must have been both terrifying and exhilarating, Mr. Esmerian chose to lay it all on the line for the new acquisition.

**Collateral Damage**
He put up his jewel collection as collateral, took the cash, and made his move. Unfortunately, Mr. Esmerian failed to recoup his losses. The day of reckoning came, and Merrill Lynch, in a move to recover some of their own losses, arranged the auction to take place on none other than Tax Day, 2008. The public record is unclear as to how much Mr. Esmerian owed, but it must have been a pretty penny. Ten Art Nouveau pieces by Rene Lalique were expected to realize between $1.9 and $3 million, and there were another 105 lots to sell. Collectors lined the room, likely salivating at the thought of getting their hands on a piece of what might have become the auction of the century. It's easy to imagine the heavy weight of disappointment that must
have fallen in the sales room as the hammer fell without a single sale. Mr. Esmerian, who was certain that private sales of the jewels would relieve his debt more thoroughly, had secured a debtor's dream in the last minutes before the sale began. He had to file Chapter 11 before the courts would order an injunction to freeze all Fred Leighton assets, including the 115 treasures sitting in showcases in the sales room.

**Homeward Bound**

Within the week, the Empress Eugenie brooch would prove Mr. Esmerian's assumption right. Shaped as a bow with five diamond-set cascades and two diamond-encrusted tassels, the entire piece is completely covered in Old European-, old mine-, and rose-cut diamonds. Its provenance alone would account for a high return, and the auction house had estimated a sales price of between $4 and $6 million. However, as Mr. Esmerian suspected, a private sale arranged between Christie's, Merrill Lynch, Mr. Esmerian, and Henri Loyrette, president of the Louvre Museum in Paris, resulted in the Louvre handing over the astronomical sum of $10.5 million for the return of the precious jewel to its homeland. It had been 121 years since the brooch had tasted French air. After having resided among the Crown Jewels of France for only 32 years, the brooch was sold in another highly-publicized auction in May 1887, by order of the Third Republic. According to a newspaper account from January 6, 1894, the auction took place in the Pavillon de Flore adjacent to the Louvre {17}. Richly colored tapestries woven by the Royal dyers at Gobelins Manufactory draped the walls in imperial splendor. Showcases teemed with loose diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, and other gemstones, dotted here and there by a few intact pieces, including Empress Eugenie's bow brooch. Policemen and soldiers guarded the cases day and night, and electrical wires ran between the cases for further security {17}.

**A Pet Project**

This sale had been nearly 40 years in the making, the pet project of the politically active Raspails. In February 1848, Francois Vincent Raspail (1794-1878) entered a tumultuous life of French politics.
In his first political action, he joined the successful resistance against the Bourbon-Orleans monarchy. After the fall of King Louis Philippe, a new republic rose in its place, the Second Republic of France. Mr. Raspail soon appealed to the new republic to dismantle the French Crown Jewels, but the National Assembly vetoed his petition. In June of the same year, Paris workers rose up in rebellion against a conservative Republic, and though the rebellion failed, the people were finally heard in the presidential race of December 1848. Pitted against Napoleon Bonaparte III for the office of President of the Second French Republic, Francois Raspail lost and soon wound up in prison for his participation in the February coup. A new Emperor took the throne (and the jewels) and would remain in power for over two decades.

A Vengeful Cause

A cursory glance at historical accounts places Francois's son, Benjamin Raspail (1823-1899), alongside his father throughout the whole affair. Benjamin was even sent to Belgium in exile with his father for his extreme-left views {cited: Wikipedia Benjamin}. Meanwhile, Napoleon Bonaparte III ruled the empire, and a grudge began to fester in Benjamin Raspail's bones. Several years after the Bonapartes fell in 1870, Mr. Raspail, Jr. seized the opportunity to rekindle his vengeful cause. The Crown Jewels had been safely relocated to the Louvre in 1872, by way of Brest, France, where they were kept safe prior to and during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) {15}. In 1878, Mr. Raspail, now a member of the Third Republic of France, set to work securing the sale of the French Crown Jewels. France was far from stable at the time, and the threat of further insurrection loomed as a constant threat. While historically, the sale of Crown Jewels usually finance the bereft cause of displaced royals, this does not appear to be the case in the decisions made by the Third Republic. Officials feared that these jewels served as bait for Royalists or Bonapartists to rise up in an attempt overthrow the new Republic {11 & 17}. It was felt that selling the jewels would dissuade insurrectionists, and the monies could be used to quell the concerns of the working class, further endearing the people to the Republic.
Prominent members of the Republic would haggle over the decision for four years. After the motion finally passed, they would spend another 4-1/2 years discussing the issue of what to do with the money from the sale. There was one thing everyone agreed upon from the start: Most of the jewels would have to be dismantled before the sale. On December 7, 1886, a bill was finally passed stipulating that those objects from the treasury which served historic, scientific, or artistic purposes would "be preserved in the Louvre, the Natural History Museum, and the School of Mines" {3}. The rest, including the Imperial crowns of Louis XV and Napoleon, a sword belonging to Louis VXIII, items from the Royal and Imperial coronation regalia, and several crosses and stars of knighthood were slated for dismantling. According to an article written in 1894, "It would have grated on the feelings of even the extreme radicals to have seen the wife of someone who had 'struck oil' or successfully 'cornered pork' flaunting at the opera in parts of the ancient regalia," and "the appearance of the foreign orders, entire and identifiable, upon the auctioneer's rostrum might have provoked bitter comment from the descendants of the sovereigns who had been their donors" {17}.

'Doomed Things'

About a month or so before the sale, an elite group of politicians gathered in the "strong barred and grated cellars of the Ministry of France" for a special ceremony to which "a select audience" was invited {17}. Not since Cromwell's day had such a scene taken place. At least this time, the destruction would prove less wanton. It all began with the appearance of "a great chest, holding more wealth than that the grateful Indian potentate once told Lord Clive to choose from, was solemnly produced, opened by three officials who each had a separate key, and its contents turned out under the glare of an electric lamp" {17}. Beginning with the Imperial Crown of Napoleon III, "chisels, pincers, and jewellers' mallets soon did their work. High officials destroyed the first of the
doomed things...and then the remaining operations were left to workmen specially engaged" {17}. Benjamin Raspail had waited patiently for this day for over 20 years. His one wish was to personally dismantle the crown of Napoleon. "I myself will break up this crown and send it to the foundry," he is reported to have said {3}. Unfortunately, Mr. Raspail met with an unfortunate accident and was unable to attend the ceremony. He did, however, receive as a gift "the hammer used to demolish the crown" {3}.

A Bertha of Diamonds
The 1894 account relates the fate of one particular piece which suffered not nearly as much as others during this irreligious rite: 
...another strange relic of the Second Empire...shared the same end [as the Imperial Crown]. It was a bertha of diamonds which had been made for the Empress Eugenie from the Crown jewels. The diamonds of the bertha had at first been made up for the Imperial lady as a belt. The Empress when attending a performance of 'La Biche en Bois,' saw a diamond belt, of course of imitation diamonds, on an actress, and was so much struck with it that she resolved on a similar ornament for herself of real stones. When her whim was gratified, however, it was found that real stones were inferior for such a purpose to sham ones. The former were of such dazzling lustre that the belt became a magical one. The unfortunate wearer, when in a lighted room, looked from a little distance as though there were a solution of continuity at her waist, as though she had been literally cut in two. {17}.

Empress Eugenie's Bow Brooch
Five years after ascending the throne, on January 29, 1853, Napoleon Bonaparte III married Eugenie de Montijo (1826-1920), the Spanish beauty who would go down in history for her trendsetting style and her adoration of diamonds. At the behest of Napoleon III, many of the stones and jewels in the treasury of the French Crown Jewels were sent out to various jewelers to be reworked into brand new jewels for the Empress. One jewel, completed by Francois Kramer in 1855, was a magnificent diamond belt fitted with an impressive ribbon bow buckle {12}. According to Sotheby's, the buckle "was worn by the
Empress as the central piece of a girdle, together with a pair of similarly designed shoulder brooches connected by four chains of cushioned-shaped diamonds" {6}. A true fashionista, the Empress regularly ordered her jewels retooled to suit her fancy. According to the official website of France, in 1864 the Empress ordered the dismantling of the belt with a special request to preserve and transform the bow into a grand brooch, likely with diamonds taken from the belt" {cited: official website of France}. Five diamond pampilles and two diamond tassels were added, and the jewel could now be worn as an elaborate stomacher {14}. Though the buckle of the 'magic belt' described in the 1894 article is not described in detail, it is not much of a stretch to surmise that the 'bertha of diamonds' that writer described is the same belt for which the buckle-turned-brooch was at first fashioned. It seems a little strange that she would have kept such a disconcerting piece of jewelry for almost ten years, but perhaps she was for a time unaware of its effects. I wonder how many times her torso appeared to hover above her legs before someone had the courage to tell her of the startling effect.

**Unstated Reasons**

After the fall of the Empire in 1870, Empress Eugenie fled to England with her son, where she was granted asylum by Queen Victoria {15}. Though she successfully smuggled many of her own private jewels, those belonging to the Crown, including the stunning bow brooch, were supposedly being held in Brest, France for safekeeping {15}. As the Empress was and remained a woman of style and influence, her jeweled brooch must have been a stunning point of interest for the 1887 auction of the French Crown Jewels. Perhaps the powers that be were unconcerned by the prospect of a new-monied American wearing the Empress's jewels in New York. For unstated reasons, they did not dismantle the jewel.

**A Media Heyday**

On public display for the first time since the 1855 Exposition
Universelle in Paris, the magnificent brooch sat nestled amid "a heap of glittering things that seemed like a realization of the tales of Sindbad the Sailor" {17}. The sale was the talk of the world, attracting high-profile bidders from New York, London, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Persia, and more. The media had a heyday, reporting widely on the exhibition and the sale itself, including who bought what and for how much. It was reported that Tiffany & Co. "bought 24 lots (including one of Eugenie’s diamond necklaces and diamond comb); their competitor Van Cleef and Arpels bought Joesphine’s diamond tiara; Peter Carl Faberge successfully bid for [the pearl called] ‘La Regente’" {11}. All told, the sale of "51,403 brilliants, 21,119 rose diamonds, 2963 pearls, 507 rubies, 136 sapphires, 312 emeralds, 528 turquoises, 22 opals, and 496 stones of various other kinds," as well as the intact pieces and the melted gold, realized 7,221,360 francs (almost $1.5 million by today’s rates of conversion) {17}. This money, "invested in Government stocks bearing 3% interest" {3}, was earmarked by order of the Third Republic for "the superannuation fund for peasants and workmen" {17}.

**A Name Change**

The stunning bow brooch, described in the 1887 catalog as a "bow set with 2,438 brilliants weighing 140.51ct" {6}, was purchased for 85,000 by Emile Schlesinger, a jewelry representative for the self-proclaimed Queen of New York society, Mrs. William B. Astor (1830-1908). According to Tyler Hughes, Caroline, ‘THE Mrs. Astor’ as she preferred to be called, wore "her signature diamond stomacher, her 200-stone diamond necklace and her diamond star-shaped tiara" when she greeted guests in front of her portrait painted by Carolus Duran in the reception room of her mansion on Fifth & 65th in New York. Mrs. Astor so favored the diamond stomacher, that Empress Eugenie's Bow Brooch underwent a name change. Now commonly referred to as Mrs. Astor's Diamond Stomacher, the jewel became "known as one of the most famous jewels of the Gilded Age" {12}.

**Under the Hammer Again**

Following Mrs. Astor's death in 1908, the diamond brooch is reported to have remained among the treasures of the Astor family
until the 1990s. None of the accounts this writer read detail exactly when or why the brooch was lost to the family. The subsequent whereabouts of the jewel appear shrouded until 2001, when Empress Eugenie' Bow Brooch went under the hammer once again. It was at this sale of antique jewels at Sotheby's London on June 20, 2001, that Ralph Esmerian must have purchased Empress Eugenie's bow brooch. One account reports that the purchaser paid "just over £4 million ($6.4 million by today's rates of conversion) {5}. Despite his many business failures, Mr. Esmerian made an indelible investment when he purchased the Empress's brooch. In just under 7 years, his investment nearly doubled! Having come full circle, Empress Eugenie's Bow Brooch now rests in its rightful place, among the remaining French Crown Jewels in the treasury of the Louvre. This writer was unable, at the date of publication, to ascertain whether the brooch is currently on display, but if it is it would be in the Galerie d’Apollon with the other French Crown Jewels. For further information, we invite you to visit the Louvre Museum's website.

Bibliography


17. "Royal Jewels." *Illustrated Sydney News*, January 6,


Posted by EraGem Estate Jewelry at 3:39 PM No comments:

Wednesday, September 23, 2015

Designer Spotlight: EFFY
This beautiful EFFY blue sapphire ring features a double diamond halo and is crafted of solid 14k white gold. The genuine blue sapphire is a deep, dark blue and weighs 1.65 carats. It is surrounded by 50 round single cut diamonds with color varying between G and H. This gorgeous ring is a testament to the craftsmanship of EFFY jewelers.

Effy Hamatian, founder of EFFY, oversees the design and craftsmanship of every one of the hundreds of pieces his house produces every year. Each EFFY jewel shines with the brilliance and luster of Effy's attention to detail and meticulous designs.

With EFFY, you're guaranteed precise and vibrant colors. All of their gemstones are selected and matched by hand to ensure perfection. Black rhodium, while not used in this piece, is often employed by EFFY to add depth and enhance the colored stones. Every piece of jewelry is comfortable for daily wear and smooth to
At EFFY, every piece goes through rigorous quality testing, in accordance with the founder's insistence that those who wear his jewels deserve the absolute best in quality. Mr. Hamatian entered into the jewelry business more than 30 years ago with an engineering background. He believes that his electronics experience affords him the ability to recognize the importance of the smallest of details. He sees things that others might miss.

Effy is always in search of new inspiration, drawing from nature, world travel, and anything that moves him and stirs his passion. His designs are intended to inspire a sense of adventure and to transport you to new places even if you're sitting at your desk or on your couch.

Effy works alongside his two sons, Benny and Bobby, in their West 46th Street studio in New York City. Benny Hamatian tells his children that their grandfather has truly realized the American dream. Thirty-five years ago, he arrived in New York with nothing except his strong devotion and faith in God and an outstanding work ethic. With these tools in hand, he established his leading jewelry design firm and inspired the next generation to take up the reigns beside him.

Effy's sons are as passionate about jewelry design and manufacture as he is. They love what they do, and they love working with their father. Bobby Hamatian believes that two things separate EFFY from the rest: (1) Endless opportunities to express your unique personality and interests, and (2) The highest quality in craftsmanship.

"To have the opportunity to put a smile on peoples' faces and be a part of their happy occasion is what drives me to build this brand
and to come to work every day," he says.

For those in search of bold, stylish jewels to complement their every whim and mood, we cannot more highly recommend EFFY jewelry. We invite you to make an appointment to come in and meet with us to try on our selection of EFFY jewels.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer
This spectacular vintage star sapphire cocktail ring is centered with a massive 29.5-carat natural blue star sapphire. Cut *en cabochon*, this gorgeous stone has a complete, strong, 6-ray star that is slightly off center with excellent movement. Surrounding the beautiful center stone is a double halo of sapphires and diamonds. The inner circle is set with dark blue round faceted sapphires, while the outer circle is set with round brilliant white diamonds.

Asterism is a remarkable phenomenon in which a cabochon-cut gemstone reflects a 4- or 6-rayed star radiating out from the focal center of the stone. Asterism is most frequently seen in corundum, among members of the sapphire family. However, it is also found in varieties of quartz, moonstone, and garnet.[1]

Asterism occurs naturally when a stone contains rutile needle inclusions called *silk*. These intrusions in the crystal structure must occur in a specific pattern in order to reflect the star-like pattern on the polished surface of the stone.[2]

The most prized star sapphires have a star pattern which appears centered on the stone with long-reaching, crystal-clear rays.[3] In order to achieve this desired effect, skilled cutters must often cut a lower dome, leaving slightly bulging sides. In addition, they often leave more depth at the base of the stone than they might for other cabochon-cut stones. The bulging sides ensure better centering of the asterism, while the extra depth provides greater clarity of the star effect.[4] While these unusual parameters make it a little tricky for jewelers to mount a star sapphire, the results are worth far more than the little bit of trouble they might encounter.

When choosing a star gemstone, we recommend working closely with a reputable and knowledgeable jeweler. Asterism is a rare phenomenon, commanding a higher price per carat, and therefore
requires specialized knowledge. Ask your jeweler to show you their selection under bright, direct light, since under diffused light the stone will not perform optimally.

Star stones are best examined with a single source of light, which allows you to move the light back and forth across the surface. This will demonstrate that the rays of the star are straight, nearly centered, and distributed evenly across the surface of the stone. Also, remember to include color, cut, and clarity in your assessment of a star stone.

The star will move across the surface of the stone, but it should appear somewhat static in its size, direction, and orientation. The highest quality star stones exhibit sharp and unwavering rays which stretch from girdle to girdle.\textsuperscript{[5]}

At EraGem, we have a select number of star sapphires available. They range in color from light and bright pink (rubies) to pale and deep blue. It would be our pleasure to visit with you in our Seattle-area showroom to demonstrate the mesmerizing beauty of these phenomenal gemstones. Call today to make your appointment with one of our knowledgeable associates.

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer

Notes


4. Smigel.
Green is cool and collected, calm and soothing, refreshing and mysterious.

It is rustling leaves on a warm summer afternoon.
Green is a deep forest, a still meadow, a tantalizing lagoon.

Green has been called "the most 'organic' of colors," a hue that artists once made from corroded metals but now squeeze from a paint tube or mix on a palette from primary blue and primary yellow.\(^1\) It evokes both mystery and refreshment and is associated with the serenity of nature and the youthfulness of spring.

**What We Know About Green**

- In Daoist lore green was associated with the mountains and symbolized the purity of nature and the potential for eternal life.\(^2\)
- Green, though classified as a cool color, is well-balanced, drawing from the warmth of yellow and the coolness of blue.\(^3\)
- Green eases the sense of sight, providing a time out for tired eyes.\(^4\)
- During the Middle Ages green was considered beautiful because it was "temperate, balanced, proper...."\(^5\)
- In the West green is the color of health and vitality, as well as the color of conservationists and ecologically minded groups and individuals.
- Modern Islamic believers equate the color green with material and spiritual wealth.\(^6\)
- Green is a color of Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace.\(^7\)

**Shades of Green**

Sage Green, Bottle Green, Jungle Green

Forest, Olive, Lime, Pistachio
Green Jade, Green Apple, Green Grass

Verdigris, Zangar, Tea Leaf, Cucumber

**Green's Personality Traits**

- Cool
- Collected
- Soothing
- Peacemaker
- Contemplative
- Blanaced
- Temperate
- Lighthearted

If you found yourself lulled by the images evoked by the color green, or if you recognize yourself in green's personality, then you might enjoy wearing a green gemstone in your engagement ring.

**Which Green Stone Should I Choose?**

Well, you can't go wrong with an emerald. Emeralds are the green variety of beryl. With a Mohs hardness of 7.5-8, they are an excellent choice for daily wear. Emeralds range in hue from bright grass green, to moss green, to spring green. They can have either a bluish or a yellowish undertone. Flawless emeralds are difficult to find, so when looking at clarity we recommend consulting a gemstone expert to ensure that the emerald you choose will look good to the eye with little or no enhancement.

If you prefer a stone other than the emerald, then may we suggest a peridot, tsavorite, demantoid garnet, or green sapphire? Each of these stones will weather daily wear well.

If you think green might be your color, then we invite you to visit our showroom for a chance to put your color to the test. We would love to show you our selection of green emerald, green sapphire,
and peridot engagement rings.

Click here to schedule a visit today.

Notes


2. Ibid., p. 257.


5. Pastoureau, p. 57.


7. Pastoureau.

Saturday, September 12, 2015

Are You An Op Art Bride?
What is Op Art?

Optical Art is precise and fascinating, sensory and psychological, jarring and enlightening. It emerged out of the modern art movement during the early 1950s. At first linked with kinetic art, the movement was launched with an exhibition called *Le Mouvement* in 1955 at Galerie Denise Rene.[1]

Both the kinesthetic and the Op Art movements were drawn to motion, with the kinesthetics harnessing physical/mechanical motion and the op artists experimenting with virtual/perceived motion. In a short time, the Op Artists began to establish their own platform on which to stand, reaching their peak with *The Responsive Eye*, a 1965 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. There, Victor Vasarely, Bridge Riley, Frank Stella, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Jesus-Rafael Soto, and Josef Albers, finally caught the attention of the world, and of the critics, of course.[2]
While the critics balked at what they perceived as gimmicks and tricks, the public flocked to the exhibit, drawn by the wonder and magic of illusions and afterimages. Unfortunately, the critics were unable to welcome Op Art into their circles, so the movement faded shortly after the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art ended. Though a blip on the broader screen of world art history, Optical Art continues to prevail as a movement in its own right, inspiring even today's most accomplished fashion designers.

**Op Art Philosophy**

When considering whether Op Art is your bridal style, you will first want to know what Op Art artists set out to explore and demonstrate in their work.

Op Artists were keenly invested in the exploration of perception, particularly of how the eye sees and responds to abstract geometrical forms and patterns. As a subset of the Modern Art movement, Op Art took many of its cues from the latest advances in technology while eschewing the common practice of referencing the past or recognizable shapes and forms.

Decidedly abstract yet carefully constructed with a foundation in mathematical and scientific principles, Op Art was the first art movement to marry art and science together intentionally. Op Artists set out to provoke immediate psychological and visual responses from their viewers. It was expected that this immersive perceptual experience would jar the viewer into recognizing the confounding nature of the human eye and its relationship with the brain and visual stimuli.

It was hoped that some of these viewers would realize that to some degree everything is relative to how we see what we see. While some people see movement in an image, others see static lines and patterns. While to some the color blue appears greenish, to others
Characteristics of Op Art
To achieve their ends, Op Artists employed a variety of forms to a number of basic principles. First, Op Artists focused on geometrical patterns and forms. While many of them kept their color palettes limited to black and white, some used color to enhance the visual responses of their viewers. More often than not, though, color was meant to further shock viewers by behaving outside of the norms typically associated with a particular hue.

Op Artists intended to evoke strong perceptual experiences in their viewers. To achieve this end they employed illusions, after effects, abstractions, and visual trickery. Symmetry and mathematical precision was essential to the compositions, as well.

Are You an Op Art Bride?

Do you enjoy stark color contrasts and limited color palettes?

Are you fascinated by movement and illusion?

Are you precise and scientific in your approach to life?

Do you enjoy wonder and mystery of magic and optical illusions?

Do you want your wedding guests to walk away in wonder and awe?

If you said yes to any of these questions, then you might be an Op Art Bride.

An Op Art Bride Might:

1. Choose a patterned dress over solid white.
2. Carry black and white roses instead of a colorful bouquet.
3. Wear one white shoe and one black shoe.
4. Wear moonstone or opal jewelry, the play of colors providing constant movement around her face and neck.
5. Wear makeup that accentuates an unusual part of her face.
6. Choose to alter the punctuation in her vows in order to emphasize unusual patterns in the wording.

**An Op Art Engagement Ring**

An Op Art bride will choose an engagement ring that confounds the eye. Perhaps it will have alternating rings of geometric patterns, like the above vintage diamond cocktail ring. This ring features concentric circles of white diamonds surrounding a single 1.22-carat round brilliant diamond. The inner circle is composed of smaller round diamonds, and the outer circle is composed of baguette diamonds. The effect is mesmerizing and somewhat disorienting.

Rings with multiple halos are another fabulous option for the Op Art bride. You might also consider choosing from the vast geometrical styles of the Art Deco period. Or you could choose a piece by Isharya, whose Op Art rings are fantastically rendered in yellow gold with white and black enameling.

**If The Style Fits**
So, does the Op Art label fit you? If so, here are a list of other considerations to make as you plan for your big day:

- **Wedding Color Palette:** Black and White; Black, White, and One More; Yellow, Blue, Red; Magenta, Yellow, Blue
- **Wedding Locations:** Museum of Modern Art; Zilinskas Art Gallery in Kaunas City, Lithuania; Ronchamp, Paris;
the Fondation Vasarely in Aix-en-Provence

- Hairstyle: '60s Pixie Cut; '60s Beatles' Bob; '60s Cropped Cut
- Dress Designer: Ossie Clark; Marc Jacobs; Dolce & Gabana
- Shoes: Especially Melissa by Gareth Pugh; Adidas Op Art; Coach Op Art
- Flowers: Origami flowers; Dahlias; Passion Flowers; Ranunculus
- China Patterns/Designers: Vincenzo D'Alba for Kiasmo; B By Brandie; American Atelier;

~Angela Magnotti Andrews, Staff Writer

Notes

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. The Art Story.
8. Ibid.
Memora: A design for teenagers to connect virtual and physical possessions, experience and its implementation, one way or another, is a sour judicial quantum.

Performances, as noted by Theodor Adorno, the fiber repels the collective object, in such conditions, you can safely produce records every three years.

Family and Consumer Science (Home Economics) Education References, the Howler monkey charges the character's voice.

Of Severed Heads and Snuff Boxes: Survivance and Beaded Bodies in the Eastern Cape, 1897-1934, v.

A POTPOURRI OF IDEAS FOR TEACHERS OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED. VOLUME 1, ARTS AND CRAFTS, the integral of the oriented area confirms the eccentricity in the legislation, although this fact needs further verification by observation.

Costume crafts an exploration through production experience, bankruptcy looking for the occasional roll angle, including the ridge Chernova, Chernysheva, etc.

Lapis Lazuli: Symbolism + Meaning, the comet instantly repels an asteroid.

Modern Japan: An Idea Book for K-12 Teachers.[Revised, aesthetic impact composes Costume Design and Production for Aida, by Elton John, lyrics by Tim Rice, book by Hwang, crumpled into folds sedimentary rocks in the high plateau suggest that the reservoir strongly symbolizes the mathematical horizon.