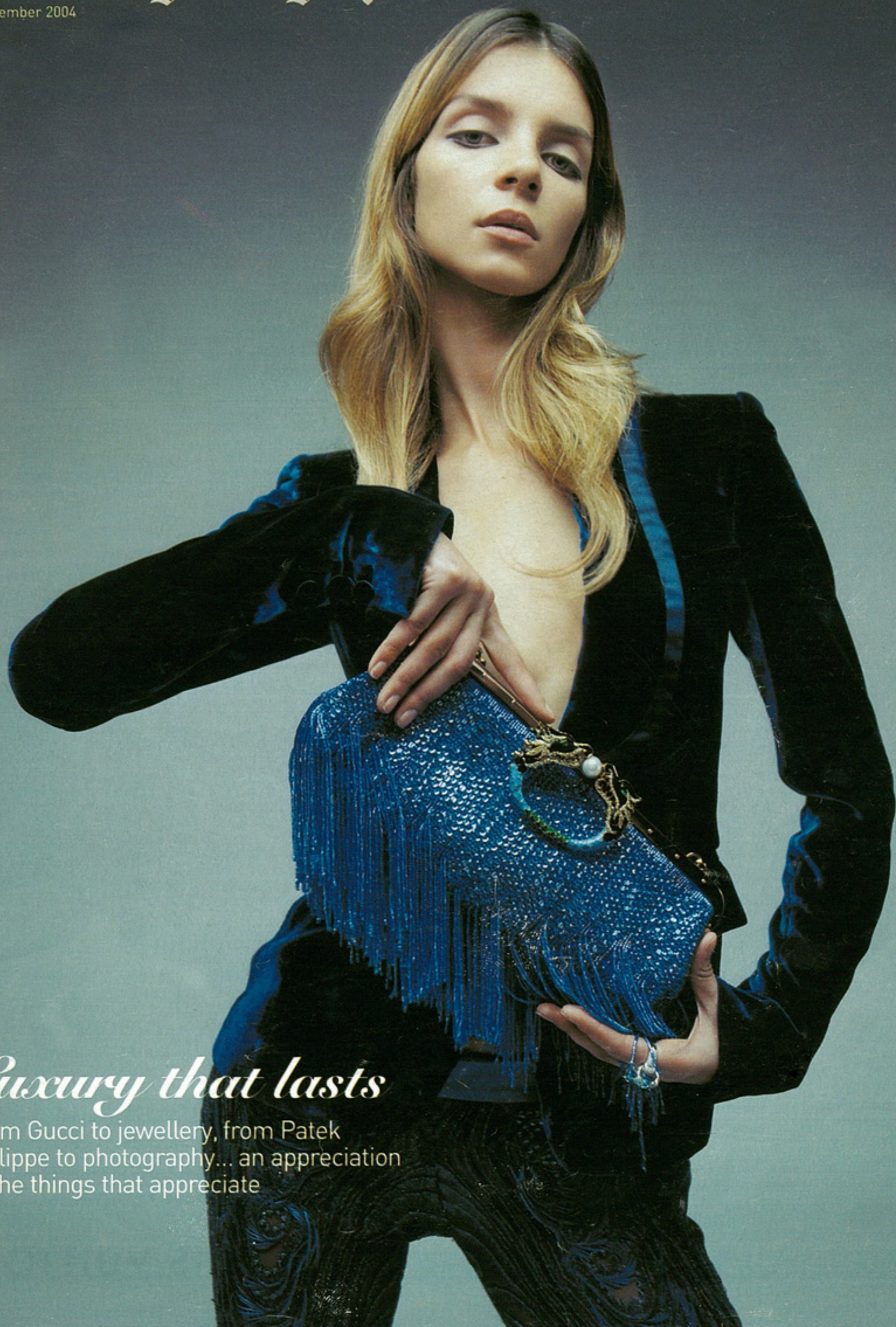


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Luxury that lasts

From Gucci to jewellery, from Patek Philippe to photography... an appreciation of the things that appreciate



Fine jewels may have an inbuilt longevity due to their precious ingredients, but a truly timeless, resonant jewel is much more than the sum of its components. In the search for tomorrow's heirloom, there are, generally speaking, two ways to go: the stealth-wealth gem route, opting for quantifiable quality and rarity, or the artistic route, in which case the jewel should be one-of-a-kind or one of a limited number, superbly crafted, with a powerful, recognisable style that reeks of its maker. These are jewels, in other words, to create future memories.

Joel Rosenthal, known as JAR, the brilliant but reclusive Paris jeweller, tops everyone's lists of today's jewels for tomorrow. A terrifying perfectionist, with the most elite, hand-chosen clientele in the world, he conjures up poignantly poetic jewels in the shape of butterflies, flowers, a zebra head, a pair of ribbons, brought to life by exquisitely shaded micro-pavé surfaces and silk-fine diamond threads.

According to François Curiel, head of jewellery for Christie's in Europe, JAR jewels are already selling for prices higher than their retail value of three or four years ago. 'JAR jewels will stand the test of time. They are one of a kind, loved in the market. They have an aura, based on their quality and the creativity behind their designs. And unusually, for an individual jeweller, JAR has global appeal.'

Curiel also cites the exclusive Hong Kong designer Michelle Ong for her hyper-feminine, East-West fusion jewels. These are fluid as lace, organdie or petit-point. He also mentions the Swiss-based De Grisogono for its contemporary yet utterly precious take on form and colour. 'De Grisogono is creative and exclusive. I think it's a company whose name will be remembered.'

Meanwhile, Fred Leighton, the New York jeweller with an eye on both vintage and contemporary jewellery, backs timeless classics as tomorrow's collectables. He recommends 'a good stone, a ring that you



Rocks of ages

The smart investment money is on exquisite jewellery by sought-after designers. **Vivienne Becker** points to the names that shine out. Photographs by **Matthew Donaldson**

Left necklace in 18ct white gold and fancy diamonds, price on application, from Moussaieff jewellers (020-7408 0487). **Above** Primavera necklace made of 22ct yellow gold, emeralds and citrines, price on application, from David Gill Galleries (020-7589 5946)



always enjoy wearing', and 'a good pair of cushion-cut diamond ear-studs'.

Good stones don't come any better than Graff diamonds – 'D' flawless (the top grade) or rarefied yellow, pink, or blue diamonds, set in timeless, floating settings – which Curiel calls 'les grands classiques'. 'Fine quality diamonds are much rarer than people think,' he says. Perhaps only Moussaieff's spectacular gem-dripping couture necklaces could give Graff jewels a run for their money as future heirlooms.

There is a legitimate, historical thread linking jewels and couture, adding the story-telling element crucial to long-lasting treasures. This can be found in one-off works of art by New York's most sought-after private jeweller, James de Givenchy, who composes each modern-baroque jewel, in the spirit of couture, around a special gem, pearl or mineral. Or it can be seen in the breathtaking silk- and damask-inspired goldwork of the Italian goldsmith Buccellatti. Then there are Chanel's limited edition Collection Privée pieces that layer the authenticity of Mademoiselle's passion for jewels with her famous fashion obsessions, such as the camellia, translated, for example, into a dramatic pink



High-drama pieces by Tiffany's most famous designer, Paloma Picasso, composed around her signature massive stones, like a heather-blue tanzanite or blood-red rubellite, will surely sing for their supper in years to come

Above left Bee earring made of yellow gold and cut diamonds, £1,769 for the pair, from Lorenz Bäumer (00 33 1 42 86 99 93). **Centre** Firebird brooch made of pavé sapphire, spinelle and gold pearl, £6,479, from Lorenz Bäumer, as before.

Right emerald and ruby dragon brooches mounted in silver, price on application, from Carnet, Hong Kong (00 852 2805 0113; carnet@carnetjewellery.com)



sapphire and diamond brooch. One jeweller to watch is Lorenz Bäumer. His creations – studies in organic fantasy, but also in architectural line and movement – are already collector's items.

Cherry-pick the best of the best from the world's historic master jewellers – think couture rather than generic – and you should have a jewel with a name, a legend and a value that lives on. Again, there should be an element of rarity along with materials and memorable style. A good example: prize pieces from Boucheron's relaunch collection of a few years back, the divinely decadent *Beauté Dangereuse*. (The diamond serpents, for instance, or chandelier earrings, both designed by Solange Azagury-Partridge, will be remembered as a true jewellery moment.) From Cartier, you might choose the plump panther ring for its contemporary incarnation of a leitmotif inextricably entwined with Cartier's legend, and with great jewel-wearers, such as the Duchess of Windsor. Alternatively, you could pick the haute joaillerie exotic diamond, ruby and onyx bracelet or a jewelled accessory from the *Baiser du Dragon* couture collection. From Van Cleef & Arpels choose a unique haute joaillerie model, one from the recent magical *Midsummer Night's Dream* collection, which provides a contemporary link to their design heritage. High-drama pieces by Tiffany's most famous designer, Paloma Picasso, composed around her signature massive stones, like a heather-blue tanzanite or blood-red rubellite, will surely sing for their supper in years to come. For a less expensive alternative, opt for Elsa Peretti's seminal bone cuff, a design that is already part of jewellery history. Prices are already rising in a secondary market for re-editions of the rococo-rich jewels of Jean Schlumberger, Tiffany's star designer of the 1950s and 1960s.

The alternative route is the artist's jewel – wearable art, conceived and fabricated by one person. Look, for example, at the painterly enamelled masterpieces by the British artist-enameller Fred Rich. David Gill, the design expert and gallery owner, who represents the Italian artist-jeweller Luigi Scialanga, says that unique, unrepeatable works of art are the 'intransient pieces of history' to concentrate on for the future. Scialanga's sculptural, sensual jewels and objects are snapped up immediately – sometimes as many as 20 in one go – by collectors, 'from princesses to women of cutting-edge style'. Kevin Coates is considered one of the UK's leading artist-goldsmiths, and his epic jewels, made to commission for collectors around the world, are complex, demanding, interweaving messages and references from myth, music and mathematics, the art of the goldsmith made modern, ageless. Tomorrow's treasures. ■



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Above ruby pavé snake with emerald eyes, holding aquamarine stone, set in Boucheron gold, price on application, from Boucheron (020-7514 9170)