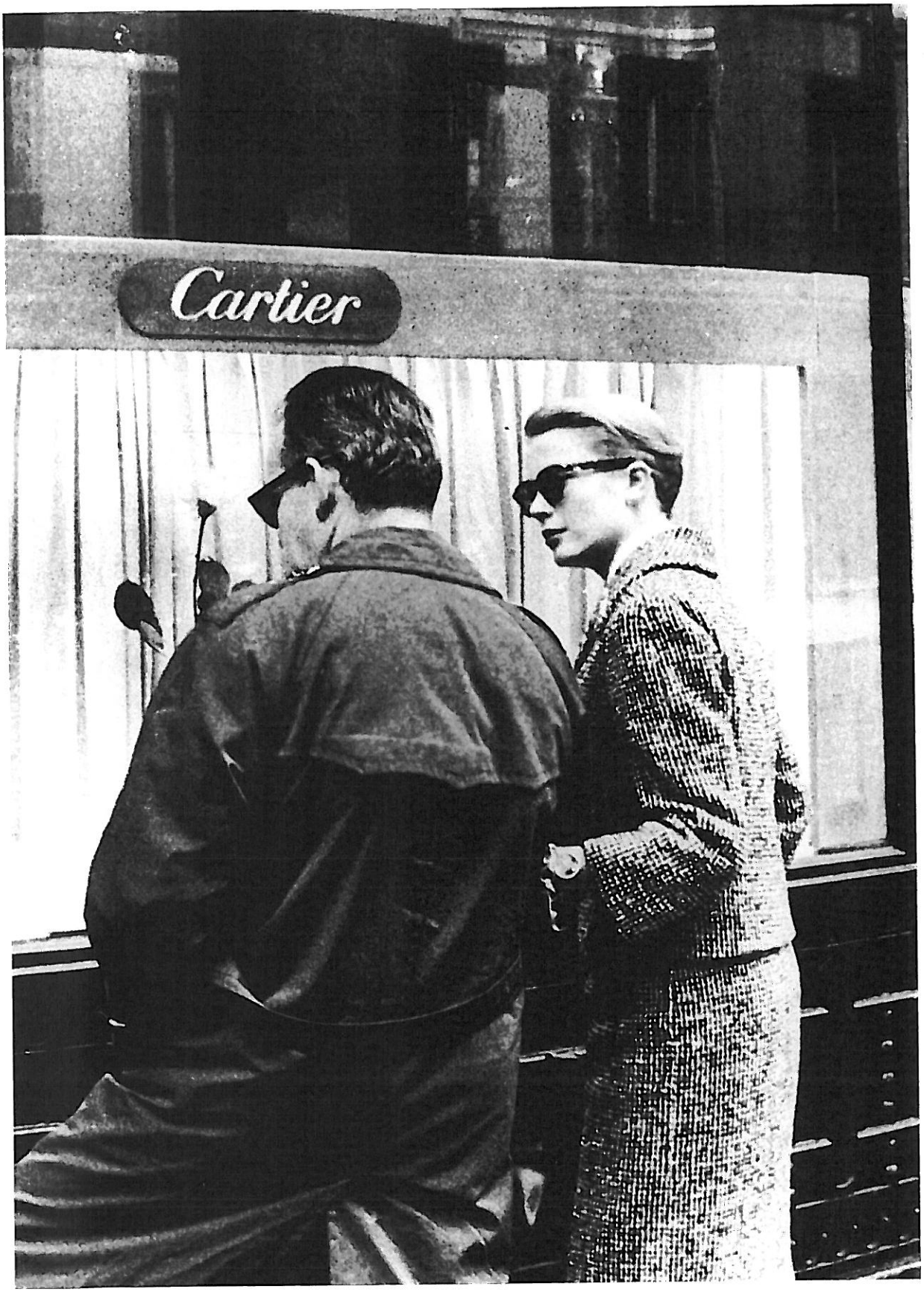


Chapman, O. (2010). Cartier for Americans. In Cartier and America (pp. 11-41). San Francisco, Calif.: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco

Cartier for Americans

"Let me introduce you to the man who killed Rasputin," Lady Emerald Cunard once announced to her guests at lunch. Not surprisingly, the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich—who had indeed had a hand in dispatching the old mênace—turned on his heel and left.[1]

Lady Cunard (1872–1948), who was born Maud Burke in San Francisco, was the notoriously outspoken American leader of London high society between the wars. Married to the heir of the Cunard steamship fortune, she was part of the cosmopolitan circle surrounding the Prince of Wales and his American friend, Wallis Simpson. In the mid-1930s nearly all of the members of this circle were avid customers of Cartier's London branch, and among them Lady Cunard was the jeweler's most devoted patron. Her client account reveals that she went into the shop with astonishing frequency between 1928 and 1940. In 1929 alone there were forty-three orders to her account, including four grand diamond-set necklaces, two diamond bracelets, and a diamond-and-emerald brooch. She even had the fabric replaced on an evening bag and a vanity case converted into a cigarette case. The firm's trade in fashionable jewelry, its wide range of luxury accessories, and its repair and alteration services meant that for Lady Cunard there were many reasons to visit Cartier's shop at 145 New Bond Street.[2]

Americans have always been important customers for Cartier. Even before the Parisian jeweler opened its business on rue de la Paix in 1899, Americans such as J. P. Morgan were patrons of Cartier's previous store on the boulevard des Italiens.[3] However, when Cartier moved to the more fashionable rue de la Paix, Americans—fueled by their recently acquired industrial riches—became an increasingly significant clientele. By 1900, when the hugely successful Exposition Universelle drew fifty million visitors, Paris was confirmed as the luxury center of the world, attracting a whole new generation of customers. Cartier was one of the destinations for Americans visiting Paris because it had a reputation for making the finest jewelry for the ruling elites. In the early years of the century, it was *de rigueur* for American women to dress at Worth on rue de la Paix and to complement their attire with jewelry from Cartier, just next door. The novelist Elinor Glyn wrote

3. Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier III of Monaco shopping at Cartier Paris before their wedding, ca. 1955

in 1908 that she admired Americans who "crossed the Atlantic twice a year to have their dresses fitted and whose jewels were perfect."[4] Cartier's jewelry was the supreme example of this essential measure of refinement and precision, and its success during those years was the result of important innovations in the business.

With the move of the store to rue de la Paix, Alfred Cartier (1841–1925) also shifted his business model, repositioning the firm as a designer and manufacturer of jewelry rather than a retailer of luxury goods. He transformed the firm in three significant ways in order to suit an expanding market for expensive and precious items: by taking closer control over manufacturing, by adopting a particular program for design, and by establishing new branches abroad. He wanted to ensure that Cartier would become renowned worldwide for its exceptional craftsmanship, refined designs, and use of high-quality gemstones—a reputation that it did indeed achieve in the following decades.

With regard to manufacturing, although the firm would continue the practice of commissioning work from some of the many small specialist workshops in Paris, Cartier now prided itself on providing its own designs and having jewelry made in its own designated workshops, thus keeping stricter control over quality. The resulting jewelry was the key to Cartier's success. During the first decade of the century, white diamond jewelry was the fashion for wearing with the sumptuous evening dresses of the Belle Epoque. The new wealth of diamonds that had been mined in South Africa since the 1870s was the perfect match for the newly rich of industry and commerce; indeed, diamonds eclipsed all other gemstones in the years leading up to World War I. Only occasionally were diamonds combined with other gems, such as pearls.

Having espoused the courtly taste for white diamonds, Cartier then implemented the relatively new idea of setting the stones in platinum. Instead of the silver used hitherto, Cartier employed platinum to produce mountings that did not tarnish and gave a more refined overall effect. Overcoming the inherent difficulties of the metal, such as its high melting point, Cartier exploited the means whereby platinum, which had been known but overlooked for well over century, could be worked into the most delicate settings for jewelry. Apart from anything else, it meant that a plentiful supply of diamonds could be compressed into a setting without making the piece too heavy, as would have happened with silver or gold. What Cartier developed in platinum technology in 1900 stood the firm in good stead for the next thirty-five years.[5]

Recognizing the importance of his client base, Cartier completely avoided the contemporary Art Nouveau aesthetic, concentrating instead on what he knew the ruling classes of 1900 wanted: the more conservative Louis XVI style. Derived from the neoclassicism of the late eighteenth century, the Louis XVI revival had enjoyed some popularity since the mid-nineteenth century, most famously in the spectacular diamond jewelry made for the Empress Eugénie in the 1850s and 1860s. The swags and garlands found

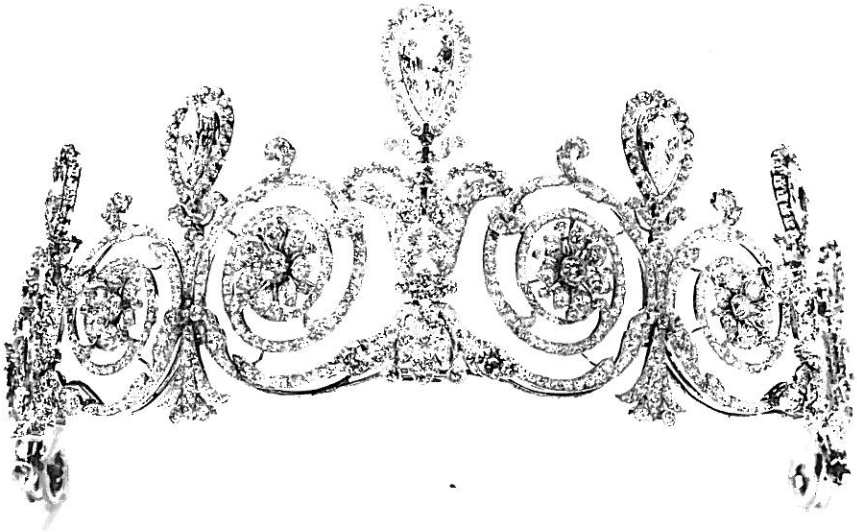
in pattern books of the late eighteenth century were translated into Cartier's jewelry of around 1900. Often described as Garland style for its frequent use of that type of ornament, the design is inspired by more than that one motif. It includes the full panoply of decoration of the late eighteenth century, ranging from bows and tassels to the vases and medallions that were found in jewelry design albums and architectural design books. Cartier's essentially pretty and feminine application of this style to jewelry suited the conservative taste of the rich and integrated successfully with the prevailing fashions, especially with Worth's elaborately constructed dresses. This close relationship to couture was to remain an important aspect of Cartier's designs in succeeding decades.[6]

The third innovation that made Cartier so successful was the expansion of the business abroad. In 1900, observing that his richest customers came from London, New York, and Saint Petersburg, Cartier investigated opening boutiques in those three cities. In the end he decided not to establish permanent premises in Saint Petersburg, restricting his presence there to visits twice a year, but he proceeded to open shops in London in 1902 and in New York in 1909. Business there was so good that Cartier expanded out of the original premises within a few years, with the London branch moving to 145 New Bond Street and the New York branch to 653 Fifth Avenue—the addresses where they remain today.

Cartier cemented the success of his strategy by deploying his three sons to run the three businesses. Louis (1875–1942), the aesthete and collector, stayed in Paris, which remained the heart of Cartier production. Jacques (1884–1942) moved to London, from which location he also dealt with the lucrative Indian trade.[7] And most significantly for this essay, Pierre (1878–1965, pl. 2), who had originally worked in London, moved to New York to oversee the branch that opened there in 1909. Pierre Cartier's business acumen was essential for dealing with American millionaires; in 1908 he had achieved greater credibility by marrying Elma Rumsey, the daughter of a well-to-do American industrialist from Saint Louis.

CARTIER IN THE GILDED AGE

In the early years of the twentieth century, Cartier actively sought the patronage of the courts of Europe, which were undergoing a brilliant final era. The 1902 coronation of Edward VII (1841–1910) in London, for example, brought Cartier a large number of commissions for tiaras and other grand jewelry—one of the reasons the firm opened a branch in that city. Although Alfred Cartier's Parisian business was directed more toward the middle classes during the second half of the nineteenth century, he had briefly opened a London business that supplied the English royal family with luxury goods in the early 1870s, while the chaos of the Commune was raging in Paris. This experience brought him the business of Edward VII, who, unlike his stolid mother, Queen Victoria, was a great



4. *Tiara*

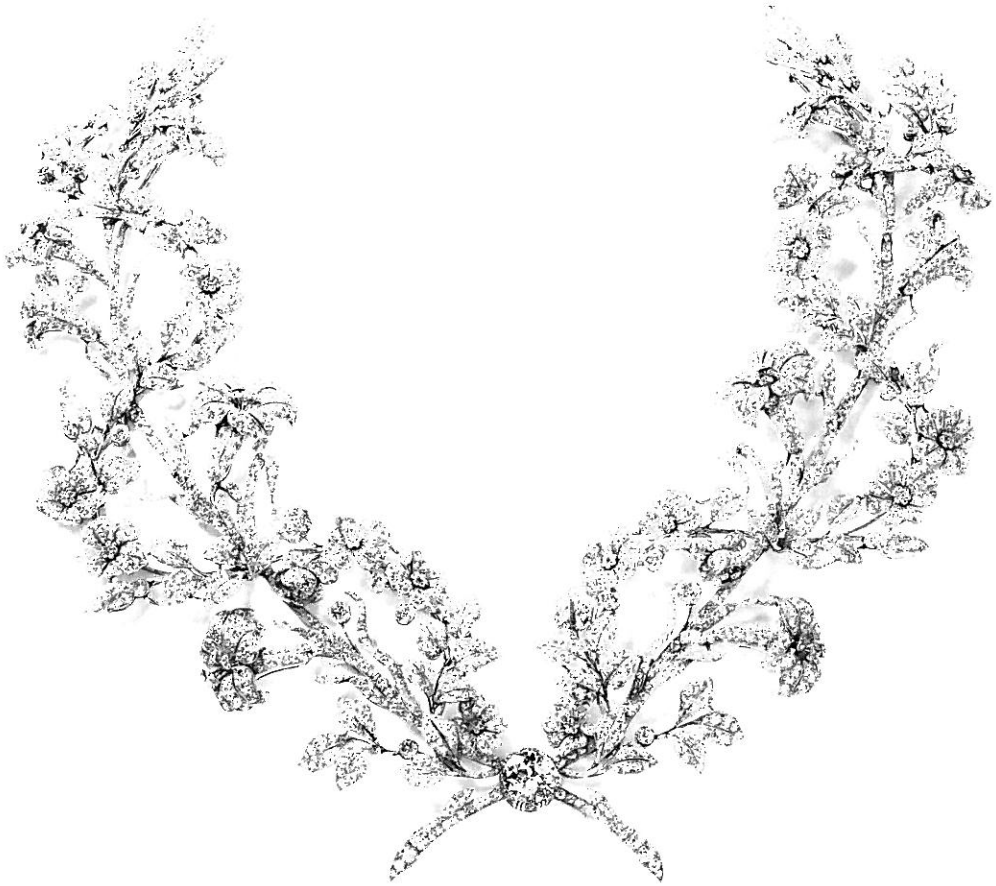
CARTIER PARIS, 1905

Sold to Mrs. Richard Townsend of Washington, D.C., this tiara shows that Americans wore grand head ornaments in the years leading up to World War I. It is designed in Cartier's signature Louis XVI style.

[cat. 9]

Francophile and an enjoyer of luxury and the good life. He became an important client of the firm as soon as he became king, with the 1901 commission of an Indian-style necklace for Queen Alexandra, and it is he who is said to have dubbed Cartier "King of jewellers and jeweller of kings." He gave Cartier its first royal warrant, naming it an official supplier in 1904. Between that date and 1939 Cartier received fifteen of these royal warrants from various courts, ranging from Edward VII to King Zog of Albania. Apart from the business the warrants brought, Cartier capitalized on them as tools for promotion; the arms of its royal patrons were emblazoned on the fronts of its stores and on its stationery.

Alfred Cartier, recognizing that the patronage of the royal courts would prompt the aspiring new rich of industry and commerce to follow in their wake, supplied his American clients with equally splendid, if not more so, arrays of jewelry. Mary Scott Townsend of Washington, D.C., heir to the fortune of the coal and railroad magnate William Lawrence Scott of Pennsylvania, acquired a suite of diamond jewelry from Cartier

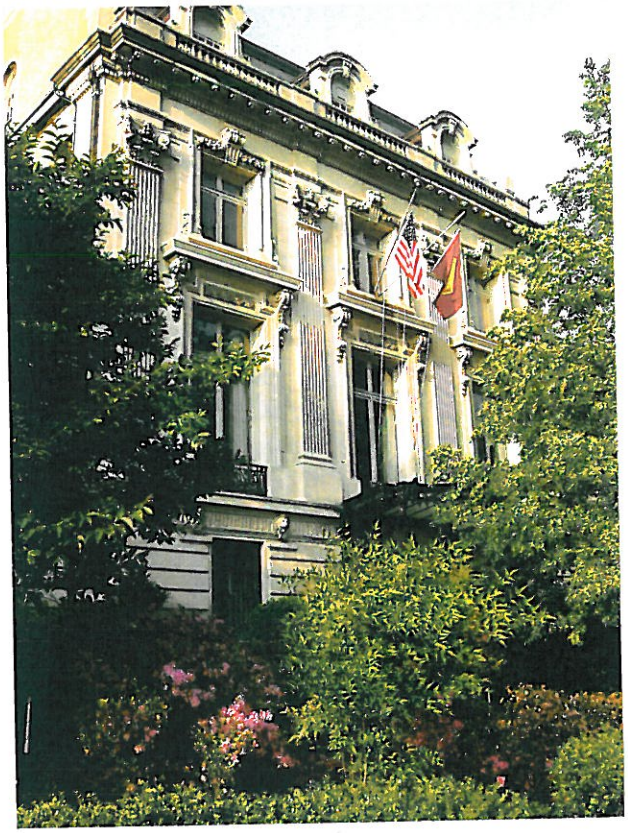


5. *Rose-and-lily corsage ornament*
CARTIER PARIS, 1906

Mrs. Richard Townsend complemented her grand tiara with this substantial breast ornament of entwined roses and lilies. [cat. 14]

Paris in 1905–1906, perhaps in preparation for her daughter Mathilde's debut in 1907.[8] Included was a diamond-set tiara with large pear-shaped diamonds (pl. 4). As unlikely as it seems today, this type of grand head ornament, usually signifying European royal or aristocratic rank, was also worn by American elites in the years leading up to World War I. Many New York matrons of the Gilded Age wore their tiaras at the old Metropolitan Opera in what was appropriately dubbed the Diamond Horseshoe. In the Cartier Paris archives there are albums that contain photos of dozens of tiaras designed for American clients during this period—and they were not just made for Americans married to Europeans.

In addition to her tiara, Cartier made Townsend an array of white diamond jewelry that comprised a choker necklace (pl. 39) and a grand *devant de corsage* breast ornament (pl. 5). The overall effect of these glittering white diamonds placed at the bosom, neck, and head would have been similar to that of the jewels worn by royalty of the day, such as Queen Alexandra of England (pl. 32). All of Townsend's pieces were designed



6. View of the Beaux-Arts Townsend mansion in Washington, D.C., now the Cosmos Club, showing some of its neoclassical architectural details

according to Cartier's signature Louis XVI style. The choker is made of interlacing garlands of flowers and foliage; the tiara uses rolling classical scrollwork; and the most spectacular of Townsend's jewels, the breast ornament, is made of sprays of lilies entwined with a garland of roses, in the taste of the late eighteenth century. Remarkably, the jewels coordinated perfectly with the Beaux-Arts style of her mansion on Embassy Row, which had been recently transformed by the New York firm of Carrère and Hastings. The new facade and interior, with its obligatory ballroom, included much neoclassical ornament typical of Louis XVI taste, with swags, medallions, masks, vases, and garlands adorning walls, windows, and doors (pl. 6). The Louis XVI style was so versatile that its applications could range from architecture and decor to the most intricate pieces of jewelry. Townsend's patronage of Cartier must mark one of the rare moments when architecture and jewelry were so perfectly in tune.

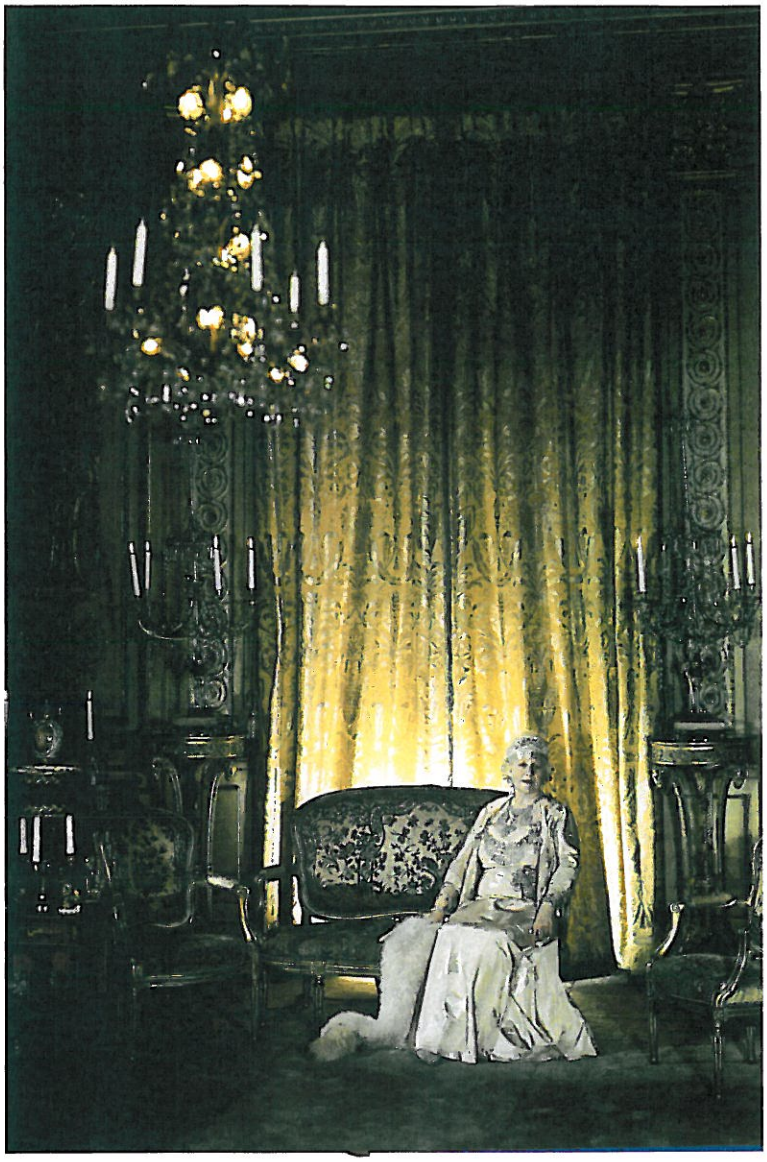
opposite:
7. Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III, ca. 1909, wearing her 1909 Cartier necklace in its original form (see pl. 8 for one of its pendants). She also wears the tiara supplied by Cartier in 1909 and a rose brooch purchased in 1904.

As we have seen, Cartier had already established an important client base of rich Americans even before it opened in New York. The most prominent names of the Gilded Age were customers in Paris; members of the Vanderbilt family, for example, appear frequently in the Cartier archives for these years. Consuelo Vanderbilt, Duchess of Marlborough (1877–1964), bought a Fabergé-style clock in 1908 (pl. 47). Her cousin by marriage, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III (1870–1953), had an array of grand jewelry that

8. *Pendant*

CARTIER PARIS, 1909

This hexagonal pendant was once part of the grand necklace shown in pls. 7 and 9. [cat. 25]



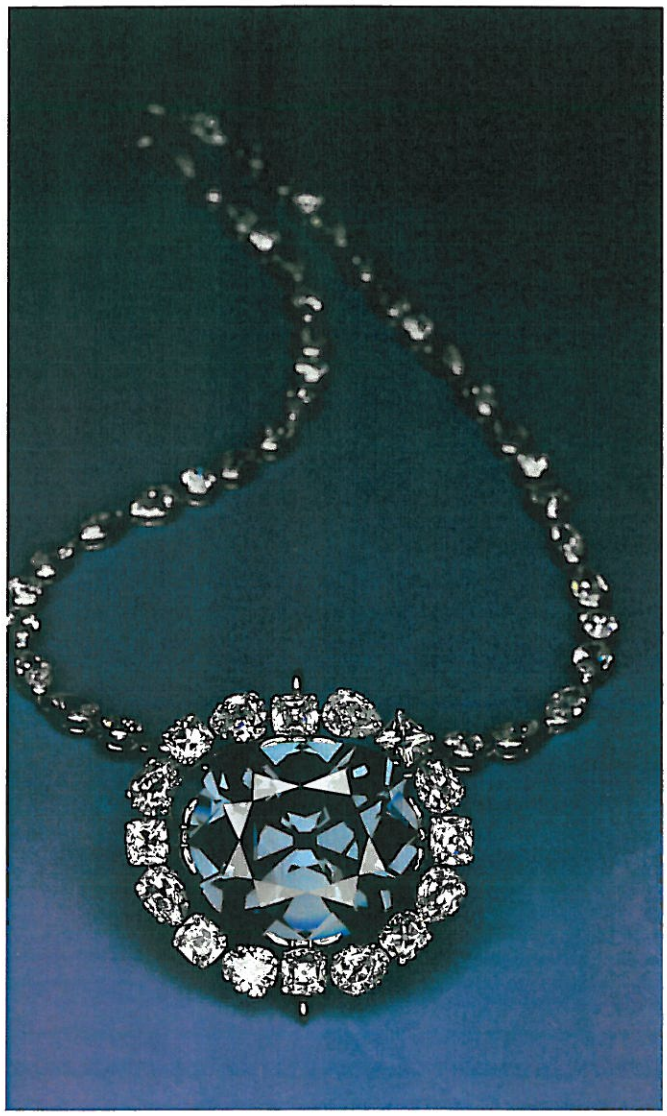
9. Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III wearing the same suite of Cartier jewels, photographed by Cecil Beaton in her Fifth Avenue mansion, 1941

she is shown wearing in a photograph taken around 1909 (pl. 7). Her unusual necklace with hexagonal pendants (pl. 8) was acquired as a special order from Cartier in 1909. At her bosom she wears a diamond-set rose that Cartier had sold her in 1904. It was an old piece, made in 1855, but its royal provenance outweighed its old-fashioned design—it had been made for Princess Mathilde, scion of the Bonaparte dynasty during the Second Empire. Under her bosom Vanderbilt wears a huge breast ornament, terminating in tassels and fringed to an extent that it is difficult to determine where the diamond fringes stop and the fringes of her dress begin. The crowning touch is a grand "Russian" tiara that gives the wearer added height as well as status. Mrs. Vanderbilt bought it in 1909.[9] Initially scorned by her husband's family as an adventuress and an unsuitable marriage prospect, Grace Vanderbilt rose to become a leader of New York society, and she continued to wear

her Cartier jewels at the opera and at parties in her Fifth Avenue mansion until the end of her life (see pl. 9).

Consuelo Vanderbilt's sister-in-law, Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt II (1875–1935, pl. 34), was more readily accepted into the clan despite the fact that she was the daughter of a once-poor Irish immigrant miner who made a fortune in the Comstock Lode. Known as Birdie to her family, Virginia Graham Fair Vanderbilt was born in San Francisco. With her sister, Theresa Fair Oelrichs, she built that city's famous Fairmont Hotel. In 1906 she acquired a grand scroll tiara in the form of a crown set with diamonds and pearls, and in the same year she ordered an impressive diamond necklace of eighteenth-century inspiration with a bow knot at its center.[10] Cartier Paris supplied several of the Vanderbilt women with grand jewelry in those years. In 1909 Virginia Vanderbilt's stepmother-in-law, Anne Harriman Sands Rutherford—confusingly known as Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Sr.—ordered two diamond bandeaux, one in a highly original Byzantine design of interlacing ornaments that attached with a string of pearls, and the other made of enormous pear-shaped diamonds.[11] In 1910 she bought a long dress ornament called an *écharpe*, a sort of sash that fixed to the shoulder and looped across the breast.[12] Then she had another made entirely of diamonds, with two large medallions terminating in pear-shaped drops.[13] Other *écharpes* or *aiguillettes* were made for Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt and Mrs. Frederick Vanderbilt, suggesting stiff competition between the Vanderbilt wives for the grandest and most avant-garde Cartier jewelry. Unfortunately, none of those innovative designs survive. Most of the Cartier pieces worn by Virginia Vanderbilt that are included in this catalogue date from the 1920s, when her jewelry designs were more conventional for their time (see pl. 69).

Another figure that became one of Cartier's most important customers was Evalyn Walsh McLean (1886–1947), also the daughter of an Irish immigrant miner who struck gold. At the tender age of twenty-three, honeymooning after marrying Edward McLean of the *Washington Post* family, she bought a 94.8-carat white diamond called the Star of East from Cartier for $120,000. On her next trip to Paris, in 1910, Pierre Cartier showed her the famous blue diamond known as the Hope, which, although it was smaller at 45.52 carats, had a glamorous and legendary provenance. As McLean related in her book *Father Struck It Rich*, although she was fascinated by Cartier's telling of the story of the Hope and its curse, she declined to buy the diamond. She changed her mind later in New York when she saw Cartier's new setting, which surrounded the Hope with alternating square and pear-shaped white diamonds, cunningly designed to disguise the irregular shape of the stone (pl. 10). In 1911 she bought the Hope for $154,000, and she wore the diamond proudly throughout her life (see pl. 11).[14] McLean continued to be a significant customer for Cartier New York thereafter. During the Depression years Cartier sold her a diamond-and-ruby bracelet for $135,000. She seemed to have been aiming for all points of the



10. The Hope diamond in its Cartier setting of 1910

11. Evalyn Walsh McLean, ca. 1932, wearing the Hope diamond (pl. 10) with a diamond necklace and chain supplied by Cartier New York in 1932

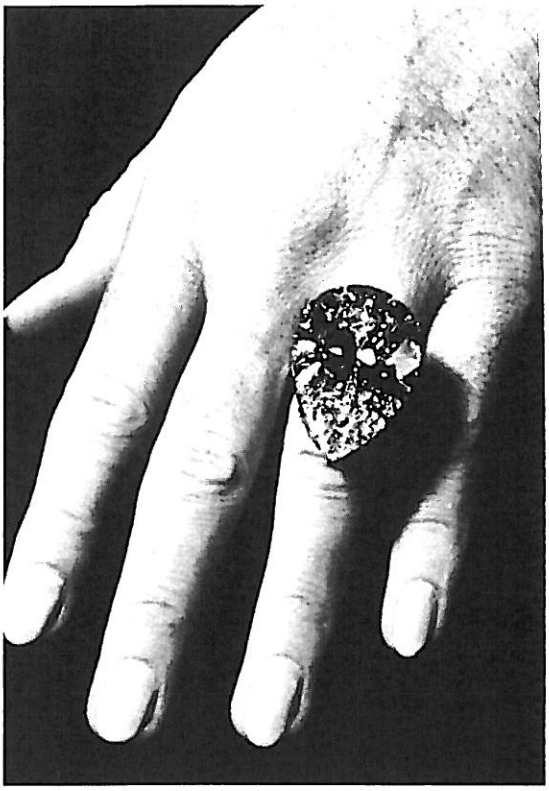
compass with her jewelry collection: the bracelet's main diamond was called the Star of the South.[15]

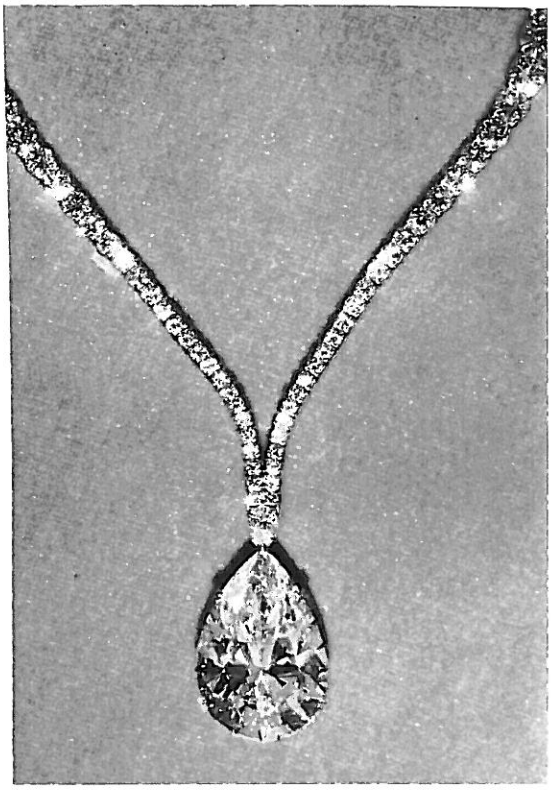
McLean's purchase of great gemstones illustrates another mainstay of the Cartier business model. Around 1917 Pierre Cartier purchased the famous Star of South Africa, a pear-shaped, 47.69-carat diamond, and reset it as a brooch (pl. 12). The 1869 discovery of the stone is credited with having unleashed the South African diamond rush; before it made its way to Cartier it belonged to the Countess of Dudley and J. P. Morgan. Cartier also handled the sale of some of the famous jewels belonging to Prince Felix Youssoupoff in the 1920s.[16] In 1928 Cartier London sold Mrs. E. F. Hutton the so-called Marie Antoinette earrings, featuring pear-shaped diamonds of 14.25 and 20.34 carats from the Youssoupoff collection.[17] From the same source came the famous black pearls sold by Cartier New York to Mrs. Townsend's daughter, Mathilde Townsend Welles, who sold them back to

12. *Star of South Africa brooch*

CARTIER NEW YORK, CA. 1917

The 47.69-carat diamond in its pendant brooch setting by Cartier [cat. 52]





13–14. Cartier's 1969 settings of the Taylor/Burton diamond as a ring and a necklace

Cartier in 1924 after her husband complained that they looked like decayed oysters.[18] In 1927 Cartier bought the historic Youssoupoff pink diamond, the Tête de Bélier (Ram's Head) of 17.47 carats. Sold to Daisy Fellowes, who had it set into a ring, it was reputed to be the inspiration for Schiaparelli's signature color shocking pink.[19] Perhaps the most famous transaction of all, however, was Cartier New York's sale of the Taylor-Burton diamond. Cartier purchased the then unnamed stone for $1,050,000 in October 1969 and set it into a ring of 69.42 carats. The actor Richard Burton immediately bought it for his wife, Elizabeth Taylor, and it was exhibited by Cartier to large crowds in New York and Chicago before being remade as a necklace and handed over to its new owners (see pls. 13–14).[20]

CARTIER IN NEW YORK

With so many Gilded Age Americans as customers, Alfred Cartier decided to open a store in New York and designated his son Pierre to move there from London. Pierre Cartier's business skills were important to running the enterprise, particularly in negotiating with the millionaires who came to the store. In 1909 there were reputed to be three hundred millionaires living in New York alone.[21] Setting up initially at 712 Fifth Avenue, in 1917 the business moved permanently to 653 Fifth Avenue, where it is housed in a Beaux-Arts mansion (pl. 15). Cartier famously bought the six-story mansion from the industrialist

15. Alexandre Genaille's rendering of Cartier's store on Fifth Avenue, New York, 1920

opposite:
16. View of the main showroom in Cartier's New York store, 1920

Morton F. Plant for $100 plus a double strand of the finest natural pearls, which Mrs. Plant had admired and were worth a million dollars at that time.[22]

The architect Welles Bosworth refitted the interior of the house as a store with references to the Louis XVI style, somewhat reflecting the interiors of the Paris boutique on rue de la Paix (see pl. 16). There was the Blue Room for displaying the most expensive jewels, and the Wedgwood Room for the famous clocks, snuffboxes, and hard-stone animal figures. There were also the Pearl Room and Silver Room. Jules Glaenzer was the principal salesman to whom Pierre Cartier entrusted important clients. In the 1920s and 1930s Glaenzer became a significant host in New York, giving parties where celebrities

17. View of American Art Works, Cartier's New York workshop, 1930

such as George Gershwin performed for guests from stage and screen, including Paul Whiteman, Noel Coward, Fred and Adele Astaire, Fanny Brice, and Charlie Chaplin.[23] The popular-music composer Richard Rodgers remarked that "Jules and his beautiful young wife, Kendall, had made their series of parties famous for bringing together social registrants, business tycoons and theatrical luminaries in an atmosphere of good talk and music."[24]

Although Cartier New York's stock derived from Paris, a workshop was installed on the fifth floor around 1917. Called the American Art Works, it employed, by 1922, about thirty French workmen who had trained in Paris (see pl. 17). They were supervised

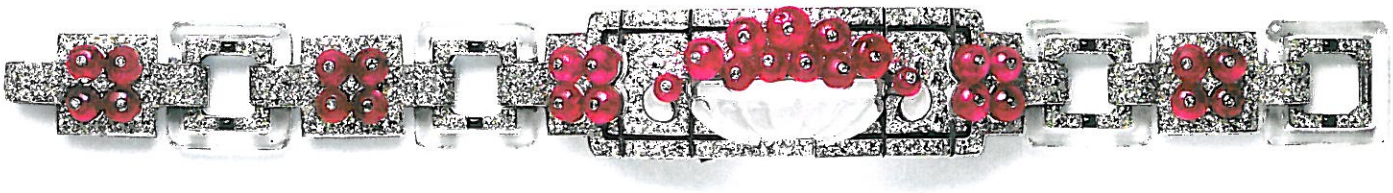
by Paul Duru (1871–1971).[25] Later there would be up to seventy jewelers and goldsmiths working with chief stone setter Paul Maîtrejean (1883–1975), the man who reset the Hope diamond. With the coming war, the workshop closed in 1941. After the war it reopened under the operation of an independent contractor, Wors & Pujol. In 1925 a second workshop for making silver and gold objects such as photo frames, commemorative pieces, and vanity cases opened on the other side of 52nd Street. It was called the Marel Works, taken from the names of Pierre Cartier's daughter, Marion, and wife, Elma.[26] The design of the New York–made pieces was under the direction of Frenchmen Alexandre Genaille and Maurice Duvallet.[27] After Duvallet moved on in 1920, Maurice Daudier became the most talented of the New York designers; in the 1940s and 1950s he created pieces for Marjorie Merriweather Post.[28]

At Cartier New York, the process of making a piece of jewelry started with the commission. There were two distinct purposes: a piece could be made either for stock or for a customer as a special order. Most of the stock pieces still came from Paris, but in the case of special orders the client took the lead under Glaenzer's gentle guidance. The whole process was written up in a *Saturday Evening Post* article about Glaenzer in 1948. It is a useful description of how a "fussy" woman might have ordered a ruby-and-diamond bracelet, wanting a variation on the twenty-five already in stock. To paraphrase the article: Having determined that she did not want any of the stock bracelets in the store, the customer gave Glaenzer a rough sketch. He took it to head designer Daudier, who assigned an artist to make a sketch of the bracelet in ink and watercolor. If the lady approved the sketch, it was turned over to the gemologist, who retrieved stones from a huge safe on the sixth floor, the size of "a refrigerator in a butcher's shop" with an electrically controlled door. There he selected gems that matched the size and color of those in the sketch. The stones were arranged on wax and shown to the customer. If she approved, she received a letter stating, "Following your instructions, we are executing the bracelets you ordered. The price will be $22,000 and you may expect delivery in five weeks." Then the stone arrangement on wax and the sketch were sent to the workshop for manufacturing.[29]

CARTIER FOR AMERICANS BETWEEN THE WARS

With the United States emerging as the dominant world power in the years following the First World War, Americans became the leading patrons for Cartier in Paris and London as well as New York. In the interwar years Cartier Paris still led in terms of design and craftsmanship. It supplied the New York store with jewelry, accessories such as vanity cases, and lavishly made clocks, which were inscribed "European Clock and Watch Company" for the American market.

Cartier's designs tended to follow one of two distinct styles during this era. The first produced jewelry in an Art Deco mode. Brilliantly colored, with geometric patterns

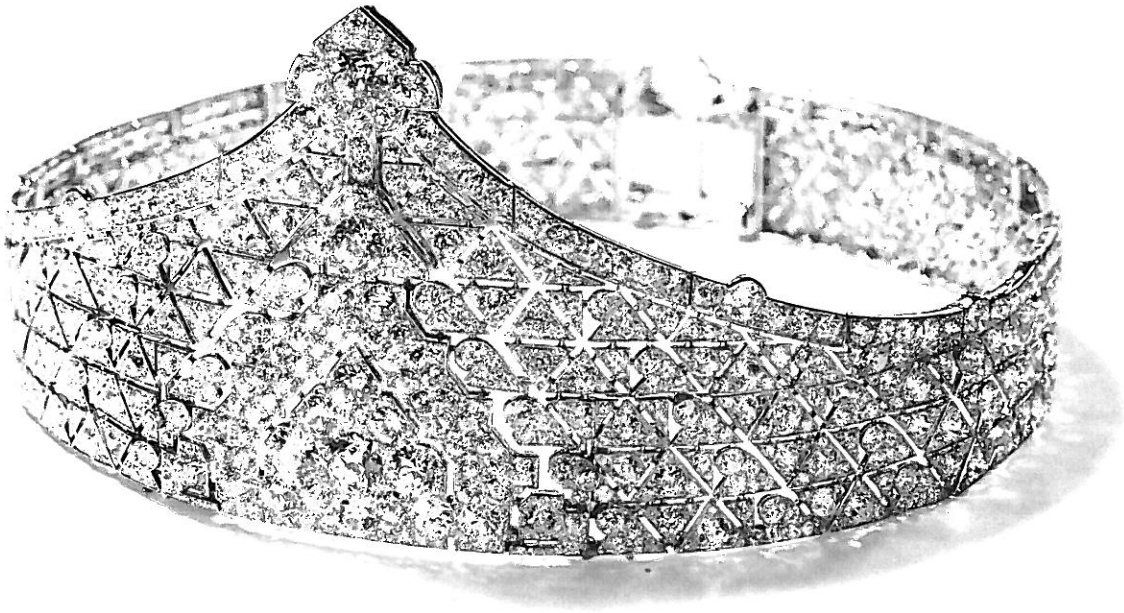


18. *Bracelet*
CARTIER NEW YORK, 1926

Designed in the style of pieces shown at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, Paris, this piece was made in New York for a member of the Mackay family. [cat. 98]

that often included stylized rather than naturalistic ornamentation, these pieces became synonymous with Cartier in the 1920s. Some characteristic examples (pls. 64–65) were shown in 1925 at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris. A short time later Cartier New York was making pieces in the same style (see pl. 18). The second design mode was the free use of exoticism, a trend that looked in three main directions: China and Japan, ancient Egypt, and, most enduringly, Mughal India. All of these exotic cultural influences would be significant for Cartier's high-society clients of the 1920s and 1930s. Mrs. Cole Porter was particularly fond of Indian-style jewelry and had two bracelets and a clip brooch (pls. 76–78) made to order. Ganna Walska, who also commissioned Indian-style jewelry, acquired Chinese-style pieces as well (see pl. 82, cat. 124), and Mrs. George Blumenthal had an Egyptian sarcophagus vanity case (cat. 89). Exoticism remained a feature of Cartier's jewelry in the postwar era, right up to the end of the twentieth century (see pls. 126, 150).

Concurrent with changes in fashion epitomized by the flappers of the 1920s, jewelry design changed dramatically after World War I. Tiaras, for one thing, fell out of fashion. In the comic novel *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, first published in 1925, the gold-digging character of Lorelei Lee is fascinated by her discovery of the tiara, archly declaring it a "new" way to wear diamonds. Always looking for a new angle, she bucks tradition and puts one on backward.[30] In real life, women's shorter hairstyles favored bandeaux, such



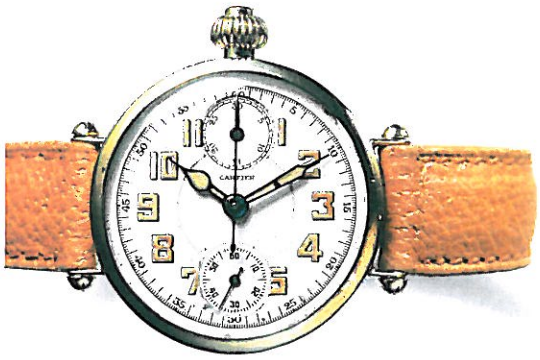
19. *Bandeau*
CARTIER PARIS, 1923
Parts of this bandeau diadem can be detached to form two strap bracelets. [cat. 70]

as the one supplied to Mrs. James B. Duke in 1924 (pl. 67); another example, made in 1923, can be taken apart and worn as two bracelets (pl. 19). Like tiaras, bandeaux were made of openwork diamonds but were flexible, more in the form of flat ribbons to be worn low on the forehead (see pl. 58). Long sautoirs, which had originally appeared around 1908, survived as a type of jewelry to be worn with tubular, low-waisted dresses (pl. 66). This was also the era of diamond bracelets, which became increasingly larger by 1930 and were sometimes worn together in numbers—as the movie star Gloria Swanson famously sported hers by Cartier (pls. 20–21).[31] Conversely, the bracelet's counterpart, the diamond-set evening wristwatch, got smaller and smaller, thanks to the tiny movements pioneered by Cartier (see pl. 68). Men's accessories also became an important part of Cartier's production at this time. The man's wristwatch has remained one of Cartier's perennial models. One owned by Al Jolson is an unusual example, with a dial oriented east-west instead of the usual north-south (pl. 22). In addition, the New York workshop made a variety of commemorative pieces for men, such as a tiepin for Fred Astaire commemorating the 1935 musical *Top Hat* (pl. 23), a cigarette case bearing an engraved inscription inside from Douglas Fairbanks (pl. 93), and a silver plaque made for presentation to the actor Alan Mowbray in connection with his role as the agent John Robert Powers in the 1943 movie *The Powers Girl* (pl. 129).

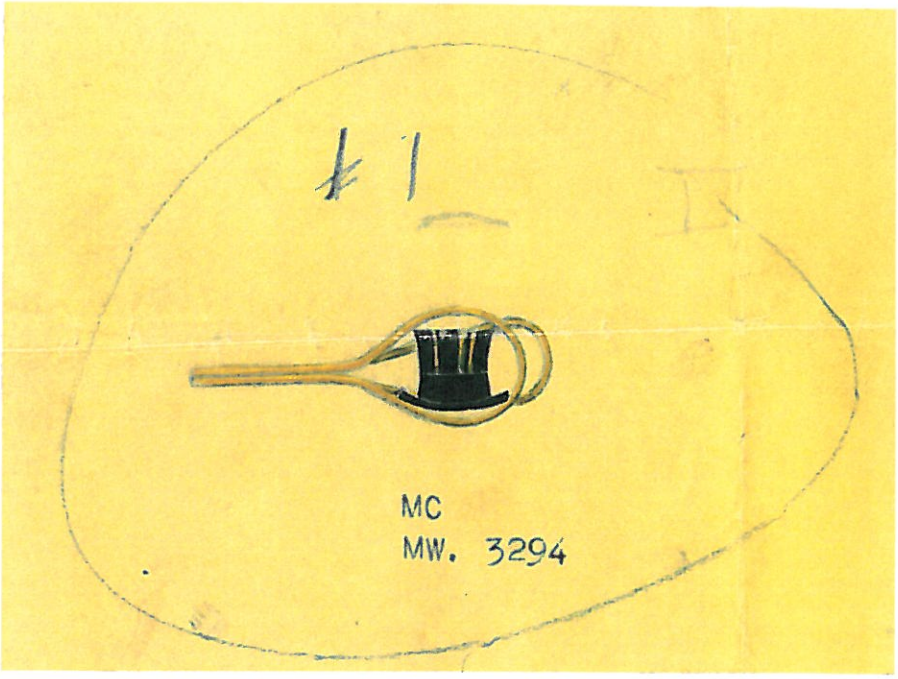
Cartier's principal American clients continued to be the rich and famous of the

20. Gloria Swanson, ca. 1930, wearing bracelets supplied by Cartier in 1930 (pl. 21)

21. *Bracelets*
CARTIER PARIS, 1930
Sold to the actress Gloria Swanson [cat. 150]



22. *Single-button chronograph wristwatch*
CARTIER NEW YORK, 1924
Sold to the actor Al Jolson in 1931 [cat. 81]



23. Design drawing for Fred Astaire's *Top Hat*-themed tiepin

Gilded Age, such as Virginia Graham Fair Vanderbilt and Evalyn Walsh McLean, but the next generation produced customers from so-called high society, a mixture of the new industrial and mercantile rich mixed with the world of stage and screen—very much as described at Glaenzer's parties. The names of New York society figures are associated with many of the pieces of the interwar years included in this catalogue. From the moneyed classes came Mrs. James B. Duke of the tobacco fortune; Barbara Hutton, the F. W. Woolworth heiress who was married in Paris in 1933 wearing Cartier jewels (pls. 131, 138–140); and Hutton's aunt, Marjorie Merriweather Post, who was then Mrs. E. F. Hutton (pls. 25–26, 85, 98, 114, 121). From the world of finance and newspapers came Mrs. William Randolph Hearst (pls. 68, 75), Mrs. Condé Nast (pl. 86), and Mrs. George Blumenthal, wife of the financier and art collector (pl. 74). From stage and screen came actresses Gloria Swanson and Marion Davies (pls. 58, 84); "opera singer" Ganna Walska, who married Harold F. McCormick, son of the Chicago reaper king (pls. 82, 158); and Mrs. Cole Porter. Cartier's clients also included a growing group of expatriate Americans, prominent among them the decorator and writer Elsie de Wolfe (Lady Mendl), who represented a new type of American woman by making her own fortune rather than marrying one. She lived mainly in France and was voted the world's best-dressed woman by Parisian couturiers in 1935, despite being in her seventies. She was often photographed in magazines in conjunction with her Cartier pieces (see pl. 24).[32] In London, where Lady Cunard ruled society, American-born Lady Granard commissioned substantial pieces of jewelry in the 1930s (see pl. 120). Raised Beatrice Mills

24. Elsie de Wolfe posed for Cecil Beaton in 1939 with her mother-of-pearl and coral Cartier clock, purchased in London in 1936, on the chest of drawers beside her.

in San Francisco, Granard possessed such enormous pieces from Cartier London that on one occasion, the diarist "Chips" Channon uttered that she "could scarcely walk for jewels."[33] Topping them all, however, was the Duchess of Windsor (pls. 99, 122–127), who was born relatively obscurely in Baltimore yet prompted a king to abdicate his throne. Her jewels by Cartier were an abiding passion for the duke as well as the duchess.

One of the most enduring and loyal American clients for Cartier throughout this period and into the 1960s was Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887–1973).[34] Heir to the Post cereal fortune, she was an active philanthropist and art collector. Although she was raised and lived her life as a staunch Christian Scientist, Post had a long-standing interest in acquiring and wearing jewelry, including historical pieces. In 1971, when she was eighty-four, her "expenditures for clothing and accessories were in excess of $250,000 a year."[35]

25. Giulio de Blaas's 1929 portrait of Marjorie Merriweather Post (then Mrs. E. F. Hutton) and her daughter, Nedenia, shows Post wearing her pendant brooch (pl. 26).

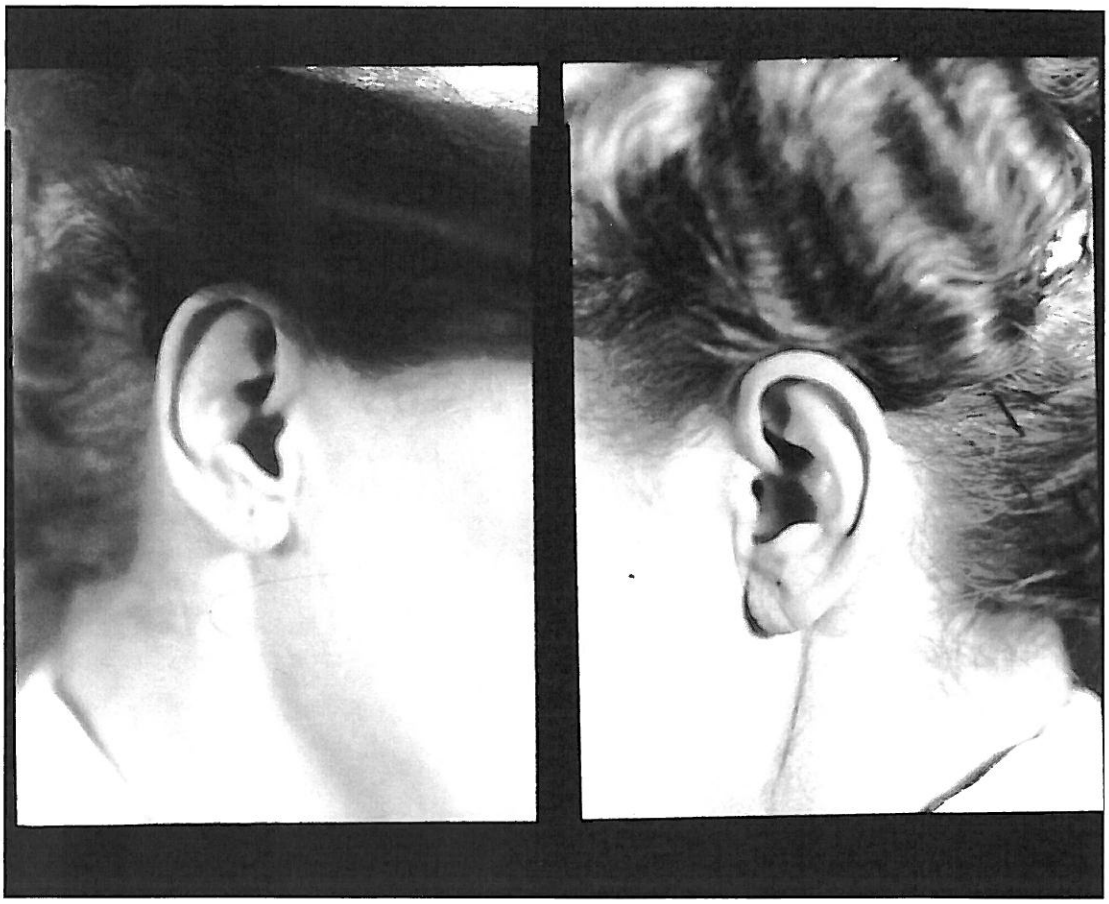
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, 51.146

Post's emerald-and-diamond pendant shoulder brooch (pl. 26) is one of the most spectacular Cartier pieces made for an American. Composed of seven carved Indian emeralds, the main one of which dates to the seventeenth century and the Mughal period, it is in the form of a diamond buckle from which the emeralds are suspended as drops. The emeralds are mounted in the most meticulous Cartier manner on a pavé diamond ground with lines of calibré-cut emeralds.[36] The piece was originally made at Cartier London, where it was sold to a Mr. Godfrey Williams in 1924 with an accompanying emerald chain for the enormous price of £10,000.[37] Post, then Mrs. E. F. Hutton, brought the piece to Cartier New York to have it altered in 1928. She is shown wearing the revised version in a 1929 mother-daughter portrait by Giulio de Blaas (pl. 25); in it the brooch becomes the focal point of the composition, nearly upstaging the sitters.

26. *Pendant brooch*

CARTIER LONDON, 1923; ALTERED 1928, CARTIER NEW YORK

Marjorie Merriweather Post was a regular customer at Cartier New York. Her brooch, one of the most spectacular jewels made in the 1920s, incorporates Indian carved emeralds, one of which dates from the Mughal era. [cat. 71]



27. Photographs of Marjorie Merriweather Post's ears included in a Cartier New York insurance valuation of 1941

From evidence in the Cartier New York archives, Post was continually having her jewelry altered as her tastes changed. In 1936 Cartier altered a diamond-set *devant de corsage*, which she wore as a shoulder brooch in the portrait commemorating her 1929 presentation at court in London, as a clasp for a pearl necklace.[38] Her sapphire-and-diamond collar necklace (pls. 98, 114) was made out of two bracelets by the relatively little-known New York jeweler De Sedles, with a new central section supplied by Cartier in 1937. The Cartier New York archives hold several alternate designs for her amethyst-and-turquoise necklace of 1950 (pl. 121), addressing details right down to the treatment of the gold prong settings. One of the services Cartier provided to its clients was insurance valuation. A valuation of 1941 (by which point she was Mrs. Joseph E. Davies) includes rather surreal photographs of her ears (pl. 27), presumably for estimating the position of earrings during the design process. The insurance of jewelry was a costly business. Post is known to have been so affected by the early years of the Depression that she retired her jewelry into a safety deposit box; with the proceeds saved from the insurance she financed a canteen for the poor.[39]

CARTIER FOR AMERICANS IN THE POSTWAR ERA

World War II brought significant changes for Cartier. Production was curtailed in Paris, London, and New York, and two members of the family, Louis and Jacques, died. Despite such upheaval, the styles of the late 1930s generally continued to be used after the war and well into the 1950s. Gold had returned as the metal of choice, replacing platinum for many pieces (with the exception of traditional diamond jewelry) since about 1935. The taste for large, baroque, and sculptural jewelry favored the more plastic qualities of gold. Suites of bracelets and ear clips (see pl. 106) were typical in this era, and after the war gold necklaces appeared. Around 1950 large gold necklaces set with colored gemstones were made for Post and the Duchess of Windsor. In 1953 the leader of European style, Daisy Fellowes, heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune, had a massy gold necklace by Cartier set with diamonds (pl. 104).

The jewels Cartier made for the Duchess of Windsor are among the most remarkable the firm ever produced. Although dispersed at auction after her death in 1987, her collection, which dates mostly from the mid-1930s to 1940 and from 1946 to the early 1960s, has survived almost in its entirety. Many pieces were commissioned by the duke as love tokens marking milestones in their relationship, and some were even designed by him, a fact that has been rarely acknowledged.[40] The Cartier London archives reveal that the duke was very particular about the design of the jewels, however simple.[41]

The duchess's first pieces were relatively small gifts, such as charms for a bracelet, from Cartier London, but by October 1936 King Edward VIII had already put himself on the path to abdication by buying a 19.77-carat emerald ring to celebrate Wallis Simpson's divorce.[42] Like many of the Windsor pieces, it is inscribed inside the platinum shank: "We are ours now 27.X.36." Made a couple of weeks before he declared his intentions to his family, this was the engagement ring for the marriage that caused the king to give up his throne. It was set with a Colombian emerald that was reputed to have been purchased in Baghdad as a much larger stone. When Jacques Cartier decided it was too large for the post-Depression market, it was cut in two.[43] The most iconic piece of jewelry made for the duchess is the flamingo clip brooch of 1940 (pls. 99, 125). Designed under the hand of Jeanne Toussaint (1887–1978, pl. 28), who had been in charge of precious jewelry in the Paris store since the mid-1930s, its fluffed-up plumage is made of calibré-cut emeralds, rubies, and sapphires from existing line bracelets supplied by the duke.[44] After the war Cartier made many more jewels for the duchess. These pieces, all collaborations between the duke, the duchess, and Toussaint, include an amethyst-and-turquoise bib necklace (pl. 122), a panther bracelet (pl. 124), a brooch in the form of a panther sitting on a large star sapphire (pl. 123), and a lorgnette with a tiger for a handle (pl. 126).

The amusing novelty designs of the late 1930s turned out to have an enduring legacy as brooches in the form of flowers, birds, and dogs from the 1950s to the 1990s. The

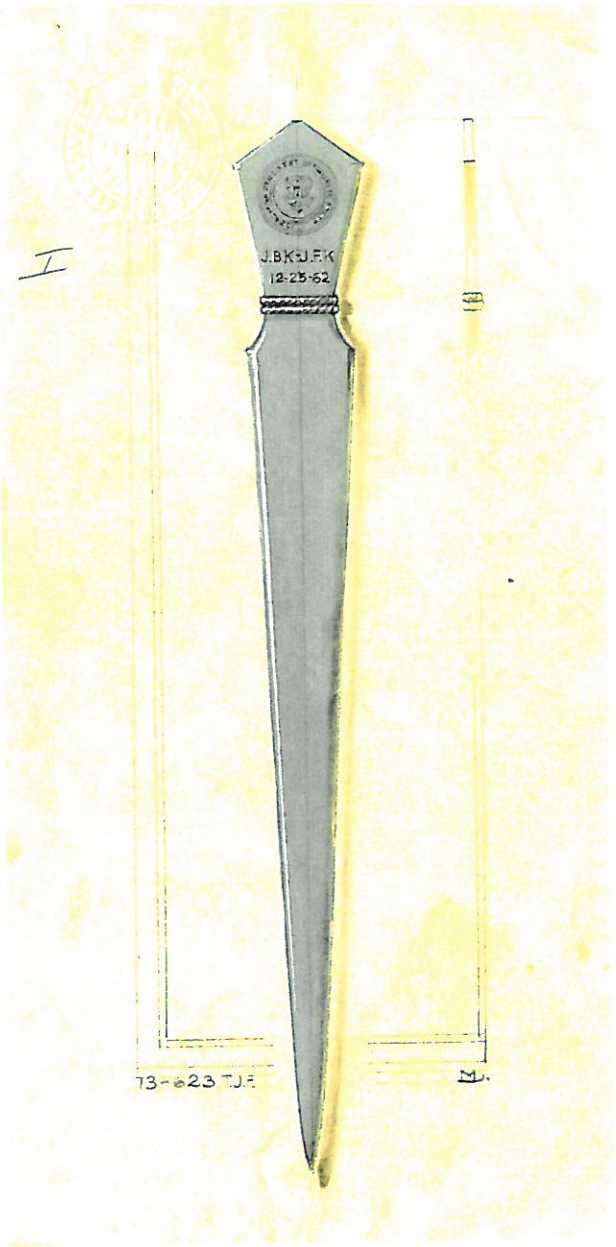
28. Cecil Beaton's portrait of Cartier's Jeanne Toussaint, 1962

Duchess of Windsor's panthers and tigers of the 1940s and 1950s were, like her flamingo, made under the sway of Toussaint. Although she was not a designer as such, Toussaint dictated the direction of Cartier's designs of this era, particularly the big cats. The panther, tiger, and leopard pieces became a standard for Cartier in the postwar period—see examples belonging to Barbara Hutton from the 1950s and 1960s (pls. 131, 139–140)—and the firm still makes versions of them today. They represent, in a way, a continuation of the exoticism that had been a recurring theme for Cartier since the 1920s. In addition to the cats, the postwar period produced exotic designs in the form of dolphins (pl. 137) and other animals, Indian-style necklaces (pl. 134), and, most sensationally, the massive crocodile and snake necklaces for the Mexican actress María Félix (pls. 132, 150–151). In the 1950s Princess Grace of Monaco had several Cartier brooches in the form of poodles and birds alongside her grand diamond jewelry (pls. 144–149).

29. Elizabeth Taylor, just after receiving her 1951 ruby-and-diamond suite (pls. 141–143) from husband Mike Todd in Cap-Ferrat, France, 1957

Fine jewelry persisted as an important part of Cartier's production throughout the 1950s. More restrained in form than the novelty designs and more feminine, these pieces tended to flatter the wearer rather than overpower her with a grand statement about design. In 1957 the producer Mike Todd gave his new wife, Elizabeth Taylor, a ruby-and-diamond suite of necklace, earrings, and bracelet (pls. 141–143). The enormous pleasure it gave Taylor is evident in stills from a home movie taken in a swimming pool in the south of France (see pl. 29). The discreet, abstract arrangement of the gemstones was typical of the 1950s, and is also visible in the diamond-and-platinum necklace (pl. 145) by Cartier Paris that Princess Grace received as a wedding gift in 1956. It consists of three simple rows of baguette and brilliant-cut diamonds. The princess's engagement ring (pl. 144), also by Cartier Paris, is likewise remarkable in its simplicity. An emerald-cut diamond of 10.47 carats, it appears briefly on the actress's hand in her last movie, *High Society.*

Commemorative and presentation objects have continued as a significant aspect of Cartier's activities. For Christmas of 1962, Jacqueline Kennedy commissioned a handsome paper knife for President John F. Kennedy. As is visible in the design drawings, it is inscribed with both of their initials and the date beneath the presidential seal (see pl. 30). Kennedy's 1961 declaration of America's intention to land on the moon was realized with the Apollo 11 mission of 1969. Cartier commemorated this momentous event with yellow and white gold replicas of the space module with enameled American flags



30. Design drawing for a paper knife for President John F. Kennedy, intended as a 1962 Christmas gift from Jacqueline Kennedy

(see pl. 153). They were given to astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins on behalf of the French newspaper *Le Figaro.*

Cartier has never strayed from its commitment to making the most refined jewelry using the highest standards of craftsmanship and the best-quality gemstones. In 1987 a California collector commissioned a version of the Duchess of Windsor's flamingo brooch based on the original designs in the Cartier Paris archives (cat. 277). Created with the expertise of Charles Jacqueau's daughter, it made use of the same calibré-cut technique employed for the colored gemstones in the original and demonstrated that Cartier could still fashion jewelry according to time-honored standards.[45] Cartier's practice of cutting

31. *Orchid necklace*

CARTIER PARIS, 2007

Made as part of the *Caresse d'orchidées* series, this necklace employs a large green beryl for the lip of the orchid and contrasting pink sapphire drops. [cat. 279]

stones to fit the design of its jewelry has been carried over to other projects as well. In the 1990s the firm employed the same type of setting for a series of parrot brooches (see cat. 278).[46] More recently the house embarked on a series of jewelry called *Caresse d'orchidées*.[47] Showing a new interest in sculptural form in jewelry, the line employs Cartier's signature high-quality workmanship as well as unusually colored gemstones. One necklace from the series (pl. 31) employs a carved green beryl for the labellum of the orchid and pink sapphires as contrasting stones. Such work demonstrates that Cartier is still drawing on traditional craftsmanship while appealing to its twenty-first-century patrons' taste for bold form and color.

1. Elsa Maxwell, *How to Do It; or, The Lively Art of Entertaining* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1957), 69.

2. The Cunard account for 1929 includes major purchases of two diamond bracelets, a sapphire-and-diamond necklace, a ruby-and-diamond cluster necklace, an emerald-and-diamond necklace and pendant using the client's stones, and a diamond necklace. In addition to her purchases of smaller items, such as a dressing case, cigarette cases, vanity cases, and stationery, there were numerous repairs: restringing necklaces, rebristling hairbrushes, and remodeling jewelry using Lady Cunard's own stones.

3. Hans Nadelhoffer, *Cartier* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 23. Cartier established its first store in Paris in 1847.

4. Quoted in Diana Scarisbrick, *Ancestral Jewels* (New York: Vendome Press, 1989), 179.

5. Platinum was largely replaced by gold in the mid-1930s, but it continued to be used for fine jewelry.

6. For more on Cartier's connections to couture, see pages 67–71 of this volume.

7. India was an important purveyor of gemstones, and the maharajahs were significant clients for Cartier in Paris as well as London. See Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, 152–175; Judy Rudoe, *Cartier: 1900–1939* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art / Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 31–36.

8. I am grateful to Douglas Reid Weimer for showing me around Mrs. Townsend's Washington mansion, now the Cosmos Club, and sharing the family history with me.

9. Cartier Paris archives. Described as a *diadème russe*, it was made for stock in 1908 and sold to Mrs. Vanderbilt in 1909.

10. Cartier Paris archives. I am grateful to archivist Betty Jais for information on the Vanderbilt purchases.

11. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, figs. 86–87.

12. Rudoe, *Cartier*, fig. 52.

13. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, fig. 56.

14. Accounts of the diamond's price vary. Evalyn Walsh McLean says, in *Father Struck It Rich*, that it cost $154,000; Nadelhoffer explains that although the selling price was $180,000, McLean received a $26,000 discount for the return of a pearl-and-emerald necklace. McLean, *Father Struck It Rich* (New York: Ishi Press International, 2008), 177; Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, 318.

15. McLean, *Father Struck It Rich*, 295.

16. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, 124.

17. According to the London accounts of October 11, 1928, Mrs. Hutton paid £6,750 (which converted to $32,737). The earrings are now in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. (G5018).

18. Unpublished autobiography of Mathilde Townsend Welles, December 1944, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York. I am grateful to Douglas Reid Weimer for giving me an extract of this typescript. Benjamin Welles, in *Sumner Welles* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 100, says that the pearls cost $400,000 in 1923. According to Nadelhoffer, they were next purchased in 1924 by Mrs. Peter Goelet Gerry of Washington, D.C., for $400,000 (*Cartier*, 124).

19. Stefano Papi and Alexandra Rhodes, *Famous Jewelry Collectors* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 158. The diamond was reputed to have once belonged to Catherine the Great. The color, now known in the United States as hot pink, was used on the box of Schiaparelli's 1937 scent Shocking. The stone was stolen in 1939 and has not been seen since.

20. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, 329.

21. Ibid., 28.

22. Pearls were at their zenith in those years, competing in value with Rembrandt paintings and exceeding that of diamonds. Cartier got the better of this deal with time. The necklace resold for only $151,000 in 1957, by which point natural pearls had lost their value with the advent of cultured pearls. Ibid., 334n13.

23. Edward Jablonski, *Gershwin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 48.

24. Richard Rodgers, *Musical Stages: An Autobiography* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2002), 121.

25. Rudoe, *Cartier*, 44, fig. 32.

26. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, 320n11.

27. Genaille produced the watercolor rendering of Cartier New York that appears as pl. 15.

28. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier*, 330n12.

29. Maurice Zolotow, "Fine Jewels Are His Business," *Saturday Evening Post*, May 8, 1948.

30. Anita Loos, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1925; repr., New York: Penguin, 1998), 36–37. Lorelei says, "I think a diamond tiara is delightful because it is a place I really never thought of wearing diamonds before. . . . I thought I had almost one of everything until I saw a diamond tiara." However, there are many instances of Americans continuing to wear tiaras well into the middle of the century. Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III, a leader of New York society, was one example (see pl. 9). Barbara Hutton was another. Her many marriages into royalty and nobility—husbands included three princes (one spurious), a count, and a baron—technically earned her the right to wear a tiara; as late as 1947 she commissioned Cartier to make her one using emeralds formerly belonging to the Grand Duchess Vladimir. Hutton's aunt by marriage, Marjorie Merriweather Post (formerly Mrs. E. F. Hutton) made no European royal or aristocratic marriages yet wore tiaras in the 1950s and 1960s, including the one made for Empress Marie Louise of France (now in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C.).

31. Swanson wore her bracelets in the movie *Sunset Boulevard* (1950).

32. De Wolfe's fashion triumph was reported in the *New York Herald Tribune*, November 26, 1935. Other Americans on the list were also prominent Cartier clients: Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Sr.; Mrs. Ernest Simpson (later the Duchess of Windsor); Mrs. Cole Porter; and the Hon. Mrs. Reginald Fellowes (who is listed as French). For more on photographs of de Wolfe, see pl. 24 in this volume and descriptions in Rudoe, *Cartier*, 30–31. There may have been an understanding between de Wolfe and Cartier; she certainly seems to have received reductions in prices. The Cartier London archives show that on October 9, 1936, she paid £160 for the mother-of-pearl and coral clock shown in pl. 24. It was discounted from £180. She was, however, a good client. In London, on June 17, 1925, she bought a collection of fifty-two pearls for the enormous sum of £11,000. In 1940, after fleeing France, she commissioned a marguerite necklace as a special order in New York, according to the Cartier New York archives.

33. James R. Rhodes, ed., *Chips: The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), 116.

34. Post is mentioned above with connection to pieces acquired while she was married to her second husband, E. F. Hutton. She reclaimed her maiden name after her fourth (and final) divorce.

35. Nancy Rubin, *American Empress: The Life and Times of Marjorie Merriweather Post* (1995; repr., Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2004), 61.

36. The calibré cut was developed at this time for small stones that were usually rectangular and step cut to fit into linear settings.

37. "30 April 1924 One five emld drop and 2 shaped emeralds diamond and emerald loop pendant with diamond collet and emerald long chain £10,000." Cartier London archives. A 1929 photograph in the archives of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C., shows Post (in costume as "Juliette" for the Palm Beach Everglades Ball) wearing the emerald sautoir with the brooch suspended from it. The sautoir, shortened in 1941, is now in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History (G5023), along with other of Post's historical pieces, including the above-mentioned Marie Antoinette earrings (G5018) and the Empress Marie Louise necklace (G5019) and tiara (G5021).

38. The 1931 portrait, painted by Giulio de Blaas, is in the collection of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens (51.149).

39. Rubin, *American Empress*, 17.

40. Cartier jewelry played an important role in their relationship from its inception. While on a cruise in

the Mediterranean in 1934, the duke, then Prince of Wales, called on Cartier Cannes in the middle of the night to produce a charm for Mrs. Simpson's bracelet. Greg King, *The Duchess of Windsor: The Uncommon Life of Wallis Simpson* (New York: Citadel Press, 2000), 114. The Cartier Paris accounts of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s reveal that it was the duke, rather than the duchess, who commissioned their pieces. The duchess's account tended to be for smaller pieces and repairs.

41. A letter in the Cartier London archives, written by the new Duke of Windsor on August 28, 1937, chides Jacques Cartier for making a clip brooch incorrectly: "You will be careful to note that the WE [the initials of the duchess and duke] on the two designs is incorrect and that they were drawn before I had the center bars of each letter shortened." One of these clips appears in this volume as cat. 184. Although the duke apparently wished this highly personal collection to be broken up after the duchess's death, the auction—which realized just over $31 million—enriched a worthy cause in the Pasteur Institute, Paris. It also ensured the survival of these extraordinary pieces, some of which (pls. 124–125) are on public view in *Cartier and America* for the first time since their sale in 1987.

42. According to documents in the Cartier London archives, Edward VIII purchased the ring on October 31, 1936; the price was £10,000.

43. John Culme and Nicholas Rayner, *Jewels of the Duchess of Windsor* (New York: Vendome Press, 1987), 152. However, Stefano Papi and Alexandra Rhodes question this assertion in *Famous Jewelry Collectors* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 119; they suggest the emerald may have come from a sautoir owned by Nancy Leeds.

44. Culme and Rayner, *Jewels of the Duchess of Windsor*, 171. The Cartier Paris archives include details of the original order from the duke (L5730, October 5, 1940).

45. Suzanne Tennenbaum and Janet Zapata, *The Jeweled Menagerie: A World of Animals in Gems* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 188.

46. Nadine Coleno, *Amazing Cartier* (Paris: Editions du Regard, 2008), 33.

47. Ibid., 115, 123, 125–127.