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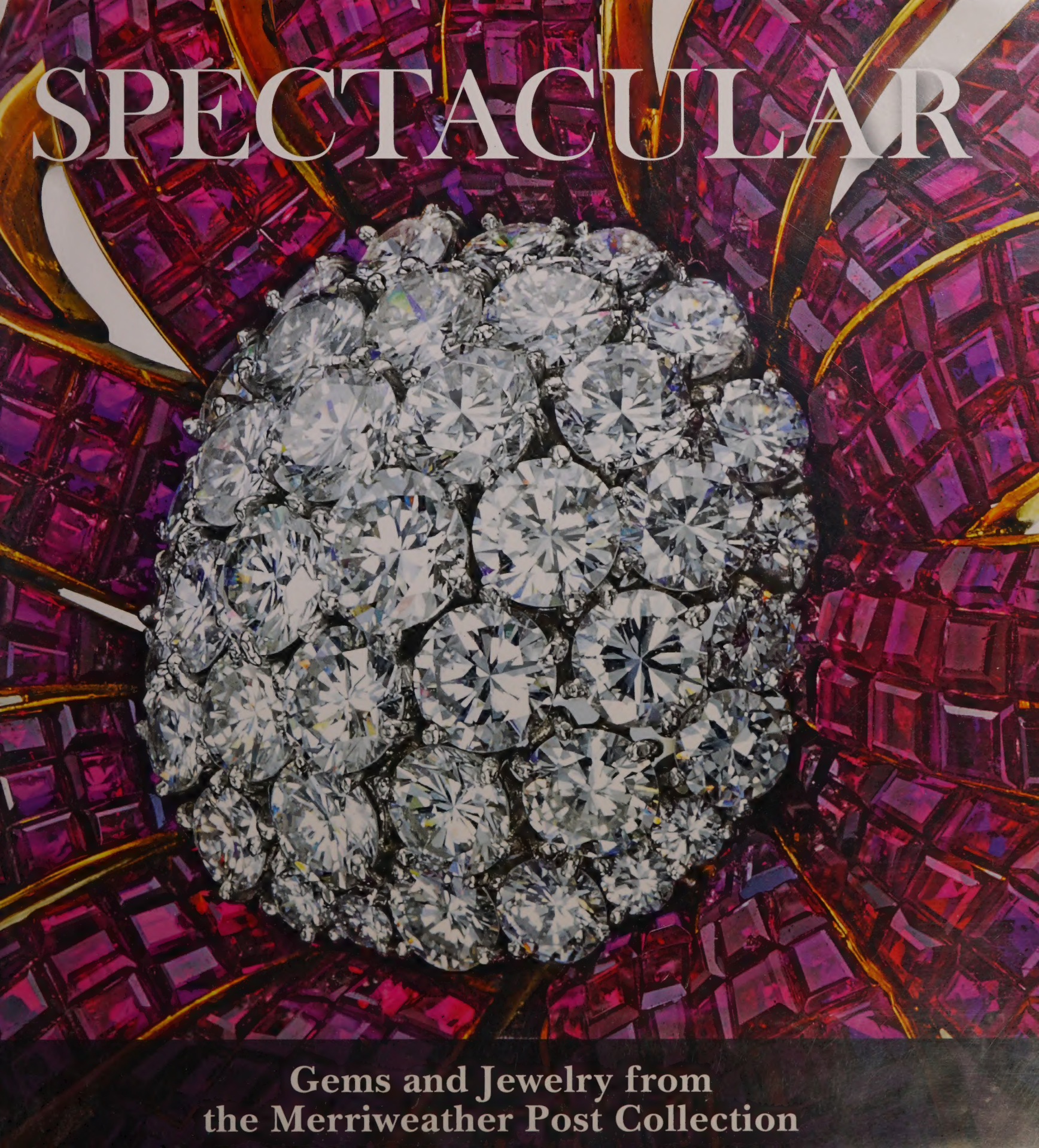

Gems and Jewelry from the Merriweather Post Collection

SPECTACULAR

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Liana Paredes
Foreword by Kate Markert
With contributions from Martin D. Fuller, Michael Hall, Jennifer Levy, Jeffrey E. Post, and Wilfried Zeisler

Spectacular immerses the reader in the Merriweather Post Collection of gems and jewelry, one of the most remarkable ever assembled. The collection features exquisite jewelry from the early twentieth century to the late 1960s from world-renowned firms such as Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Harry Winston as well as chic jewels from boutique firms like George Headley, David Webb, and Fulco di Verdura. It is also notable for its historic pieces, among them the Marie Louise diadem and the earrings reputedly worn by Marie Antoinette on the eve of the French Revolution.

Illustrated with over 160 color images, including stunning photography, design drawings, newspaper and magazine articles, and advertisements, the book offers an enthralling glimpse into the Merriweather Post Collection: outstanding gems, dazzling twentieth-century jewelry, and legendary historic jewels. Each chapter includes short essays contributed by experts in the field on a variety of historical, sociocultural, and gemological subjects. This lavish volume thus provides insight into the development of jewelry styles in the United States and Europe through one woman's unique collection and paints a vivid picture of one of the most passionate and confident jewelry collectors of the twentieth century.

Front cover illustration:
Ruby, diamond, gold, and platinum "Marguerite" brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1969. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.80. (detail)

Back cover illustration:
Pearl, diamond, and platinum necklace. Clasp by Cartier New York, 1936. Pearls by Kokichi Yamaoka, ca. 1963. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.69. (detail)

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Liana Paredes

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in association with D Giles Limited, London

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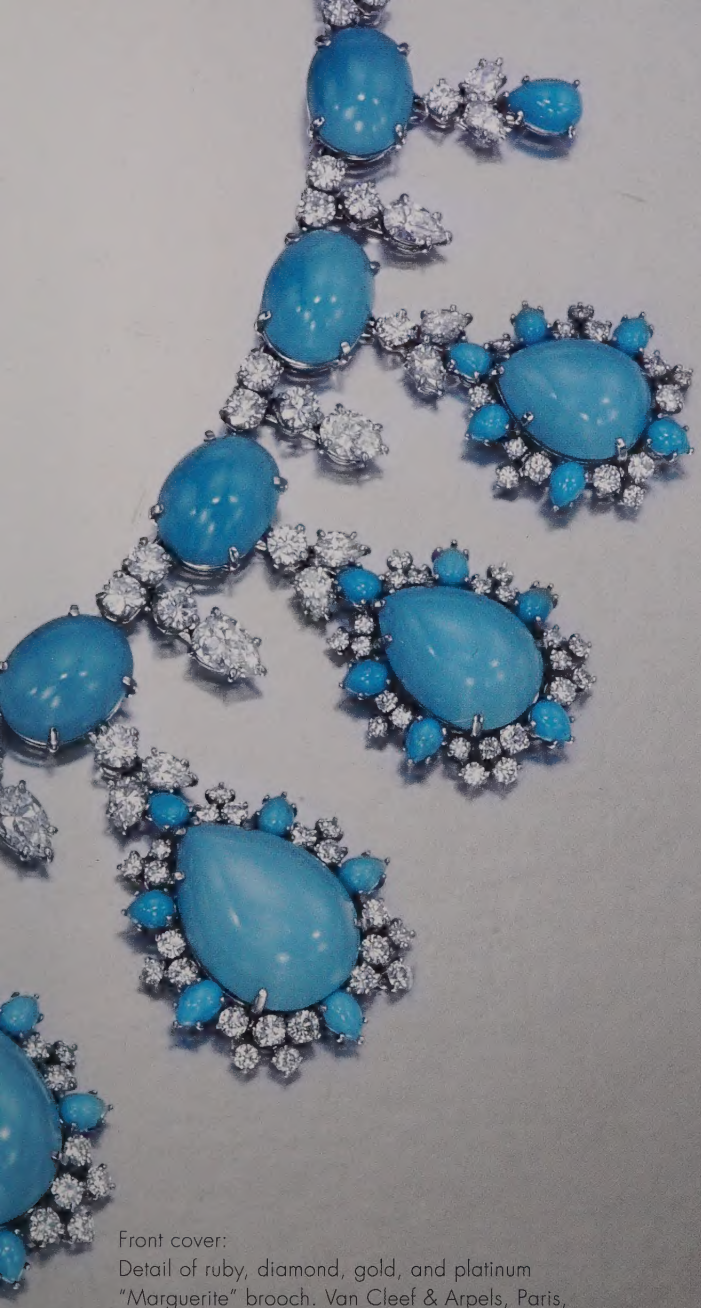

Front cover:
Detail of ruby, diamond, gold, and platinum "Marguerite" brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1969. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.80.

Back cover:
Detail of pearl, diamond, and platinum necklace. Clasp by Cartier New York, 1936. Pearls by Caro Yamaoka, ca. 1963. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.69.

Frontispiece:
Ruby, diamond, emerald, and gold hummingbird brooch. French, ca. 1890. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 2015.3.

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Detail of turquoise, diamond, and platinum drop necklace. Harry Winston, 1961. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.73.1.

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FOREWORD

The Merriweather Post Collection of gems and jewelry is unique in several important ways. Firstly, it is one of the most important ensembles to have survived substantially intact, whereas other famous jewelry collections have been sold and dispersed after the collector's death. Secondly, while jewelry is often subject to disassembly and resetting, according to the fashion of the times, many pieces in the Merriweather Post Collection have retained their original design. Another distinguishing feature is that a substantial proportion of the collection is on public view, at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, both in Washington, D.C. The public can enjoy these extraordinary pieces because Marjorie Merriweather Post understood that her jewelry was worthy of being maintained in public institutions, just as she preserved other great works she possessed, among them decorative arts and costume and accessories collections.

Marjorie Post was a long-time connoisseur of gemstones. Her father, Charles William "C.W." Post, fearing that his wealthy daughter might unwittingly fall prey to unscrupulous dealers, instilled in her the need to recognize quality in the high-end items she might acquire, including jewelry. Post bought superb stones and dealt with the finest firms, approaching her purchases with the same astuteness, attentiveness, and knowledge she relied on when buying French furniture and porcelain and imperial Russian art.

It was not uncommon for Post to hold on to her jewelry pieces and enjoy them for decades. For example, for a 1957 *Vogue* fashion shoot marking the opening of Hillwood, her new home in Washington, D.C., she wore emeralds she had purchased in the 1920s, matching them with a contemporary Charles James couture dress (see fig. 122). She knew that spectacular jewelry never loses its allure. Just as Post kept her magnificent eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French furniture throughout her life, she cherished her fine jewelry and wore it with great style.

Spectacular: Gems and Jewelry from the Merriweather Post Collection reveals for the first time the stories behind one of the most outstanding private collections of jewelry of the twentieth century. Liana Paredes, Hillwood's Chief Curator and Director of Collections, has spent years combing archives to trace lost pieces of jewelry and to understand Post's approach to working with the great jewelry houses of Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Harry Winston as well as with respected boutique firms, such as Verdura and David Webb, to create what many consider dazzling and individual works of art as jewelry. Paredes has masterfully organized a tremendous amount of information about the collector, gems, historic jewels, and twentieth-century jewelry design. Her skillful synthesis of facts and anecdotes into a compelling narrative not only provides intriguing insights into the Merriweather Post Collection, but also places it within the scope of jewelry styles, history, and design.

Kate Markert
Executive Director
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

Fig. 1
Pink conch pearl, diamond, and platinum bodice ornament with framed miniature of Marjorie Post Hutton as Marie Antoinette (acc. nos. 14.103.1–2).

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A number of institutions, jewelry firms, and individuals are to be thanked for their support of this publication.

First and foremost, I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to the many colleagues at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens who helped throughout this project. I am indebted to Kate Markert, our Executive Director, for her exceptional support and commitment. I offer very special thanks to the Collections group, Collections Manager MJ Meredith Hagan, and Curatorial Assistant Jennifer Levy, who worked above and beyond her call of duty.

A great nod must be given to Michael Oldford and Ed Parrinello of SquareMoose Inc. They photographed Hillwood's collection and cleaned up existing photography to make the pieces titillate and glitter. Bruce White is also to be commended for his photography of Hillwood and privately owned jewelry.

I would like to acknowledge the many colleagues and archives who have been extraordinarily forthcoming in their answers to my inquiries and research: Yvonne Markowitz and Emily Stoehrer at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Catherine Cariou at the Van Cleef & Arpels Historical Collection and Archive in Paris and Ilene Berg in New York, who kindly received me at the firm's premises to look at Post-related documents; Greg Bishop at the helm of the Cartier New York archives and Marina Wright for her assistance with image requests; Nico and Ward Landrigan at Verdura for scouting for Post jewels and the firm's archivist Caroline Stetson; Harry Winston archivist Libby Dale; David Webb archivist Levi Higgs; and Malgosia Myc and Diana Bachman at the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. In London, Stefano Papi, Michael Hall, and Affre Jamin, with whom I consulted in my pursuit of Post pieces. In Paris, Béatrice de Plinval at Chaumet and Claudine Sablier Paquet at Boucheron, who both graciously received me and showed their respective historical collections. I also conferred with author and expert Christophe Vachaudez on historic jewelry.

Many others were closely involved in the search for and study of Marjorie Post's jewelry. At Christie's, I wish to thank Daphne Lingon, who was extremely helpful in locating dispersed pieces. The jewelry team led by Lisa Hubbard at Sotheby's and in particular, Carol Elkins, traced several Post-related pieces sold through their premises. Samira Farmer at Doyle's office in Washington, D.C. was incredibly helpful in this regard as well. I would also like to express my appreciation to jewelers Betteridge, Wartski, Siegelson, and Simon Teakle for their assistance.

I had the privilege of consulting on this project with long-time colleague Dr. Jeffrey E. Post, Curator of the Smithsonian's National Gem and Mineral Collection, who is a fountain of gemological knowledge. Martin Fuller, gemologist and appraiser extraordinaire, was equally generous with his time in examining and sharing his expertise on Hillwood's jewels.

I am beholden to Wilfried Zeisler, Jeffrey Post, Michael Hall, Martin Fuller, and Jennifer Levy for contributing brilliant essays to this volume.

It has been a pleasure to work with publisher D Giles Limited, its principal, Dan Giles, and project managers Magda Nakassis and Allison McCormick.

I owe a great debt to my family who gave me support during trying moments while writing this book. To my late father, who instilled in me a love for art and gems. My daughter Sofia Arend read the manuscript and my husband Ignacio Alcover listened to my many diatribes while researching and writing.

Finally, I thank the Hillwood Board of Trustees, who have afforded me the great honor of working with such a distinguished collection of jewelry.

Liana Paredes
Chief Curator and Director of Collections
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

Fig. 2
Ruby and diamond "Marguerite" brooch (acc. no. 17.80) on malachite and hardstone table (acc. no. 32.19).

INTRODUCTION

Fig. 4
Marjorie Post Close, 1915.
Bentley Historical Library,
University of Michigan.

The first attempt at assessing Marjorie Merriweather Post's collection of jewelry has produced spectacular results. Until recently, the majority of known pieces were those now at Hillwood and the Smithsonian Institution. A thorough search of the archives and inventories at Hillwood has yielded an even more dazzling picture of the original size and scope of the collection. The Merriweather Post Collection, as the following pages will reveal, is perhaps the most formidable private jewelry collection assembled in the twentieth century.

Marjorie Merriweather Post was the only child of Ella Merriweather and Charles William "C.W." Post (fig. 4). Her father was a pioneer in the cereal industry and founder of the Postum Cereal Company. Upon his death in 1914, Marjorie, then twenty-seven years old, became one of the wealthiest women in America and the major shareholder of the company that would later become General Foods. Around that time, she began to buy impressive pieces of jewelry. From then on, the major developments in her life were punctuated and highlighted by the purchase of precious stones and outstanding jewels.

By 1900 Marjorie had traveled through Europe, visiting the Universal Exposition in Paris that year and attending the coronation of Edward VII in London in 1902. Later in 1902, young Marjorie received a pair of diamond solitaire earrings and matching ring from her father.

Fig. 3
Amethyst, turquoise, diamond, gold, and platinum necklace and earrings (acc. nos. 17.67.1–3) and baroque pearl, moonstone, diamond, and platinum necklace and earrings (acc. nos. 17.74.1–3) in jewel cabinet (acc. no. 31.27).

Fig. 5
Marjorie Merriweather Post's Sweet Sixteen portrait, 1903. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

She thanked him eloquently, writing, "Thanks for the lovely earrings. I feel so 'High Life' when I wear them" (fig. 5).[1]

In the late 1910s, while married to her first husband, E. B. Close, the couple began to spend the winter season in Palm Beach. "You can't conceive of the amount of jewels in those days that were worn there—huge diamond rings, pins and such necklaces as you wouldn't believe," she told her biographer, Nettie Leitch Major.[2]

Post's first major jewelry purchases coincided with the Roaring Twenties and the dazzling lifestyle she led with her second husband, the glamorous financier E. F. Hutton (figs. 6 and 7). One of the first jewelry firms she patronized was Cartier, which had risen to the zenith of jewelry making in the early 1900s. Cartier's innovation and mastering of French traditions must have greatly appealed to Post, who had already emerged as a collector of eighteenth-century French art.

Cartier soon became known for its unique manner of incorporating foreign and exotic themes into its contemporary designs. Among those exotic themes, Marjorie Post found great appeal in the Indian style—in production from the late 1910s into the 1930s, as exemplified by her purchase in the 1920s of a stunning emerald necklace and a brooch mounted with Indian old-cut emeralds (see figs. 42 and 44).

In addition to precious stones, pearls were omnipresent among Post's jewelry. Unlike diamonds, which required intervention by human

Fig. 6
Marjorie Post Hutton. Photograph by S'Ora Studio, Paris, ca. 1928. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.


L'Ota
PARIS

Fig. 7
E. F. Hutton and Marjorie Post Hutton at the Meadowbrook Cup Races in Old Westbury, New York, ca. 1933. Photograph by Bert Morgan.

Fig. 8
Marjorie Post Hutton. Photograph by Charlotte Fairchild, ca. 1920. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

hands to reveal their beauty, pearls, until they began being cultivated, were a wondrous product of nature, and this quality was highly appreciated and valued by the marketplace. Hillwood's archives document that Post had several strands of natural pearls in her collection (fig. 8).

Post not only subscribed to the latest jewelry designs, but also showed an early interest in historic jewels. This seems a natural extension of her fascination with eighteenth-century French works of royal provenance. The so-called "Marie Antoinette" earrings (see fig. 130)—purchased by Post through Cartier from the Russian princely Yusupov family—are the first of several important pieces of jewelry with royal connections that she acquired.

The Great Depression that followed the stock market crash of 1929 altered Marjorie Post's thinking in radical ways. She would no longer spend

her time in ball gowns and costumes or other theatrical extravagances, but would devote herself to alleviating the poverty and suffering of those less fortunate than herself. She promptly put her jewels away in a safety-deposit box and with the money she saved on jewelry insurance financed the Marjorie Post Hutton Canteen in New York City. It fed thousands of women and children in a homey environment not usually found in Depression-era soup kitchens (fig. 9). The tables were set with clean blue oilcloth and bouquets of red roses.[3]

In the mid-1930s, Post resumed buying jewelry. Although modernist design did not overly appeal to her, she purchased a few pieces in this avant-garde style. She also acquired some glamorous pieces, such as a Cartier diamond and sapphire necklace (see fig. 66), to take with her to Moscow when her then-husband, Joseph E. Davies, was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union, a post he held from 1936 to 1938.

After World War II, when several pieces of historic jewelry, among them a diadem (see fig. 133) and necklace (see fig. 137) once owned by Napoleon's second wife, Marie Louise of Austria, came on the market, Marjorie Post was ready to acquire them. During this period of uncer-

Fig. 9
Marjorie Post Hutton with eight-year-old Florence Lambert at the Marjorie Post Hutton Canteen in New York City, 1933. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Fig. 10
Marjorie Merriweather Post presenting the Marie Louise necklace to the Smithsonian Institution, 1962. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

tainty, jewelry became a type of investment, "a form of capital with the advantage of being easily transportable."[4]

Post's sumptuous and valuable collection was kept and maintained with the utmost care and attention to detail. Special leather boxes were constructed to her specifications and fitted with anti-tarnish cloth to accommodate each piece of jewelry. A safe next to her dressing room secured the jewels while also making them accessible for daily wear.

Gabriele Weinert, Post's second personal maid, recalled how she changed dresses several times a day, which also meant selecting the ap-

propriate jewelry for each outfit. "I was allowed to have the number code for the safe," Weinert said, "and I suggested which type of jewelry she would wear and then she said okay, or no I don't want this." The safe, Weinert recalled, "was as tall as I am . . . It was a big safe, full of jewelry of all kinds from top to bottom. I was having a ball just looking at it."[5]

In the 1960s Marjorie Post started to forge plans to leave Hillwood to the Smithsonian Institution. At the same time, she began bequeathing pieces of jewelry to the National Museum of Natural History. She first presented the Marie Louise necklace to the museum in 1962 (fig. 10). This was followed by a substantial donation in 1964. At a dinner celebrating the signing of the transfer of Hillwood to the Smithsonian in 1969, S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian, recalled how Post had appeared at the "Castle," accompanied by several friends and her granddaughter Ellen Charles. Post opened the shopping bag she had in tow to reveal an "irreplaceable collection of jewels and lace."[6] Among the items were the Maximilian emerald, the Marie Antoinette earrings, and the Blue Heart diamond (see figs. 13, 25, and 130). Ripley described the value of Post's gift as "inestimable."[7]

Marjorie Merriweather Post was de facto one of the major forces behind the creation of the Smithsonian's National Gem Collection. She led by example, writing letters to potential donors asking them to consider donating their jewelry to the Smithsonian. In a letter to Anna Thompson

Dodge, wife of Dodge automobile co-founder Horace Dodge, Post asked whether Anna would be willing to lend her historic jewels to the museum and proceeded to tell her about the important pieces she had already bequeathed, including the Marie Louise necklace and the Maximilian emerald, so called after the emperor of Mexico. "The Smithsonian would be so grateful and it would give such great pleasure to the many thousands who visit the Museum," Post wrote.[8]

The intense interest Post exhibited in the history and provenance of her art collection also extended to her jewelry. In 1965 her curator, Marvin Ross, traveled to Paris to consult records at the National Archives and continued his research in Parma, where documents relating to Marie Louise's personal jewelry survive. Post's biographer, Nettie Leitch Major, also conducted inquiries on her behalf. In 1963 she corresponded with Cartier about an emerald necklace (see fig. 42). Post recalled buying the necklace sometime between 1923 and 1927, during her marriage to E. F. Hutton, and it had supposedly been made for the Maharaja of Rajpipla. They passed this information on to Cartier for verification, noting, "Mrs. May [Marjorie Post] is having her collection catalogued and does not wish to claim a false story of origin."[9]

In her later years, Marjorie Post continued to buy jewelry, most notably a necklace by George Headley (see fig. 114) and several diamond, emerald, and sapphire rings. She also bought more casual jewelry from David

Fig. 11
Marjorie Merriweather Post at the Red Cross Ball in Palm Beach, Florida, 1968. Photograph by Bob Davidoff. Private collection.

Webb (see figs. 117, 118, and 119). Post's social life at the time was centered primarily in Palm Beach. In 1969 she wrote to her friend Rhoda Doubleday, "We are just getting ready for the big Red Cross Ball weekend here in Palm Beach and are full of excitement as you can imagine . . . complete with White Tie, tiaras and decorations" (fig. 11).[10]

Although some of Post's jewelry was well known, during her lifetime she shied away from talking to the press about her highly prized jewels. As Post told *Cosmopolitan* in 1969, "I am sorry I must decline [your proposal] as I never do this sort of thing."[11]

By 1968 a detailed inventory of Post's jewelry counted 208 pieces. Despite her desire to keep her jewelry collection in the public eye, several items were dispersed over time. Christie's auctioned a number of pieces belonging to the Post Foundation and Post family members in 1981 and 1982. The *New York Times* took note of the remarkable gems offered at Christie's in 1981 that had belonged to the late Marjorie Merriweather Post. The top lots in the sale, the article remarked, were

"a bracelet centered by . . . an exceptionally fine sapphire . . . weighing 58.33 carats . . . a dancing girl in 18th-century costume worked in diamonds, rubies and emeralds . . . and a miniature airplane awash with diamonds, sapphires, and rubies."[12]

In 1982, the press reported that, through the sale of 37 lots, the Post Foundation had raised more than $1 million toward capital improvements at Hillwood. In the words of François Curiel, head of Christie's jewelry department, "The sale was a success . . . the Post name was a big drawing card."[13]

Several pieces from these sales have since been located, but the whereabouts of others remain elusive.

Despite the sumptuousness of Post's jewelry, her collection conveys a thoughtful and nuanced message that goes beyond mere dazzle and glitz. In addition to being spectacular, Post's collection is unique. Her vision was novel in that she saw jewelry not only as objects for personal adornment, but also as works of art worthy of display. She recognized the importance of jewelry in the world of artistic design and purposely retained many of her pieces for the public's future enjoyment and access.

Post's love and understanding of gems and jewels has earned her the distinction of being a major collector of her time. Thanks to her insightfulness, the highlights of her collection remain on display for the public to enjoy.

Notes

1 Alphabetical research files, 1901–1910, Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
2 Marjorie Merriweather Post, interview by Nettie Leitch Major, Palm Beach, Florida, February 1965. Transcript in Hillwood Archives.
3 Nancy Rubin, *American Empress: The Life and Times of Marjorie Merriweather Post* (New York: Villard Books, 1995), 178.
4 Georges Fouquet, "La bijouterie et la joaillerie modernes," in *L'Orfèvrerie, la joaillerie,* Paris, 1942, quoted in Sylvie Raulet, *Jewelry of the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 13.
5 Gabriele Weinert, interview by Estella Chung, October 6, 2009, Oral History Project, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
6 Rubin, *American Empress,* 368.
7 Ibid.
8 Letter from Marjorie Merriweather Post to Anna Thompson Dodge, March 29, 1967, Marvin Ross papers, folder 26, 1967 memos, Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
9 Letter from Nettie Leitch Major to George Marx, Cartier New York, August 19, 1963, reel 16, Post Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
10 Letter from Marjorie Merriweather Post to Rhoda Doubleday, January 28, 1969, reel 10, Post Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
11 Correspondence between Marjorie Merriweather Post and *Cosmopolitan*, January 18 and February 12, 1969, reel 11, Post Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
12 Rita Reif, "Auction; Notable Gems at 2 Houses," *New York Times,* October 9, 1981.
13 Jeffrey Hogrefe, "The $540,000 Ring," *Washington Post,* April 21, 1982.

GEMS

Gem collectors seek the natural beauty of a stone over design. Great stones have historically been part of royal and princely collections and an important element in pageantry. They have also been sought after by individuals wanting to make a secure and portable financial investment. It is somewhat rare, however, for a jewelry collector to focus on gems with the eye of an expert while also acquiring high-end jewelry and historical ensembles, as was the case with Marjorie Merriweather Post.

As Post's perception of gems evolved toward seeing them as wonders of the natural world that could be turned into works of art and beauty by cutters and designers, she forged a plan to retain her gems for public display. Today some remain at Hillwood, while others can be seen at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. As with so many gems through history, some other pieces were dispersed. Several of these have been brought together for this publication.

There are early indications of Marjorie Post's appreciation of gems. Once shown a "particularly fine emerald," a friend asked her opinion on its quality. She replied that her father had told her that one day she would be a very wealthy woman and that she would therefore need to gain expertise in judging things of value she might wish to buy. Then, revealing her already discerning skills in regard to jewelry, she went on to assess the emerald's quality with the terminology and precision of an expert gemologist.[1]

Fig. 12
Emerald, diamond, and platinum ring (acc. no. 17.78) on ring holder (acc. no. 15.174).

Fig. 13

The first important stone to enter Post's collection was the so-called "Maximilian emerald" (fig. 13). This 21.04-carat Colombian emerald reportedly once belonged to the ill-fated emperor of Mexico. Napoleon III orchestrated the imperial plans for Archduke Maximilian of Austria to rule Mexico, but the scheme was a failed one from the beginning and the outcome fatal, culminating in Maximilian's assassination by Mexican troops in 1867.

Maximilian had been an amateur naturalist, and, during a botany expedition to Brazil in 1860, he collected rare gemological specimens. Among them were two exceptionally large diamonds that would be named after him, the Emperor Maximilian and the Maximilian II. The Emperor Maximilian was a 41.94-carat diamond with a strong blue fluorescence in daylight. The Maximilian II, a 33-carat specimen with a greenish-yellow tint, is sometimes called the Carlota diamond, because Maximilian presented it to his bride, Princess Charlotte of Belgium (later Empress Carlota of Mexico), upon his return to Europe.

Like so many gems throughout history that have been hidden and smuggled out of areas riddled by conflict and warfare, the Emperor Maximilian diamond disappeared for a time, after Maximilian's execution. It would, however, be returned to Carlota, and she would eventually sell it to pay for her expenses during a period of mental illness. Its troubled history continued, as it arrived in the United States in the hands of smugglers.[2] The diamond was subsequently bought by gem dealer Laurence Graff and also owned by Filipino first lady Imelda Marcos among others. It was last sold at Christie's in 2010.[3]

Much less is documented about the Maximilian emerald. Did the emperor purchase it during his expedition through Brazil or perhaps his sojourn in Mexico? His love of beautiful gems was well known. Also known is that Marjorie Post owned it around 1928 and that she possibly purchased it from Cartier. She wore it mounted in a ring in 1929 to her presentation at the Court of St. James's, complementing the green hue of her gown. Post's granddaughter Ellen Charles recalls hearing that her grandmother later wore the ring during the coronation festivities of England's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937. After attending a celebratory event at Buckingham Palace, Post realized that the emerald had dropped from its setting. A call to the palace luckily resulted in the swift recovery of the stone. In 1949 Cartier remounted the historic gem with its current setting of baguette diamonds.

Fig. 15
Oscar Heyman & Bros. design for Marcus & Co. emerald and diamond brooch, ca. 1929. Oscar Heyman & Bros. Archives.

The Maximilian ring is one of several pieces of jewelry featuring emeralds that Post acquired in the late 1920s. A large carved specimen is featured in a brooch created by Oscar Heyman & Bros. for the jewelry firm Marcus & Co., now at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 14). The central stone is very different from the Maximilian emerald in that it is carved in the typical Mughal style. It is an important and rare example of the influence of traditional Indian jewelry on American art deco jewelry. The large rounded size of the central emerald is complemented by the dangling tear-shaped emeralds surrounding it. The top section features a geometrical art deco design. The use of platinum for mounting adds a lightness and flexibility to the piece and endows the traditional cut of the stones with a feeling of modernity (fig. 15).

The brooch must date to around 1929. In the December 8, 1928 issue of *Vogue,* Marcus & Co. advertised a line of jewelry for the Christmas season that it called "Ambassadors of Good Will," featuring carved emeralds mounted in platinum and diamonds. Marjorie Post frequently wore

Fig. 14
Emerald and diamond brooch. Created by Oscar Heyman & Bros. for Marcus & Co., ca. 1929. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acc. no. 2008.179.

Fig. 16
Marjorie Post Davies watching a parade with members of the diplomatic corps in Moscow's Red Square, 1937–38.

her emerald brooch from the late 1920s through the 1960s (fig. 17). It was sold after her death and in 2008 entered the jewelry collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where it remains on permanent display.

Post's experience in Russia from 1937 to 1938 as wife of the American ambassador, Joseph E. Davies, nurtured her appreciation for Russian art as well as for Russian gemstones and hardstones (fig. 16). There are no better amethysts than Siberian amethysts, so it is no surprise that, after the diplomatic posting to Moscow, Post searched for a magnificent

Fig. 17
Marjorie Post Davies wearing her Marcus & Co. emerald and diamond brooch. Photograph by Yousuf Karsh, ca. 1950. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

example. The highest-quality amethysts have a deep, rich, velvety purple color, which can be appreciated fully in this specimen (fig. 18). The stone is mounted as a brooch with a dainty scrolled bow in a design characteristic of the Belle Époque period. The piece came from Wartski, the London firm that for years supplied Post with extraordinary examples of Russian imperial works, Fabergé, and other historic jewelry.

Post frequently provided her own stones to be set into pieces of jewelry. Such is the case of the large sapphire in the center of a Cartier necklace (see fig. 66) and the triangular-shaped diamond in her Harry Winston brooch (see fig. 102), to name a few. A great deal is known about the design for these pieces, but little about Post's purchases of loose stones.

By the mid-twentieth century, when diamonds surged in value and importance as engagement and statement rings, Marjorie Post could boast of owning a few great examples. In 1948 De Beers, the consortium of companies that still largely controls the diamond trade, launched the very successful "A Diamond Is Forever" campaign and encouraged designers to use diamonds in formal as well as casual settings. The campaign reinforced the idea of the diamond as *the* gem for engagement rings and as a symbol of enduring love. In 1953 the diamond-grading system based on the 4 "Cs"—color, cut, clarity, and carat weight, introduced earlier by the Gemological Institute of America—became the universal grading standard for these

Fig. 18
Siberian amethyst and diamond brooch, ca. 1900. Private collection.

Fig. 19
Marquise diamond. Mounted as ring by Cartier, 1920–30s. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G4220.

Fig. 20
Diamond engagement ring from Herbert May. Harry A. Meyers, New York, 1958. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.79.

gems. More sellers and consumers became aware and knowledgeable about these criteria and applied them when purchasing big stones.

Prior to the surge in diamonds' relevance, Marjorie Post had acquired a marquise-cut diamond ring from Cartier (fig. 19). The stone, an exceptional 28.3-carat specimen, originated in South Africa.

In 1958 Post came to possess another marquise diamond, this one set in the engagement ring she received from Herbert May (fig. 20). The ring, which features a marquise diamond of 17.15 carats, remains at Hillwood.

Marjorie Post seems to have fallen prey to Harry Winston's impressive stock of remarkable gemstones. Winston, who by the mid-twentieth

Fig. 21
Emerald, diamond, and platinum ring. Harry Winston, 1966. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.78.

century owned a third of the world's most famous diamonds, supplied several important gems to Post from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Typical of Winston's mounted gems during this period is a fine and rare 31-carat emerald in an elaborate setting with round diamonds interspersed with pear-cut diamonds on its shank (fig. 21). Purchased in late 1966, it is now at Hillwood. The stone is considered an exceptional specimen, with a fine green color and only a few flaws among the fissures and inclusions expected in emeralds.[4]

The above-mentioned rings are some of the ones to have survived at Hillwood. An auction held at Christie's on April 20, 1982 brought

Fig. 23
Marjorie Merriweather Post diamond.

Fig. 22
Post yellow diamond

Fig. 24
Hexagonal sapphire and diamond ring. Harry Winston, 1962.

attention to some of Marjorie Post's largest diamonds and colored gems, which were sold to benefit the museum's foundation.

Fancy new cuts and old cuts alike appealed to Post. Among her antique-cut gems was a yellow diamond, a brilliant-cut stone of over 36 carats, one of the largest fancy diamonds available at that time (fig. 22). Another was a spectacular 31.40-carat antique cushion-cut D-color diamond (fig. 23). This stone had belonged to Mae C. Rovensky, who amassed an astonishing collection of jewelry. Her name will forever be associated with the unusual trade her first husband, Commodore Morton F. Plant, made with Cartier in 1916—selling his Fifth Avenue townhouse to the firm in exchange for two strands of pearls, then valued at $1.5 million dollars, for his dear wife. Harry Winston acquired the large diamond at the Rovensky sale in 1957 and slightly recut it to 31.20 carats.[5] The jeweler sold it to Post that same year. The stone was auctioned at Christie's in 1982 as the Marjorie Merriweather Post diamond, and its sale made an astounding $540,000 at the time. In the words of

the then-head of Christie's jewelry department, François Curiel, "The Post diamond ring is one of the finest in the world."[6]

Another notable ring featured a large antique brilliant-cut diamond of 19.8 carats surrounded by baguettes with a mount enhanced by marquise- and pear-shaped diamonds. It, too, was a purchase from Harry Winston, in 1965. A spectacular 70-carat hexagonal step-cut sapphire mounted as a ring also changed hands at the Christie's 1982 sale (fig. 24). This gem likewise came from Harry Winston, purchased by Post in 1962.

The star of all Post's gems was the Blue Heart diamond (fig. 25). Its history, including the legend that it had once belonged to Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III, only added to its allure. The stone was sometimes referred to as the Eugénie Blue. The 30.62-carat blue diamond was mined in South Africa and cut into a heart shape by the Parisian firm of Atanik Eknayan of Neuilly around 1909–10. According to Dr. Jeffrey E. Post, Curator of the National Gem and Mineral Collection, blue diamonds, particularly those of a deep blue color like this one, are very rare.

Cartier purchased the stone in 1910 and sold it a year later as part of a lily-of-the-valley breast ornament to María Unzué de Alvear, one of the wealthiest Argentinians of the Belle Époque (fig. 26; see also fig. 30). Infatuated with French taste, her grand residence in Buenos Aires was built by the prestigious French architect René Sergent and decorated by the Parisian firm of Carlhian. Unsurprisingly, she went to Cartier for

Fig. 25
The exceptional Blue Heart diamond. Mounted as ring by Harry Winston, ca. 1960.
National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G4873.

Fig. 26
[illegible] María Unzué
[illegible]
[illegible] 1910
[illegible] Paris [illegible]
[illegible] ZD2880

her jewels. The blue diamond stayed in the Unzué family for more than three decades.

In 1946 Harry Winston got wind that the gem was about to become available for sale. His efforts to buy it, however, proved to be fruitless. Instead, Van Cleef & Arpels purchased it in 1953. The Parisian

Fig. 27
Zizi Jeanmaire and Serge Lifar with the necklace featuring the Blue Heart diamond at a charity ball at Versailles, June 17, 1953.

Fig. 28
Nina Dyer wearing the Blue Heart diamond pendant necklace, 1954. Private collection.

firm orchestrated a stunning reappearance of the beautiful blue diamond, transforming it into the pendant of a necklace that also featured the triangular blue diamond and pear-shaped pink diamond from the Unzué corsage ornament (see fig. 31). The Paris Opera ballet dancer Zizi Jeanmaire wore it in 1953 at a fundraising ball for the French

League against Cancer in the Orangerie at the Château de Versailles (fig. 27). Shortly thereafter, the handsome Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza bought the necklace to give to his love interest, the enigmatic beauty Nina Dyer, who had captivated the iron and steel tycoon (fig. 28). The diamond returned to Van Cleef & Arpels in the late 1950s after Dyer and the baron divorced.

By 1959 the stone was finally in Harry Winston's hands. In April 1964 he sold it to Post mounted as the present ring. Two months later, the Blue Heart entered the National Gem Collection at the Smithsonian.

Notes

1 William Wright, *Heiress: The Rich Life of Marjorie Merriweather Post* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1978), 229. Years later, as an established connoisseur of stones and with definite opinions about what she liked and wanted, Post would write in a letter to Harry Winston, "Your Marquise has been returned to you. I do not like it and I do not like its color. So, for the moment this Marquise business is a closed issue." Letter from Marjorie Merriweather Post to Count Adlerberg at Harry Winston, December 16, 1964, Post Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

2 A curious book, originally published in 1908, describes the flurry of smugglers bringing valuables and precious stones into the United States at the turn of the last century. See William Henry Theobald, *Defrauding the Government: True Tales of Smuggling, from the Note-Book of a Confidential Agent of the United States Treasury* (New York: Myrtle Publishing Co., 1908).

3 Legend has it that Maximilian was wearing the Emperor Maximilian diamond in a small satchel tied around his neck when he faced the firing squad. Following his execution, Maximilian's remains were sent to Vienna and the diamond returned to Carlota. Upon news of Maximilian's death, Carlota's mental health suffered, and she shut herself off from the outside world. The diamond was sold to help pay for expenses during her illness. It disappeared for more than three decades, until 1901, when two Mexicans attempted to smuggle it into the United States. Customs authorities seized it, and the US government auctioned it later that year for $120,000. Ferdinand Holtz, a Chicago gem dealer, purchased it at the 1933–34 Chicago World's Fair, where it was the highlight of the *Century of Progress* exhibition, which recreated a South African diamond mine complete with native laborers. Despite several offers to buy the diamond from him, Holtz refused to sell it, and it remained in his possession until his death in 1946. The gem was subsequently sold to a private collector in New York who then sold it mounted in a ring by Cartier at Christie's, New York, on July 20, 1982, for $726,000. The buyer was Laurence Graff, a London jeweler with a vast collection of notable and historic diamonds. In January 1983, Graff sold the Emperor Maximilian, together with two other important diamonds, to Imelda Marcos, wife of Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos. It was subsequently sold and recut in the 1990s to its current weight of 39.55 carats. The diamond was auctioned at Christie's, New York, on April 22, 2010, where it went for $1,762,500.

4 Observations by Pete J. Dunn, "Emeralds in the Smithsonian Gem Collection," *Lapidary Journal* 29 (January 1975): 1572–75. Dunn worked in the Smithsonian Institution's Department of Mineral Sciences.

5 See *The Magnificent Jewelry of the Late Mrs. John E. Rovensky [Formerly Mrs. Morton Plant]*, Parke Bernet Galleries, New York, January 23, 1957, lot 113.

6 Jeffrey Hogrefe, "The $540,000 Ring," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1982.

The Blue Heart Diamond

Jeffrey E. Post, Chairman, Department of Mineral Sciences
Curator, National Gem and Mineral Collection, Smithsonian Institution

In June 1964, Marjorie Merriweather Post arrived at the office of Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley bearing gifts, her bag brimming with jewelry that she was presenting to the Smithsonian Institution. Among the treasures was a magnificent 30.62-carat heart-shaped blue diamond that she had purchased from Harry Winston only two months earlier. Twenty-five round brilliant-cut colorless diamonds surround it (fig. 29). The blue diamond measures 20.15 x 19.84 x 11.85 millimeters. Its fancy deep blue color originated from trace amounts of the element boron that were incorporated into the diamond structure as it formed more than a billion years ago approximately 100 miles below Earth's surface.

With its large size, deep blue color, and exquisite cut, the Blue Heart diamond was, and is, one of the world's great diamonds and is considered by many diamond aficionados to be the most beautiful blue diamond. Today, it is a visitor favorite at the National Gem Collection Gallery in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, appreciated for its singular beauty and glamorous past.

Blue diamonds are exceedingly rare, accounting for fewer than one in 200,000 mined diamonds. South Africa's Premier Mine, now the Cullinan Mine, is noteworthy as a source of these rare stones. According to the De Beers archives, in November 1909 an exceptional 100.5 carat deep blue diamond was found at the Premier Mine, and, in December of that same year, the rough crystal was sold to the diamond cutter Atanik Eknayan of Neuilly, Paris, for £3,979.16 (equivalent to approximately $600,000 in 2016). Eknayan had the stone faceted into a

Fig. 29
The exceptional Blue Heart diamond. Mounted as ring by Harry Winston, ca. 1960. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G4873.

Fig. 30
Lily-of-the-valley corsage ornament featuring the Blue Heart diamond. Cartier Paris, 1910. Cartier Paris Archives.

Fig. 31
Design for necklace mounted with the Blue Heart diamond at the bottom. Van Cleef & Arpels, 1953. Van Cleef & Arpels Archives.

30.62 carat heart-shaped brilliant and later, in 1910, sold it to the jeweler Pierre Cartier. Cartier used the blue diamond as the centerpiece of a corsage ornament with a lily-of-the-valley design, accented with a 2.05-carat pear-shaped pink and 3.81-carat triangular blue diamond (fig. 30). He sold it in 1911 to the heiress and philanthropist María Unzué de Alvear of Buenos Aires, and in 1936 she gave it as a wedding present to her niece Ángela de Álzaga Unzué.[1] Thus, the diamond is sometimes referred to as the Unzué Heart.

The Parisian firm of Van Cleef & Arpels purchased the corsage in 1953. According to a member of the Unzué family, the price exceeded that being asked for a very fine house in Buenos Aires.[2] Van Cleef & Arpels reset the colored diamonds into a pendant (fig. 31). Later in 1953, the pendant was purchased by Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, a Swiss industrialist. It was one of many extravagant gifts, including an island in Jamaica, that he showered upon the fashion model Nina Sheila Dyer, with whom he had a long affair, married in 1954, and divorced ten months later. In 1959 Nina sold the Blue Heart pendant to the New York jeweler Harry Winston. For him, getting his hands on this great gem was an opportunity finally realized.

Winston had first become aware of the Blue Heart diamond during a trip to Buenos Aires in 1946, but had been unsuccessful in his attempt to acquire it at that time. Winston reset the Blue Heart in its current ring setting and sold it to Post in April 1964. Two months later, she gifted the diamond to the Smithsonian Institution, reserving the right to "use, enjoy and take [it] into her possession . . . during her natural life for such period or periods of time as she shall desire." The diamond was loaned back to her in 1964, 1968, and 1970. From June through August 1971, the Blue Heart was featured in the Kimberley Centenary Exhibition in South Africa, celebrating 100 years of diamond mining in that country.

At the National Museum of Natural History, the Blue Heart is admired by several million visitors annually. A museum docent once overheard Post saying to guests, "My blue diamond is prettier than that other one." The "other one," of course, is the Hope diamond. Many would agree with her.

Notes

1 Correspondence in the curatorial files, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

2 Ibid.

A DAZZLING COLLECTION OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY JEWELRY

The pieces of twentieth-century jewelry in the Merriweather Post Collection offer an unparalleled view of the evolution of fine jewelry during the first six decades of that era. This extraordinary ensemble also provides insight into the personality and aesthetic preferences of Marjorie Merriweather Post and places her at the zenith of elegant and discerning female patrons of the major jewelry firms of the time.

The earliest surviving pieces from her collection were special commissions from Cartier. Post was one of the firm's most important and long-standing American clients. She frequented the firm's three establishments in Paris, London, and New York from the 1920s through the 1960s. The Cartier brothers had established their first shop on Paris's fashionable rue de la Paix in 1899. While Louis oversaw the Paris branch, Pierre moved to London in 1902 to open their second store, which Jacques took over in 1906. A few years later, in 1909, Pierre crossed the Atlantic to inaugurate Cartier in New York. Pierre was the Cartier brother with whom Marjorie Post dealt most directly.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Cartier bypassed the Art Nouveau movement and fully embraced the "garland" style, which was

Fig. 32
Diamond and platinum bib necklace (acc. no. 17.70) suspended from *Négresse* clock (acc. no. 16.3).

Fig. 34
Portrait of Marjorie Post Hutton in presentation court dress. Giulio de Blaas, 1929. Oil on canvas. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 51.149.

influenced by Louis XVI neoclassicism. The jewelry produced by the firm also had parallels with the architecture of the Belle Époque, combining such classical ornaments as laurels, wheat sheaves, wreaths, meanders, and arrows with eighteenth-century elements, including scrolls, garlands, and bows. In women's fashion, the S-curve silhouette and close-fitting bodices of the period were complemented by stomacher (*devant de corsage*) brooches, bodice ornaments, bows, and choker necklaces that hugged the neckline.

It is not surprising that Post, who in the 1920s was developing a taste for collecting French art and furnishing her elegant Manhattan homes with the decorative arts of late eighteenth-century France, would commission pieces with an Ancien Régime flair. In a photograph of Marjorie Post stepping out at Hogarcito, her first Palm Beach residence, she is fully decked out in a Marie Antoinette costume for a fancy dress ball. A Cartier pearl and diamond stomacher adorns the bodice (fig. 33). Remarking on Post's appearances as Marie Antoinette, fashion photographer Cecil Beaton told *Vogue* in 1937 that she looked "unsurpassable" as the French queen.[1]

The stomacher was later refashioned as a shoulder ornament (*épaulette*) to complement Post's outfit for her

Fig. 33
Marjorie Post Hutton dressed as Marie Antoinette at Hogarcito in Palm Beach, Florida. Photograph by Frank E. Geisler, 1923. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

presentation at the Court of St. James's in 1929. The appearance before King George V and Queen Mary was something she had looked forward to for quite some time. To mark the occasion, Post sat for a portrait by Giulio de Blaas decked in a splendid beaded green silk court dress with the customary train and feathers (fig. 34). She is depicted wearing her spectacular Marie Antoinette earrings, which she had just purchased from Cartier, the Maximilian emerald, and an assortment of diamond and emerald bracelets. She also wears the Cartier shoulder ornament. This unusual piece of jewelry speaks to the fleeting fashion trends of the day. They were only produced for a short period of time, never in pairs, and were often disassembled.

In the late 1920s Post commissioned a brooch from Cartier designed as a miniature triangular bodice ornament (fig. 35). An avid collector of gems from her early years, she provided the naturally irregular conch pearls, which Cartier masterfully arranged for the brooch.

The conch pearls' light orange-to-pink iridescent shades distinguish and highlight Post's unique piece. Such pearls, from the pink shells of the Caribbean conch, were considered exotic and chic. Unlike nacreous pearls, with their milky surfaces, the saturated colors of the conch appear to burn with a "flaming" effect known as "chatoyancy."[2] As the fashion for pearls climaxed around World War I, pink pearls came to be regarded as an extravagance. Conch pearls were rare—and continue to be, as they cannot be cultured—and thus remained the preserve of a small circle of connoisseurs.

Fig. 35
Pink conch pearl, diamond, and platinum bodice ornament.
Cartier New York, 1929. Private collection.

A few years prior Post had ordered a long pendant brooch with a pear-shaped natural pearl from Cartier. While the triangular brooch drew inspiration from the past, the pendant brooch looks forward in an utterly modern way. The elongated pin is topped by carved ruby and onyx buds set on "vines" suspending a pear-shaped natural pearl and briolette-cut pink tourmaline at the bottom (fig. 37). The combination of black onyx with white diamonds and platinum together with a splash of color from the pink tourmaline and ruby announces the chromatic schemes of the Art Deco movement. Stylistically, it reflects Post's developing interest in simple, abstracted forms and a shift away from classical scrolls, swags, and garlands. The piece began life as a slightly shorter pendant brooch, as shown in the 1914 design from Cartier's Paris archives (fig. 36). It was subsequently lengthened in 1925 with the addition of two stylized tree branches at the top. A photograph from the early 1920s shows Marjorie Post wearing it as a hatpin (fig. 38). Pendant hatpins were a variation on the hat brooches with dangling stones and upright ornaments (*aigrettes*) worn to adorn turbans and bandeaus in the 1910s and early 1920s.

These early pieces in the Merriweather Post Collection are mounted in platinum. Thanks to a novel melting process developed just before 1900, platinum began to be prized for its lightness and unparalleled strength, two qualities that offered great advantages in reducing the amount of metal needed for setting stones and allowing for airier mounts. Platinum's

Fig. 36
Design for onyx, pearl, ruby, and pink tourmaline pendant brooch. Cartier Paris, 1914. Cartier Paris Archives.

Fig. 37
Diamond, onyx, pearl, ruby, pink tourmaline and platinum penaart brooch. Created by Cartier Paris in 1914 and modified by Cartier New York, 1925.

shimmering surface also beautifully complemented strongly colored gemstones. Cartier became known for its innovative use of platinum, and its pieces were soon declared the best in Paris.

As noted, the pearl on the brooch is natural. Around 1900, the price of pearls on the European and United States markets reached astronomical heights, making them a status symbol and an absolute must for high society ladies. Cartier, Chaumet, and Tiffany & Co. stood at the forefront of the pearl jewelry business, collecting specimens from various dealers and turning them into attractive necklaces and strands. They and other major jewelry firms had special sections, or salons, devoted to pearls, which accounted for over 80 percent of their business.[3] Their value was such that, in 1916, Pierre Cartier was able to trade the palatial Fifth Avenue mansion of banker Morton F. Plant for two strands of pearls that Plant's wife had taken a fancy to. The mansion, at 653 Fifth Avenue, remains Cartier's headquarters in New York.

An episode from Post's life further reflects the cost of pearls. After her second husband, Edward F. Hutton, lost a staggering amount of money at Bradley's Casino in Palm Beach, Marjorie Post threatened to spend double that amount if he did it again. Additional gambling losses caused her to go out and buy a strand of pearls worth $100,000. She later recounted that when E. F. Hutton received the bill, "He went straight in the air like a geyser . . . He paid the bill . . . I never found that he was gambling as heavily again."[4]

Fig. 38
Marjorie Post Hutton wearing her Cartier brooch as a hatpin, ca. 1921. Photo signed "Brandenburg, N.Y." Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Archival photographs reveal the various strands of natural pearls that Marjorie Post owned. A long strand *en sautoir* dating from the late 1920s was divided in 1936 into two shorter necklaces for Adelaide, Post's eldest daughter (fig. 39). One necklace consisted of thirty-nine pearls weighing 675 grains (1 carat equals 4 grains), while the other had forty-three pearls and weighed 771.64 grains.[5] The photograph of the sautoir shows each pearl bearing a number in red, indicating its weight in grains. Post's middle daughter, Eleanor, received two similar strands of natural pearls that same year. Cartier measured and handled both restringing jobs.

The allure of natural pearls began to fade in 1916, when Mikimoto succeeded in the production of round cultured pearls. Although cultivated pearls were dismissed by many high-end jewelers, the appeal of the natural pearl was unable to halt the rise of the cultured pearl in the United States and Europe.[6] The final blow to natural pearls came during the global economic crisis of 1929, when their price dropped dramatically.

As a wealthy young socialite, collector, and philanthropist, Marjorie Post signaled her status in society by selecting pieces of jewelry of undeniable presence and modernity. Cartier's designs, especially those incorporating exotic influences, were particularly appealing to her. In 1913, Cartier's New York store hosted an exhibition of fifty items reflecting a wide range of Eastern cultures, as recorded in an accompanying catalogue.[7] The pieces' dazzling juxtapositions of color stemmed from the striking combinations presented by the Ballets Russes and Fauvist painters. They

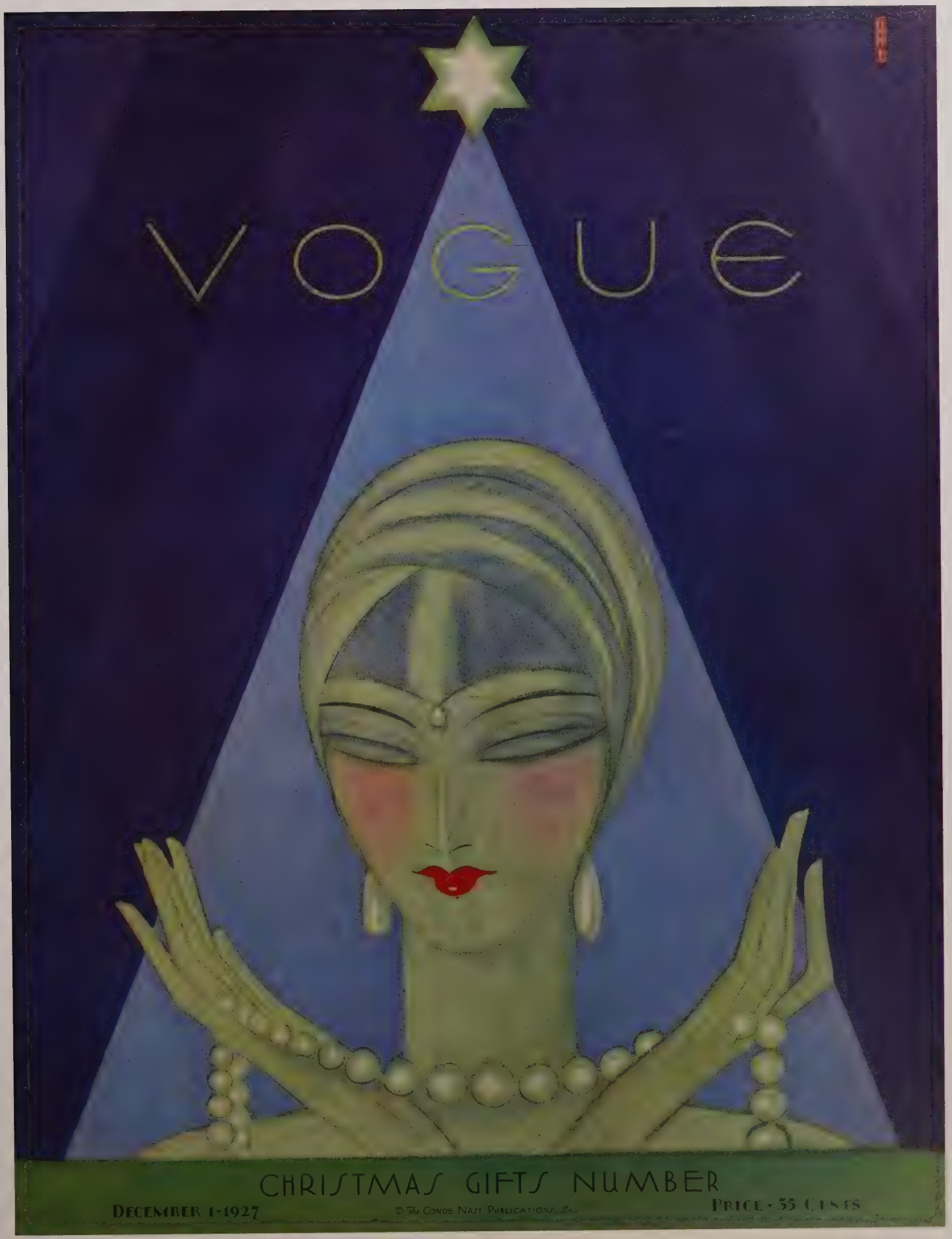
Fig. 39
Photograph of natural pearl sautoir prior to splitting and restringing, 1929. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

also illustrated the allure of the exotic, exhibited new forms, and displayed the use of "primitive" unfaceted stones. These trends all continued into the 1920s. "No longer are size and flawlessness the only essential qualifications for the chic of a jewel," reported *Vogue* in 1927.[8] Marjorie Post undoubtedly fell under the spell of Cartier's novel jewels.

By the 1920s, the cultures of India, Persia, and Egypt had captivated European society, inspiring avant-garde expressions in literature, fashion, the performing arts, and design (fig. 40). India exerted the strongest influence on Cartier, particularly the London branch, due to the British presence there. Jacques Cartier from the London office was the main intermediary with maharajas and gem dealers and cutters in Bombay. The first important contacts Cartier made with the maharajas were forged during celebrations for George V's coronation at the Delhi Durbar in 1911. To Jacques's surprise, the Indian rulers were initially primarily interested in watches. The firm's first big commission came from the Maharaja of Baroda, a state where the caste system was proscribed and education was free. For his golden jubilee, he commissioned Jacques to reset his entire jewelry collection in platinum. Others maharajas soon followed his lead.[9]

India was not only a source of stones and business, but also a fount of inspiration for the creative minds of the designers at Cartier. From India Jacques brought traditional engraved gemstones to set in modern styles. Cartier made one of its most original contributions to

Fig. 40
Vogue magazine cover, December 1, 1927.
Illustration by Eduardo Garcia Benito.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BÉRÉNICE

DIADÈME ET COLLIER, DE CARTIER

twentieth-century jewelry design with its use of engraved Indian emeralds and other carved gems for its contemporary designs. The vivid color contrasts of Indian jewelry and champlevé enamels superseded the pale, evanescent hues of the firm's previous styles.

Jacques's trip to India secured Cartier the lion's share of business with the maharajas. The biggest commission came from the Maharaja of Patiala, who in 1925 ordered Cartier to remount his most valuable jewels. In 1928 Cartier exhibited the principal pieces on the rue de la Paix before a host of society personalities awed by the richness and modernity of the creations. This triggered more orders from the maharajas, who sent increasing numbers of jewels to Cartier for remodeling.

The 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs presented novel emerald jewelry not made for the maharajas, but for a Western clientele. The premise that all exhibitions had to demonstrate modern inspiration and originality propelled new forms in jewelry, vibrant color combinations, and innovative arrangements of stones, such as pairing unfaceted stones and cabochons with baguette-cut gems. The star of the exhibition was the so-called "Bérénice" necklace, which featured a carved Mughal emerald at its center (fig. 41).

Marjorie Post's Indian-style emerald necklace successfully weds art deco platinum and diamond jewelry with the ceremonial jewels traditionally worn by Indian maharajas (fig. 42). It consists of twenty-four

Fig. 41
Fashion plate of "Bérénice: diadème et collier de Cartier." Appeared in special issue of *La Gazette du bon ton*, "Le pavillon de l'élégance: l'Exposition des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, Paris, 1925," 1925. Cartier Paris Archives.

Detail of fig. 44

Fig. 43
Portrait of Maharaja Sir Vijaysinhji of Rajpipla. Vandyk, London, ca. 1922. Private collection.

baroque-cut emerald drops, each surmounted by a smaller emerald bead mounted in platinum with pavé-set diamonds. The stones, in typical Indian style, have been cut to preserve size rather than brilliance. Post's necklace does not deviate much from Indian male ceremonial necklaces. It is said to have belonged to the Maharaja of Rajpipla, the most "un-Oriental" of the Indian princes with houses in India and England (fig. 43).[10] Although highly probable, this provenance has not been definitively confirmed. The necklace was reputedly sold to pay the maharaja's gambling debts.[11] It was originally a longer necklace (sautoir)—shortened by Cartier around 1941 to its present length—that could be worn with a Cartier emerald brooch as a pendant.

Fig. 42
Indian-style emerald, diamond, and platinum necklace. Created by Cartier London in 1928–29 and shortened by Cartier New York ca. 1941. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G5023.

Fig. 45
Photograph of emerald, diamond, and platinum pendant brooch in its original form, ca. 1923. Cartier London Archives.

The stunning emerald pendant brooch is also mounted with old-cut Indian emeralds (fig. 44). It features some remarkable stones, including seven carved seventeenth-century Mughal emeralds weighing a combined 250 carats. The large emerald at the center is exceptional and bears an inscription on the back that translates as "the servant of Shah Abbas," associating it with the Persian ruler Shah Abbas II (r. 1642–66). Like his contemporary and rival in India, Shah Jahan, Abbas greatly admired emeralds, whose deep green hue was associated with the emblematic color of Islam. Stones like these embodied all the magic of a great culture of Indian finery. Marjorie Post wore this piece alternately as a brooch and as a pendant. Cartier's London workshops made the piece around 1923 and originally sold it to a Godfrey Williams.[12] The brooch must have been returned to Cartier soon thereafter, because Post acquired it sometime before 1925, when it is first mentioned in her jewelry inventory.[13] It originally featured a round top (fig. 45), which Post had remodeled in 1928 in favor of its present door-knob-shaped one. In 1926 *Vogue* pronounced statement brooches and the fashion for large jewels in simple settings the epitome of chic. "Perhaps the most outstanding new note in jewellery is the size and importance of brooches," it proclaimed.[14] The sheer weight

Fig. 44
Emerald, diamond, and platinum pendant brooch. Created by Cartier London ca. 1923 and altered by Cartier New York in 1928. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.75.

Le Jugement de Paris.

of Post's emerald brooch surely required the reinforcement of dresses with shoulder straps.

The emeralds in Indian-style pieces did not originate in India, as Michael Hall elaborates in his essay in this volume. During the sixteenth century, Spanish conquistadors had brought emeralds to Europe from Colombian mines. The Spanish and Portuguese eventually traveled well-established trade routes to India, where they sold the emeralds to Indian gemstone merchants. India's highly skilled craftsmen engraved and embellished the emeralds' surfaces in the belief that the inscriptions enhanced their mystical powers. Ironically, although emeralds of the highest quality were never mined in India, they became an integral part of its jewelry culture and were passionately coveted by Mughal rulers. For them, the appeal of emeralds lay not only in their exoticism, but also in their deep, saturated green hue, the sacred color of Islam.

The connection between jewelry and fashion in the 1920s was particularly marked. According to *Vogue* in 1927, "Never, in all the long history of feminine fashions, has jewelry been more important in the mode and never has it been worn more intelligently or with more art than at the present time."[15] Changes in women's lifestyles during this period led to a transformation in traditional fashion and jewelry. To suit the "new woman" of the day, couturiers abolished the restraining corset and designed dresses with unfitted bodices and low waists. The scantily

Fig. 46
"The Judgment of Paris." George Barbier, 1923.

clad women of the era loved to cover themselves with jewelry (fig. 46). Marjorie Post embraced women's newfound freedom from the old constraints with her trademark determination and flair.

Elegant ladies wore several bracelets at the same time on arms left bare by sleeveless evening dresses and the abandonment of long evening gloves. "Gone are the days when several bracelets worn at once were considered distinctly vulgar. Now, in the evening, a woman's wrist may sparkle for many inches with glittering stones," *Vogue* declared.[16] Around 1926–27 Post ordered from Cartier three nearly identical bracelets—one set with rubies, another with emeralds, and the other with sapphires (fig. 47). The bracelets illustrate a tendency toward the geometry, linearity, stylization, and contrasts in color and materials characteristic of jewelry of the era. Post frequently wore them between diamond strap bracelets, thus emphasizing their graduated pyramidal motifs and creating strong visual juxtapositions.

A ruby and diamond bracelet with a navette-shaped center, originally made by Cartier in 1927, was remodeled in 1944 with additional stones to create the bolder shape seen in fig. 48. Its sculptural design is typical of the more voluminous pieces that became prominent in the

Fig. 47
Ruby, diamond, and platinum bracelet. Cartier, 1927. Private collection.

Fig. 48
Ruby, diamond, and platinum bracelet. Created by Cartier in 1927, altered in 1944.

Fig. 49
Portrait of Marjorie Post Hutton wearing her diamond and ruby jewelry. Frank O. Salisbury, 1934. Oil on canvas. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 51.140.

Fig. 51
Sapphire, diamond, and platinum strap bracelet. Cartier, 1920s.

1930s and 1940s. In the Frank O. Salisbury portrait of 1934, Marjorie Post wears the bracelet along with other pieces of art deco ruby and diamond jewelry and a pink tourmaline, onyx, and diamond clip brooch that stylishly closes her low-cut gown at the back (fig. 49).

In another portrait of Marjorie Post by Frank O. Salisbury of about 1930, she wears sapphire rings and a diamond and sapphire triangular clip on her right shoulder, a stylish way to keep undergarments out of sight. She also models a diamond bracelet with a large sapphire on her right forearm (fig. 50). This latter piece is an extraordinary example of the strap bracelet design (fig. 51). At its center is a 58.33-carat sapphire from the legendary mines of Kashmir, whose stones are highly valued and sought after due to their velvety blue color. The bracelet was slightly

Fig. 50
Portrait of Marjorie Post Hutton wearing some of her sapphire jewelry. Frank O. Salisbury, ca. 1930. Oil on canvas. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 51.141.

Fig. 52
Diamond, ruby, and enamel rabbit waiter brooch. Raymond Yard, New York, 1929. Vartanian & Sons, New York.

remodeled by Harry Winston in the 1950s so that the sapphire at the center could be removed and worn as a ring.

In contrast with Post's stylized and abstract jewelry is a humorous and animated rabbit waiter brooch by Raymond Yard (fig. 52). Formally dressed in coat tails and a bow tie, the rabbit carries a tray of cocktails and a bottle of liquor. The brooch is mounted with pavé- and calibré-cut diamonds and accented with rubies and enamel.

Raymond Yard worked from a young age in the jewelry business; first at the well-known New York firm of Marcus & Co. There he gained business acumen and developed contacts with an elegant and wealthy clientele. With the encouragement of John D. Rockefeller Jr., Yard opened his own firm in 1922. He soon catered to some of America's most powerful families, among them the Rockefellers, Woolworths, Flaglers, and Fleischmanns.

This brooch is part of a series of anthropomorphic brooches made by Yard between 1928 and 1931. They can be viewed in relation to a number of children's books published in the early twentieth century with "humanized" rabbit characters, such as the March Hare and White Rabbit in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit, and Margery Williams's Velveteen Rabbit. The brooches can also be interpreted in the context of prohibition as chic and playful gestures of protest.

Fig. 53
Zircon, diamond, and platinum clip brooch. Joël Helft, Paris, 1939. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.72.5.

The carefree life of the bubbly flapper came to a halt when the stock market crashed in 1929. Marjorie Post responded to the economic downturn by putting her jewelry away, and, with the money saved on jewelry insurance, financed the Marjorie Post Hutton Canteen, which fed thousands of women and children in New York City. Similarly, jewelers reacted to the crisis by producing restrained pieces and working with hitherto unthinkable semiprecious stones. Gems such as aquamarine, topaz, amethyst, and citrine were selected for their affordability and ability to be cut into large shapes.

A brooch by Parisian jeweler Joël Helft using zircons exemplifies this shift in materials (fig. 53). While often unappreciated today, zircons were esteemed in the 1930s as a less ostentatious alternative to diamonds. Helft infused the brooch with Art Moderne aesthetics, as

Fig. 55
Marjorie Post Davies wearing her zircon and diamond necklace and earrings, ca. 1940. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Fig. 56
Zircon, diamond, and platinum bracelet. Joël Helft, Paris, 1939
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.72.2.

evidenced by its bold shape, strong structure, and blue-green stones and diamonds, which endow the piece with a glittering clarity. It is part of an ensemble including a necklace, earrings, and chunky bracelet in the typical 30s fashion. Like those in the brooch, the stones in these pieces were heated to alter their color to a shade of green (figs. 54 and 56). Post purchased the earrings from de Sedle's, New York in 1936 and the necklace and bracelet from Joël Helft in 1939 (fig. 55).

A citrine-mounted brooch further reveals the ongoing cross-pollination of Western and Indian cultures that continued into the 1930s, with Indian shapes influencing modern jewelry designs (fig. 58).

Fig. 54
Zircon, diamond, and platinum necklace and earrings. Earrings by de Sedle's, New York, 1936, necklace by Joël Helft, Paris, 1939. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 17.72.1 and 17.72.3-4.

Fig. 58
Citrine, diamond, and platinum leaf brooch. Cartier London, ca. 1935. Private collection

The brooch, in the form of a curved, elongated leaf and tipped at the top, echoes the shape of a *sarpech*, a traditional Indian turban ornament worn primarily by noblemen and royalty. At Cartier, this shape was linked with an Oriental palm leaf, whereas in India it was traditionally associated with the mango leaf.

Despite the general tone of austerity during this period, jewelers began to receive a flurry of orders for tiaras around the time of King George VI's coronation, in 1937. At the time, Marjorie Post owned a Cartier tiara of characteristic geometric, scrolled designs (fig. 57). The 13.38-carat step-cut diamond at its center may have been taken from her engagement ring from E. F. Hutton. In the vein of other convertible jewelry of the period, the tiara could be taken apart and worn as a bracelet.

Among other modern Post collection pieces, a Cartier "moderne" ring consists of three alternating onyx and coral rods joined by diamond-set platinum bands (fig. 59). The highly polished onyx and deeply hued red coral reflect the new color combinations Cartier introduced in the 1920s and 1930s. The rod shapes lend a constructivist air to the

Fig. 57
Diamond tiara. Cartier, 1930s.

Fig. 59
Coral, onyx, diamond, and platinum ring. Cartier New York, special order, 1933. Cartier Collection, acc. no. RG01A33

Fig. 60
Coral, onyx, diamond, and platinum ring. Cartier, ca. 1930. Private collection.

ring, illustrating the firm's softer interpretation of the machine-like, tubular motifs characteristic of the Art Deco style. An ensemble of soft pink coral accented with onyx and diamonds and enhanced with platinum represents a similar, more delicate approach to Art Deco (figs. 60, 61, and 62). The reduced use of gems and prominence of semiprecious materials identify this as a set of jewelry for daytime.

In spite of the sobriety of some designs, many jewels from the 1930s paradoxically featured an abundance of gemstones. Jewelry, considered a portable investment in those uncertain times, displaced the

Fig. 61
Coral, onyx, and diamond earrings, ca. 1930. Private collection.

Fig. 62
Coral, onyx, diamond, and platinum bracelet. Cartier, ca. 1930. Private collection.

prewar value of it for its design. In another shift during that era of crisis and austerity, Hollywood movies began to replace high society in the popular imagination, providing an affordable escape from the harsh realities of life. Film became the new source of fashion and beauty ideals, with the stars of the silver screen projecting glamour and sex appeal. Their tight-fitting, draped gowns outlined feminine curves; the glittering beads and lamés of their glamorous dresses were complemented with massive jewels that dazzled from the screen.[17] The larger-than-life world of Hollywood found reflection in the big and opulent jewels worn by the day's stars. Katharine Hepburn, Paulette Goddard, Joan Crawford, and Marlene Dietrich flashed their own jewelry in studio portraits and in their movies. "Stars want their jewels to be personal matters—not publicity stunts," *Vogue* proclaimed in 1938.[18]

Large jewelry pieces in the 1930s usually featured diamonds. In contrast to jewelry from the 1920s, with strong colors and chromatic contrasts, the early 1930s became a period of "white" jewelry or sober bichromatic creations.[19] A wide bracelet from about 1930 features a trellis design of marquise- and baguette-cut diamonds set in platinum (fig. 63). After it sold at auction in 1981, it became the property of another woman with great taste in jewelry, Lily Safra, whose collection was auctioned in 2012 for the benefit of several charities.[20] The piece is now in a private collection.

Fig. 63
Diamond "trellis" bracelet. French, ca. 1930. Private collection.

Fig. 64
Ambassador Joseph E. Davies and Marjorie Post Davies. Photographed by Leigh Irwin and Nicholas Langen for *Fortune*, 1937. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

In 1936 Marjorie Post became a member of the Board of Directors at General Foods, making her the first female director of the company her father had founded (fig. 65). That same year, her husband Joseph E. Davies was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union (fig. 64). Preparing for their posting to Moscow, Post decided to leave most of her jewelry in the United States. She did, however, carefully select certain pieces to take that would allow her to present herself in the most flattering, yet discreet way to the Soviets. As *Fortune* magazine observed, "There's no reason . . . why the Davies' shouldn't live as American[s] . . . If, in residence at Spaso House, they wore peasant blouses, dined off black bread, and twanged

Fig. 65
Portrait of Marjorie Post Hutton. Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, ca. 1933. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Fig. 67
Design for central element of sapphire and diamond fringe necklace. Cartier New York, 1937. Cartier New York Archives.

the balalaika, official and popular Moscow would only set them down as phonies."[21] Marjorie Post's jewelry from this period is manifestly practical and multifunctional. It embodies a new classicism and discretion, while managing to remain imposing in character.

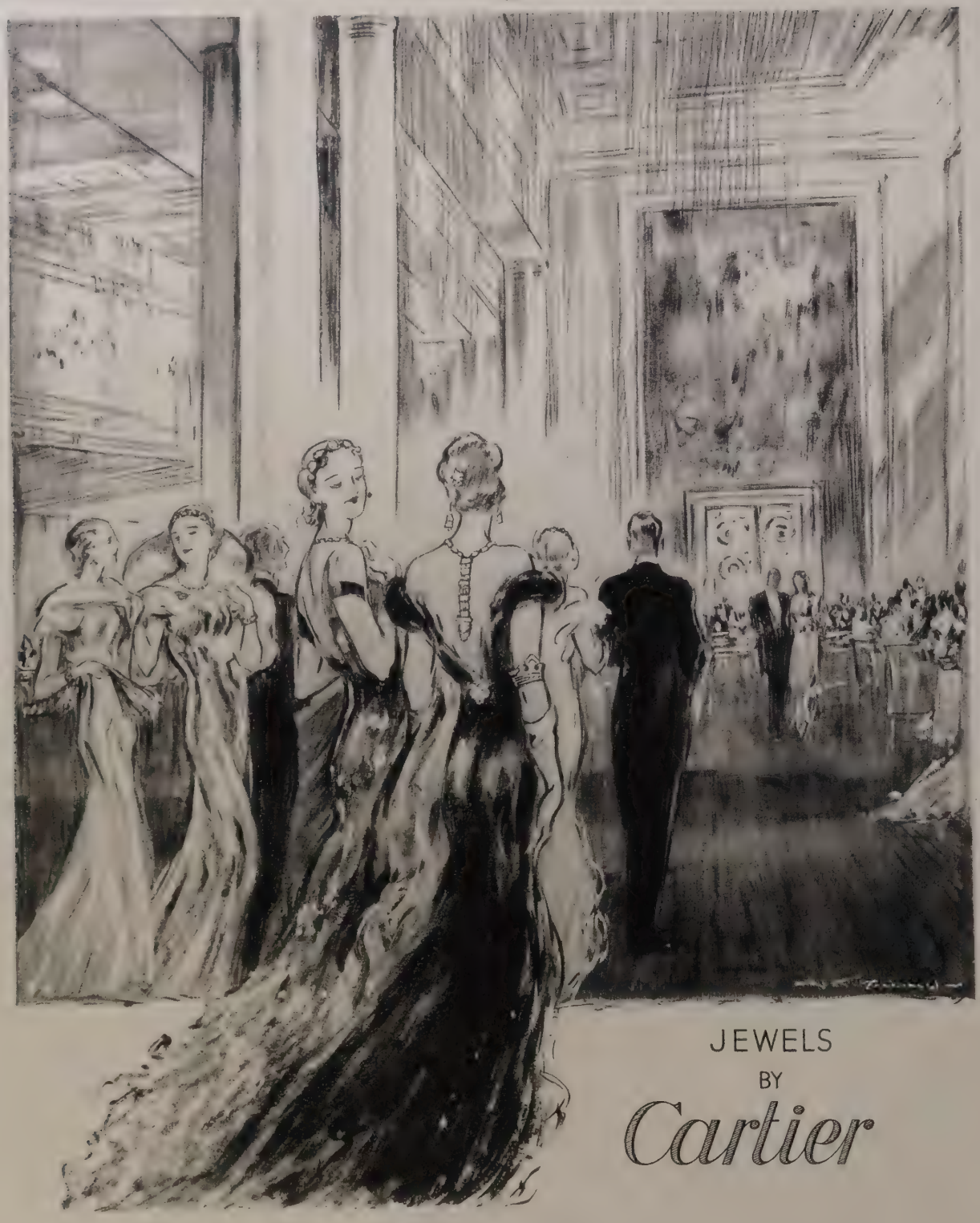
In several cases, new pieces were refashioned from existing ones. One notable example of this practice is a sapphire necklace from 1937 (fig. 66). Around the time of her husband's ambassadorial appointment to Moscow, Post instructed Cartier to combine two diamond and sapphire bracelets that she had acquired that year from de Sedle's in New York to create a necklace. The firm designed a centerpiece with a large sapphire provided by Post to great effect—the almost 40-carat, cushion-shaped sapphire surrounded by cascading diamonds not only visually anchored the necklace, but could also be detached and worn separately as a brooch (fig. 67). Martin Fuller's article in this volume provides a gemological analysis of the sapphires in this necklace.

Fig. 66
Sapphire, diamond, and platinum fringe necklace. Cartier New York, 1937. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.68.

Fig. 68
Design for diamond clasp for pearl necklace. Cartier New York, 1936. Cartier New York Archives.

In 1936 Marjorie Post also ordered from Cartier an impressive arrow-shaped clasp with dangling tassels of diamonds for her magnificent pearl necklace (figs. 68 and 69). Such clasps were shown to best advantage with the low-back evening gowns so fashionable in the 1930s. A 1935 advertisement for Cartier in *Harper's Bazaar* depicts a

Fig. 69
Pearl, diamond, and platinum necklace. Clasp by Cartier New York, 1936. Pearls by Caro Yamaoka, ca. 1963. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.69.



JEWELS
BY
Cartier

Dinner Hour in the
Grand Restaurant of the
"Queen Mary"

Fig. 71
Miniature portrait of Marjorie Post Davies wearing her diamond and pearl necklace. Frame by Cartier Paris, ca. 1940. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 21.111.1–2.

group of elegant women in bias-cut gowns aboard the *Queen Mary* (fig. 70). The female figure in the foreground wears a chic necklace with a prominent clasp dangling from the back of her neck. In 1963, Post substituted the original pearls with new strands acquired from Caro Yamaoka. This is one of the few sets of pearls belonging to Post still at Hillwood. A portrait miniature in a Cartier frame shows her wearing pearls with the cascading Cartier art deco clasp (fig. 71).

Fig. 70
"Dinner Hour in the Grand Restaurant of the Queen Mary." Illustrated by A. K. MacDonald and published in *Harper's Bazaar*, 1935. Cartier London Archives.

Fig. 72
[illegible] at Warner Brothers Studios, ca. 1940. From left to right: Joseph E. Davies, Marjorie Post Davies, Jack L. Warner, president of Warner Brothers, Mrs. Mildred S. Talbot, daughter of J. E. Davies, and Harry N. Warner. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Fig. 73
Marjorie Post Davies and Barbara Hutton on the *Mission to Moscow* set, ca. 1943. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

After leaving Moscow in 1938, Marjorie Post and Joseph Davies made their first foray into Hollywood when Warner Brothers bought the rights to Ambassador Davies's book *Mission to Moscow*, in 1941 (figs. 72 and 73). The movie was released in 1943, starring Walter Huston as Joseph Davies and Ann Harding as Marjorie Post Davies. Although the film was strongly criticized by many as propaganda for the Soviet regime, Post, always discreet, avoided press and stayed above the fray. In the Salisbury portrait of 1946, she appears in a gown identical to the one designed by Orry-Kelly for Ann Harding to wear in the movie (fig. 74).[22] With the gown, she sports the Cartier sapphire necklace in pure Hollywood style, leaving ample space in the décolletage to let the piece shine and take center stage.

Fig. 74
Portrait of Marjorie Post Davies. Frank O. Salisbury, 1946. Oil on canvas. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 51.143.

Fig. 75
Marjorie Post Davies and Evalyn Walsh McLean, two iconic jewelry collectors, chatting at an Easter luncheon, ca. 1945. The Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

Fig. 76
Yellow gold, rose gold, diamond, and ruby bracelet, clip brooch, and earrings. Bracelet marked Cartier. Ca. 1940. Private Collection.

In contrast to evening wear, daytime attire during World War II was less seductive. Well-tailored suits characterized by straight knee-length skirts and long, tight-fitting jackets with wide, padded shoulders worn with clunky shoes were the norm. A touch of femininity was added with clip brooches that attached to the neckline of slim dresses and lapels of suits, occasional large bracelets, and small earrings clipped close to the earlobe. Small circular or tricorne hats adorned with flowers, veils or pins added a fanciful touch to otherwise sober outfits (fig. 75).

With platinum reserved for armaments manufacturing during the war years, the prized metal became scarce. Gold became preeminent and jewelers began exploring the use of textured gold in all colors—white, gray, yellow, green, pink, and red—and working it in all possible ways—tied in ribbons, roped, pierced into lace-like designs or twisted as corded wire (fig. 76).[23] *Vogue* remarked in reference to the emerging trend for wide, gold, linked bracelets, "Gold, gold, gold. The greed for gold that we sighted last year is more insatiable than ever."[24]

As noted, in the 1920s Cartier had been Post's jeweler of choice, but in the late 1930s she added Van Cleef & Arpels to her list of preferred jewelers. The firm's classical French elegance greatly appealed to her. Clients and critics often remarked on its savoir faire in allying tradition, innovation, and technology with beauty.

Van Cleef & Arpels began with the marriage in 1895 of Alfred Van Cleef to his cousin Esther (Estelle) Arpels. Both were born in France and were of Dutch-Flemish ancestry. Alfred was the son of a lapidary craftsman in Amsterdam and Esther the daughter of a gemstone dealer. Following the death of Alfred's father in 1906, Alfred and his two brothers-in-law, Charles-Salomon and Julien, acquired a space on Paris's place Vendôme for their business. Louis, the third Arpels brother, later joined them. Alfred and Estelle's daughter, Renée Puissant, assumed artistic direction of the firm in 1926, working with the talented designer René Sim Lacaze. In the 1930s, Van Cleef & Arpels embarked on a wonderfully creative period, and, despite the global economic crisis, never ceased to be innovative.

Alfred died in 1938, signifying the end of the Van Cleef line. A year later, several members of the Arpels family traveled to New York to represent the firm at the 1939 World's Fair. After their success at the fair's French Pavilion, they decided to open a store in Manhattan, first at Rockefeller Center and later on Fifth Avenue, next to Bergdorf Goodman.

Van Cleef & Arpels' designs of the 1930s allied a contemporary interest in abstraction with geometric forms and the sculptural aesthetic characteristic of the decade. The firm relied on superb stones and interesting cuts. The briolette cut of the diamonds on a pair of Post's earrings (fig. 77) was not the most popular faceting style of the time,

Fig. 77
Briolette diamond and platinum earrings. Van Cleef & Arpels, 1948.
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 17.77.1-2.

Fig. 78
Marjorie Post May with her daughter, Dina Merrill, and Mary Sanford at the Polo Ball, Palm Beach, Florida, 1961. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

in large part because of cost. A briolette is a pear- or drop-shaped gemstone with its entire surface covered with long triangular facets. This cut requires large pieces of rough stone, and many gem cutters have therefore deemed it an inefficient use of precious materials such as diamonds. The effect of the briolette resides in its ability to display color and reflect light from any angle. When worn, Post's earrings would have flickered with every movement.

Another pair of earrings from this period mounted with pear-cut sapphires and diamonds required that a specific one be worn on each ear (figs. 78 and 79). These are of similar design to a series of "fan" ear

Fig. 79
Sapphire, diamond, and platinum fan-shaped earrings. Probably Van Cleef & Arpels, ca. 1930s. Private collection.

Fig. 80
Emerald, diamond, and platinum pendant earrings. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1939. Private collection.

Fig. 81
Design for emerald, diamond, and platinum pendant earrings. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1939. Van Cleef & Arpels Archives.

clips by Van Cleef & Arpels, such as those purchased by the Maharaja of Kapurtala in Paris in 1935.[25]

In 1939, after Joseph E. Davies had left Moscow to take up the ambassadorial post in Brussels, Marjorie Post ordered a pair of earrings from Van Cleef & Arpels in Paris featuring carved hemispherical emeralds surmounted by scrolled designs in platinum and diamonds (fig. 80). Over the ensuing years, she wore them very frequently, often in combination with her Indian-style unfaceted emerald jewelry. A drawing from the firm's Paris archives shows the hang of the earring from an earlobe (fig. 81).

The invisible mount (*serti invisible*) or "mystery setting" has been synonymous with Van Cleef & Arpels since the firm perfected and patented it in 1933. This was a revolutionary gem-setting technique, leaving no trace of a mount or prongs visible from the front of the piece. The resulting effect, similar to micro-mosaic, allows for the full brilliance of a gemstone to be revealed (fig. 82). To achieve this look, the stones are carefully cut into

Fig. 82
Advertisement for Van Cleef & Arpels' "Mystery Setting" technique, 1936. Van Cleef & Arpels Archives.

Fig. 83
Design and order sheet for ruby and diamond "Marguerite" brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1969. Van Cleef & Arpels Archives.

squares or rectangles and incised with grooves at the back so that they can be slipped onto metal rails, rendering the setting invisible. To create a uniform chromatic effect, the stones must be perfectly matched in terms of color and depth.

The *serti invisible* became an instant classic and remains a hallmark of the firm. Marjorie Post ordered a stunning flower brooch with invisibly set ruby petals and bursting center composed of a cluster of brilliant-cut diamonds in 1969 (fig. 84). A drawing for her floral "Marguerite" brooch survives in the company's Paris archives (fig. 83).

The graceful dance poses and lightness of step of Van Cleef & Arpels' ballerina brooches provided a note of cheer and charm during the somber years of World War II. Designer Maurice Duvalet took inspiration for some of these designs from paintings and photographs. He

Fig. 84
Ruby, diamond, gold, and platinum "Marguerite" brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1969. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.80.

Fig. 85
Diamond, ruby, emerald, and platinum ballerina brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, 1942. Private collection.

Fig. 87
Ledger order for diamond, ruby, and emerald ballerina brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, ca. 1942. Van Cleef & Arpels Archives.

Fig. 86
Mademoiselle de Camargo Dancing. Nicolas Lancret, 1730. Oil on canvas. Wallace Collection, London, acc. no. P393.

worked with the jeweler John Rubel, who also developed some models after seeing flamenco dancers at a café on New York's Lower East Side.[26]

The Post ballerina brooch, most likely a gift from husband Joseph E. Davies in 1943, represents Marie-Anne de Cupis de Camargo, a famous ballerina at the Paris Opera in the eighteenth century (figs. 85 and 87).[27] Camargo was the first *danseuse* to shorten her ballet skirts to calf length and remove the heels from ballet slippers, to facilitate freedom of movement and display her rapidly moving feet. The figure's pose is informed by *Mademoiselle de Camargo Dancing*, an eighteenth-century painting by Nicolas Lancret, now at the Wallace Collection in London (fig. 86). As with other early examples of ballerina brooches, the stones for the pin reputedly came from Spanish crown jewels that found their way to Mexico in the nineteenth century and were later sold at auction in New York.[28]

In the 1960s, George Balanchine, choreographer of the New York City Ballet, credited Claude Arpels, Louis's nephew, as the inspiration for his ballet *Jewels*, which premiered in 1967. Each of the ballet's three acts highlights a specific gem and features music by a renowned composer: *Emeralds* is set to a score by Gabriel Fauré, *Rubies* to the music of Igor Stravinsky, and *Diamonds* to a composition by Pyotr Tchaikovsky. The dancers evoke the gems themselves through their bejeweled costumes.

Fig. 88
Diana bracelet, Verdura, 1948

Fig. 89
Diana, Princess of Wales wearing a "Diana" bracelet at an auction preview party at Christie's, 1997.

At the end of World War II, an era of economic prosperity ensued. Fashion reacted to the abandonment of austerity with utterly feminine designs. In jewelry, yellow gold maintained its preeminence. Pieces set with amethyst, citrine, rock crystal, and topaz continued to be popular, with Brazil emerging as the main supplier of colored gemstones. Gold's malleability was well suited to the creation of voluminous, sculpted shapes as well as the fantastical creations that characterized the period. Gold and colorful jewelry coexisted with white-on-white jewelry made of platinum and diamonds.

In the United States, designers such as Paul Flato and Fulco di Verdura epitomized the vigor and inventiveness of these new trends in jewelry. Duke Fulco di Verdura opened a New York boutique with the backing of composer Cole Porter and wealthy philanthropist Vincent Astor in 1939. This idiosyncratic jeweler, of Sicilian aristocratic origin and former jewelry designer to Coco Chanel, became the toast of the town among New York's cognoscenti in the 1940s and 1950s. His discerning American clientele included *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland, wealthy socialite Rachel "Bunny" Mellon, and style icon Barbara "Babe"

Fig. 90
Marjorie Post Davies wearing her "Diana" bracelet. Photographed by Irving Penn for *Vogue*, August 15, 1951.

Paley, among others. Marjorie Post made three purchases from Verdura in 1948.

The "Diana" bracelet, so named for its interlocking crescents symbolizing the goddess of the hunt, is one of Verdura's most iconic designs. The jeweler created this piece for Marjorie Post from a pair of diamond-studded crescent-shaped brooches she provided (fig. 88). She posed with the bracelet for Irving Penn for the August 15, 1951 edition of *Vogue* (fig. 90). More than four decades later, this bracelet was still modern and alluring enough for Diana, Princess of Wales, to wear one to a benefit sale of her clothing at Christie's, New York, in 1997 (fig. 89).

Fig. 91
Amethyst, diamond, and gold ring. Verdura, 1948. Private collection.

Fig. 92
Design for pearl, diamond, and palladium charm bracelet. Verdura, 1943. Verdura Archives.

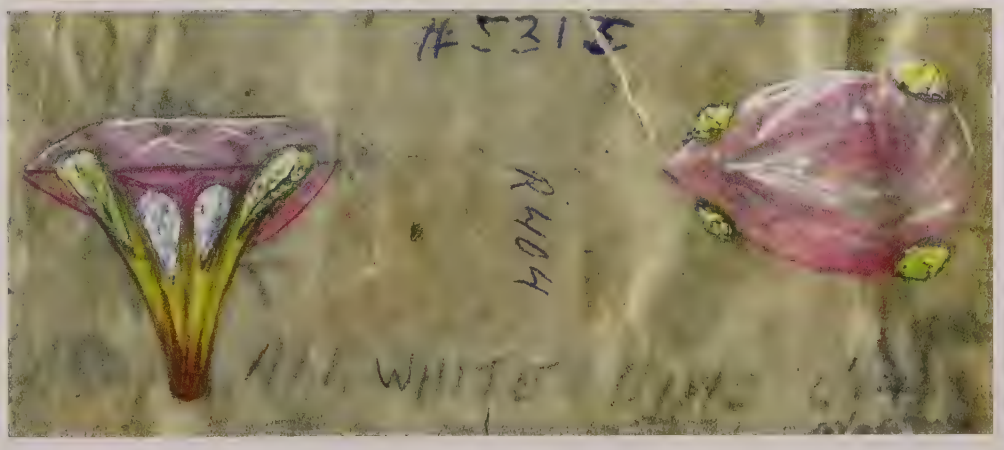


Fig. 93
Design for amethyst (originally pink topaz), diamond, and gold ring. Verdura, 1946. Verdura Archives.

Post also purchased a bracelet *en résille* (with a mesh body) that year (fig. 92). This flexible palladium bracelet, interspersed with pearls and diamonds, is indicative of Verdura's work on the theme of roped jewels. Knots and ropes, inspired by Hellenistic jewelry, were a standard of Verdura's designs beginning with his early production of Maltese crosses, which were bound with gold or diamond knots.

A ring with a pear-shaped amethyst set in a bifurcated gold mount with diamonds was the third item Marjorie Post ordered in 1948 (fig. 91). An archival drawing of the piece reveals that it was originally intended to be set with a pink topaz (fig. 93). Notions of romanticism, grace, and fantasy were key to jewelry design in the late 1940s and 1950s. Sharp angles, cut-off corners, and flat surfaces disappeared, giving way to reliefs, curves, and volutes. In addition to embodying these broader trends, the ring's boldness and strong color are typical of the casual inventiveness of Verdura.

Fig. 94
Marjorie Post Davies and Joseph E. Davies with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor on a cruise on the *Sea Cloud* to Nassau and Cuba, 1948. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Cartier also created fanciful and colorful designs during those years, illustrated in the Merriweather Post Collection by a necklace and earrings set that effectively mixes translucent amethysts with bright, opaque turquoises (figs. 95 and 96). This audacious color combination had been made famous a few years earlier by a bib necklace that Cartier created for the Duchess of Windsor. Marjorie Post and Joseph E. Davies had met the Windsors in Palm Beach in 1948 at a Good Samaritan Hospital fundraiser and invited them for a cruise to Nassau and Havana on their palatial yacht, the *Sea Cloud* (fig. 94). One wonders if the two ladies spent time discussing their latest purchases from Cartier, a firm both frequently patronized. A drawing of the Post necklace in the Cartier archives shows the various options she received for mounting

Fig. 95
Amethyst, turquoise, diamond, gold, and platinum earrings. Cartier New York, 1951. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 17.67.2-3.

Fig. 96
Amethyst, turquoise, diamond, gold, and platinum necklace. Cartier New York, 1950. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.67.1.

Fig. 97
Design for amethyst, turquoise, and diamond necklace. Cartier New York, 1950. Cartier New York Archives.

Fig. 98
Colored photograph of yellow sapphire, amethyst, and gold necklace designed by Cartier. Van Cleef & Arpels Archives.

the stones (fig. 97). All are bold and sculptural, but feature different motifs. She settled for a heart-shaped design that mirrored the cut of some of the amethysts.

Another necklace of semiprecious stones set in gold is known from a colored photograph (fig. 98). Marjorie Post gave it to her eldest granddaughter, Marwee, who described it as an "incredible necklace [with] pale yellow sapphires and amethysts, with earrings and a ring to match." The set, apparently previously earmarked for Post's youngest daughter Nedenia, was the cause of some dispute between them. Marwee threatened Nedenia,

"If you want that jewelry, you are going to have to dive for it." In the end, the waters calmed, and Marwee kept the necklace.[29]

Despite the prominence of gold, platinum remained a staple of *haute* jewelry after World War II. Fine jewelry of the post-war era was similarly characterized by a profusion of diamonds. A leaf brooch that Post acquired from Cartier exhibits the use of these materials, making it an exquisite representation of the "white" style popular in the 1950s and 1960s (fig. 99). During this period, clips began to disappear in favor of brooches, the latter ultimately becoming an essential accessory in any wardrobe. References to nature also abounded. The brooch's cascading leaves are fully articulated, trembling slightly with each movement and infusing "life" into the piece.

Yet no jewelry better epitomizes these trends than that produced by Harry Winston, who ushered in a period of bright, modern-looking diamond jewelry and became world famous for it. "If I could," Winston said, "I would attach diamonds directly onto a woman's skin" (fig. 100).[30]

The "white" style was defined by jewels encrusted with diamonds typically mounted in precious white metal and virtually no use of pavé settings or enamel accents. With its cluster of great gems set in platinum, Post's necklace embodies the essence of Winston's jewelry (fig. 101). Beaded claw settings highlight the brilliant-cut stones. The bib design reflects how Winston drew attention to the front section of his necklaces for evening wear.

Fig. 99
Diamond and platinum bow and leaf brooch. Cartier New York, 1950.
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.82.

Fig. 100
Harry Winston jewelry advertisement, 1954. Harry Winston Archives.

Fig. 101
Diamond and platinum bib necklace. Harry Winston, 1965–66. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.70.

Fig. 102
Diamond and platinum aigrette brooch, Harry Winston, 1959, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.76

Harry Winston also created a diamond brooch with a platinum setting for Marjorie Post that featured a triangular diamond of almost 14 carats that she provided (fig. 102). Winston surrounded the large stone with smaller marquise- and pear-shaped diamonds, fashionable cuts at the time, in raised settings. The brooch is fitted with two clips at the back that would have allowed for the attachment of two pear-shaped diamond drops.

In addition to being a jewelry designer, Winston became renowned for his large and impressive collection of important stones and historic jewels. In order to build his inventory, he pursued prominent jewelry collections like that of Evalyn Walsh McLean, from whose estate he purchased the Hope diamond, the most famous blue diamond in the world, and the 94-carat Star of the East diamond in 1949. Around 1960 Winston came into possession of the magnificent Marie Louise diamond necklace. He heralded this new acquisition by featuring it in an issue of *Vogue* around the neck of an eagle, a nod to Napoleon's emblematic imperial bird (fig. 103). A short time thereafter, Marjorie Post purchased the necklace from Winston. A couple of years later, he would sell her the Blue Heart, the second best blue diamond he had available (see fig. 25 as

Fig. 103
Photograph of eagle wearing the Marie Louise necklace. Shot by Irving Penn and featured in the July 1, 1961 issue of *Vogue*.

well as Jeffrey E. Post's essay on the Blue Heart diamond in this volume).

A great salesman and marketing genius, Winston organized an exhibition in 1949 entitled "The Court of Jewels" at Rockefeller Center, as part of a benefit for the United Hospital Fund (fig. 104). The exhibition displayed his most famous jewels, including the Hope, Star of the East, and Jonker diamonds. The exhibit was so successful that it toured other cities, including Winston-Salem, Dallas, and San Antonio. At each stop, it was greeted with great enthusiasm.

Marjorie Post helped promote the exhibition's arrival in Washington, D.C. "The Court of Jewels" was on display there for two days in November 1951 to raise funds for the Washington Home for Incurables, with Post serving as honorary chairman of the event.[31] Post held center stage wearing an enormous sapphire suspended from a diamond link chain. The sapphire, from Harry Winston's stock, reputedly was once owned by Catherine the Great of Russia (fig. 105).[32]

The diamond "comeback" promoted by Harry Winston continued its trajectory toward stardom. "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," famously sung by Marilyn Monroe in the 1953 film *Gentlemen Prefer*

Fig. 105
Marjorie Post Davies at the gala preview for "The Court of Jewels" exhibition in Washington, D.C., 1951. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Blondes, was a timely reflection on the allure of diamonds. That same year Elizabeth Windsor was crowned Queen of England, and the scale and opulence of the diamond regalia she and her courtiers wore at the coronation were so impressive that fine jewelers around the world set out to emulate the impact of the royal diamonds.

Of course, not all jewelry of the 1950s was white and bristling with diamonds or exclusively abstract. Disparate sources of inspiration characterize the jewels of this decade. Naturalism coexisted with abstraction, and conventionality was expressed through a wide range of narrative pins and charm bracelets presenting an endless repertoire of domestic objects, figures, flowers, and animals.

Fig. 104
Models wearing jewels at Harry Winston's exhibition "The Court of Jewels," 1949–53. Harry Winston Archives.

Among the myriad of anecdotal pins of the 1950s and 1960s, two examples from the Merriweather Post Collection stand out. A diamond and platinum pin from Shaw & Brown Company featuring the *Sea Cloud* dates to 1949 (fig. 107). Built in 1923 and first christened the *Hussar*, the vessel was an imposing four-mast schooner, more than 300 feet long. Post sailed the world aboard the *Sea Cloud*, a veritable floating palace. In a generous act of patriotism, she offered it to the Coast Guard during World War II. The pin was ordered a few years after her beloved ship was returned to her for private use.

The *Merriweather* airplane pin makes reference to Marjorie's turboprop plane (fig. 106). At one time terrified of flying, Marjorie was eased into the idea of owning a private plane by her fourth husband, Herbert May, in 1959. Post was soon using the *Merriweather* to chauffeur friends, family, and staff from property to property. The pin was a Christmas gift from May in 1961.

Fig. 106
Diamond, ruby, and sapphire pin modeled after the *Merriweather*, ca. 1961.

Fig. 107
Diamond and platinum brooch modeled after the *Sea Cloud*. Shaw & Brown Company, 1949.

Fig. 108
Sapphire, diamond, and gold "leaf" earrings, bracelet, and brooch. Van Cleef & Arpels, ca. 1954. Private collection.

Another characteristic of the 1950s and 1960s was a return to differentiating between daytime and evening jewelry. For the day, appropriate pieces included gold necklaces and bracelets that could be occasionally set with discrete precious or semiprecious stones. For formal evening wear, rich and opulent parures of diamonds and colored precious stones were the preferred choice.[33] A set of leaf design jewelry by Van Cleef & Arpels features small sapphires and diamonds mounted in gold that make the pieces suitable for cocktail wear (fig. 108).

Fig. 110
Design for turquoise, diamond, and platinum drop necklace. Harry Winston, 1960. Harry Winston Archives.

A Harry Winston turquoise and diamond necklace appears much more formal by comparison (figs. 109 and 110). Vivid turquoise made its entrance into high-fashion jewelry in the 1960s. Paired with diamonds, the lush and waxy turquoise cabochons were fit for evening wear. In the Winston necklace, the turquoises effectively contrast with the textured platinum mounts of the interspersed diamonds.

For the 1967 Red Cross Ball in Palm Beach, Post wore a combination of new and old turquoise and diamond jewelry (fig. 111). Her ensemble included a Harry Winston necklace, brooch, and bracelet set in

Fig. 109
Turquoise, diamond, and platinum drop necklace. Harry Winston, 1961. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.73.1.

Fig. 111
Marjorie Merriweather Post with Colonel C. Michael Paul and a member of the US Marine Corps at the Red Cross Ball in Palm Beach, Florida, 1967. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

platinum as well as Cartier earrings mounted in gold (fig. 112). The centerpiece of her regal ensemble was the imperial Marie Louise diadem, originally set with emeralds but remounted with turquoises by Van Cleef & Arpels in the mid-1950s (see figs. 133 and 135).

The last grand set of contemporary jewelry Marjorie Post acquired consisted of a necklace and earrings; the creation of Kentucky-based designer George Headley in 1966, it was made of large and unusual baroque

Fig. 112
Turquoise, diamond, and gold pendant earrings. Cartier New York, 1960. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 17.73.3-4.

Fig. 113
Baroque pearl, moonstone, diamond, and platinum earrings. Designed by George Headley and made by Charles Vaillant, Inc., 1966. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 17.74.2-3.

Burma pearls and moonstones (figs. 113 and 114). Headley sent the pieces to Post's Palm Beach residence, Mar-A-Lago, for her approval. Enchanted by the set, she wrote back, "The lovely necklace and earrings are going to live with me."[34]

George Headley's name has almost been forgotten, but in the 1940s he was part of a coterie of up-and-coming jewelry designers orbiting around Hollywood and New York. After training as a painter at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, he became a designer for the jeweler Paul Flato in the 1930s. Headley helped Flato launch his boutique on Sunset Boulevard, regularly catering to Hollywood stars. Soon afterward, he left to work for a competitor, Laykin et Cie, until the 1950s, when he set up shop in his place of residence, Kentucky. In the 1960s, Headley opened a boutique in Palm Beach associated with David Webb.

The conservatism of the 1950s gave way to a new dynamism and youthful energy in the 1960s. Bursting jewels with textured metal surfaces and strong colors reflected the new zeitgeist. A brooch using

Fig. 114
Baroque pearl, moonstone, diamond, and platinum necklace. Designed by George Headley and made by Charles Vaillant, Inc., 1966. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.74.1.

Fig. 115
Pink conch pearl, diamond, and gold brooch. 1960s. Private collection.

Fig. 116
Reverse of pink conch pearl, diamond, and gold brooch.

Fig. 117
Amethyst, turquoise, diamond, gold, and platinum bracelet. David Webb, 1961. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.67.4.

conch pearls that seem to be exploding from a nest of textured gold is characteristic of this period (figs. 115 and 116). The round, polished pearls offer a jarring contrast to the intricate mounts.

Verdura, Seaman Schepps, and David Webb perfectly captured the spirit of the age. They all formed part of a group of personality-driven, single-owner shops. Webb's jewels were amusing and unconventional. Raised in Asheville, North Carolina, he opened a boutique in New York in 1955 after a few years of selling through Bergdorf Goodman and Lord & Taylor.[35] Webb's pieces were quickly and widely featured in *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Town & Country*. His clientele primarily came from old money, with homes in New York and Palm Beach. To better cater to them, Webb also opened stores in Palm Beach, Beverly Hills, and Houston.

Fig. 118
Peridot, diamond, and gold bracelet. David Webb, 1966. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 2016.7.

Marjorie Post made several purchases from David Webb in the 1960s. The jeweler was entrusted with the design of a bracelet to match her amethyst and turquoise ensemble from Cartier (fig. 117). Completed in 1961, the piece is indicative of the bold styles and forms of Webb's oeuvre. A suite of jewelry featuring peridots on gold with diamonds was a special commission. From among this order, which consisted of a ring, earrings, a bracelet, and a clip brooch, only the brooch and bracelet have been located. Post provided the peridots for the ring, earrings, and bracelet (fig. 118). She acquired the peridot mounted on the bracelet, a large specimen weighing more than 120 carats, from Bombay in 1965. The earrings included stones she had received as Christmas gifts from her middle daughter, Eleanor, that same year.

Fig. 119
Peridot, diamond, and gold brooch. David Webb, 1961. David Webb Collection.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Drawings for the peridot brooch in the David Webb archives demonstrate the various steps involved in a special commission. Webb began by sketching several options in pencil (fig. 120). Once satisfied, he created detailed renditions of designs in watercolor on vellum to present to the client (fig. 121). Marjorie Post marked her choice clearly so that it could go into production.

The David Webb brooch features a triangular-shaped peridot of approximately 38 carats and 120 small diamonds set in wing-shaped motifs, all bound by bold bombé sections of rope-twisted gold wire (fig. 119). It elegantly embodies the informal and colorful quality of some of the boutique jewelry of the 1960s.

In view of the pieces highlighted in this chapter, it is easy to see how Marjorie Merriweather Post's name will forever be associated with jewelry. Described as "endowed with an unerring eye . . . as a connoisseur of jewelry"[36] and proclaimed "a most discerning collector of fine jewelry,"[37] she has been singled out as one of the most important style icons and jewelry collectors of the twentieth century (fig. 122).[38]

Fig. 120
Concept sketch for peridot, diamond, and gold brooch. David Webb, ca. 1961. David Webb Archives.

Fig. 121
Final design for peridot, diamond, and gold brooch. David Webb, ca. 1961. David Webb Archives.

Notes

1 Cecil Beaton, "Suggestions for Fancy Dress," *Vogue*, December 15, 1937, 37.
2 The term is derived from the French *œil de chat*, meaning "cat's eye."
3 Elisabeth Strack, *Pearls* (Stuttgart: Rühle-Diebener-Verlag, 2006), 36.
4 Nancy Rubin, *American Empress: The Life and Times of Marjorie Merriweather Post* (New York: Villard Books, 1995), 149.
5 The necklace with forty-three pearls was bequeathed to Hillwood by Adelaide and is now part of the museum's jewelry collection.
6 By 1926 there were thirty-three pearl farms in Japan. Annual production amounted to 669,000 pearls, but only 40 percent were of saleable quality. By 1931 there were fifty-one farms, producing more than 1 million pearls. On the eve of World War II, 360 pearl farms in Japan were producing more than 10 million pearls. See Strack, *Pearls*, 315–25.
7 "Catalogue of a Collection of Jewels: Created by Messieurs Cartier from the Hindoo, Persian, Arab, Russian, and Chinese," 1913, Cartier Paris archives, inv. Archives/Invitation/1913/NYC/02.
8 "The Wearing of the Jewel," *Vogue*, March 1, 1927, 82.
9 Hans Nadelhoffer, *Cartier: Jewelers Extraordinary* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 156.
10 In an email dated July 24, 2013, Indra Vikram Singh, a grandson of the maharaja, stated, "I was not surprised to read that my grandfather sold the necklace in the early years of the 1920s. By then he had given up wearing necklaces, and confined himself to studded buttons, tie-pins, cuff links and 'sirpench' [turban ornaments]. He built the Vadia Palace in Rajpipla, owned 11 Rolls-Royce ... And is the only Indian owner ever to win the coveted Epsom Derby of England in 1934 ... He was described as 'one of the most un-Oriental' of the Indian princes."
11 Notes provided by Rhoda Doubleday, Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
12 Martin Chapman identifies Godfrey Williams as the first owner of the brooch, which he bought together with an emerald chain. See Chapman, *Cartier and America* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Munich: DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2009), 33. Judy Rudoe states that "the first purchaser, Godfrey Williams, had addresses in central London and at the South Western Hotel in Southampton, and so may have been a visiting American." See Rudoe, *Cartier: 1900–1939* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 179.
13 This inventory, referred to in Hillwood's curatorial files, no longer exists.
14 "The Chic of Jewels," *Vogue*, June 1, 1926, 50.
15 "The Wearing of the Jewel," *Vogue*, March 1, 1927, 82.
16 "The Chic of Jewels," 130.
17 See Janet Zapata, "The Democratization of Glamour: Fashion and Jewelry from the Silver Screen," *The Magazine Antiques* 181, no. 5 (September/October 2014): 140–47.
18 "Hollywood's Own Jewels," *Vogue*, October 15, 1938, 73.
19 David Bennett and Daniela Mascetti, *Understanding Jewellery* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Antique Collectors' Club, 1989), 296.
20 *Jewels for Hope: The Collection of Mrs. Lily Safra*, Christie's, Geneva, May 14, 2012, lot 8.
21 "Ambassador Davies," *Fortune* 16, no. 4 (October 1937): 94.
22 The Welsh designer Orry-Kelly moved to Hollywood in 1932 to become chief costume designer at Warner Brothers, where he dressed major screen stars of the era.
23 Bennett and Mascetti, *Understanding Jewellery*, 359.
24 "No Stone Unturned in To-day's Jewels," *Vogue*, October 15, 1938, 53.
25 Ekaterina Shcherbina, *Indiia: Dragotsennosti, Pokorivshie Mir* (Moscow: Muzei Moskovskogo Kremlia, 2014), cats. 226 and 227.
26 "Family Story-1940: American Nightlife," John Rubel, accessed July 15, 2016, http://johnrubel.com/there-are-stories-1940/.
27 An inventory note states that the brooch was a gift, from 1943. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
28 Sarah D. Coffin, Suzy Menkes, and Ruth Peltason, *Set in Style: The Jewelry of Van Cleef & Arpels* (New York: Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 2011), 97.
29 William Wright, *Heiress: The Rich Life of Marjorie Merriweather Post* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1978), 222–23.
30 André Leon Talley, *Harry Winston* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2012), 131.
31 "Dinner Parties Will Precede Court of Jewels," *Washington Post*, November 2, 1951.
32 We would like to thank Libby Dale at Harry Winston for confirming this information.
33 Bennett and Mascetti, *Understanding Jewellery*, 361.
34 Note from Marjorie Post to George Headley, June 22, 1966, curatorial files, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
35 For an extensive biography, see Ruth A. Peltason, Takaaki Matsumoto, and Ilan Rubin, *David Webb: The Quintessential American Jeweler* (New York: Assouline, 2013).
36 Laurent Salomé and Laure Dalon, *Cartier: Style and History* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux – Grand Palais, 2013), 286.
37 Coffin, Menkes, and Peltason, *Set in Style*, 253.
38 Marjorie Merriweather Post is one of eleven women featured in Stefano Papi and Alexandra Rhodes's book *20th Century Jewelry & The Icons of Style* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2013).

Fig. 122
Marjorie Merriweather Post in Hillwood's French Drawing Room. Photographed by Horst P. Horst for *Vogue*, November 15, 1957.

Emeralds — Four Centuries of Global Trade

Michael Hall, Curator of Ceramics, Capelain Collection

Marjorie Merriweather Post's emeralds were as well traveled as she was. Some of those with carved decoration or bearing the engraved names of their former owners are historic stones, mined many centuries ago, that later traveled via circuitous routes before finding their way into Post's collection of jewelry in America.

The seventeenth-century French gem trader Jean-Baptiste Tavernier observed, "As for the emerald, it is an ancient error of many people to suppose that it was originally found in the East because before the discovery of America they could not believe otherwise."[1] Although green stones appealed to both Hindus and Muslims for their green hue, a holy color, associated with the Prophet's turban and Paradise, their origins lie in South America. Emeralds were known in antiquity, but they were scarce. A small deposit at Mount Zabarah in Egypt was the only source through the Middle Ages, until another small mine was discovered near Salzburg, Austria. In the sixteenth century, a large source of the gem was discovered in Colombia.

Fig. 123
Detail of carved central emerald of gold, emerald, diamond, and enamel arm bracelet (*bazuband*). Emerald, probably Deccan, India, 2nd quarter of the 17th century; setting, India, probably 19th century. Al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait, acc. no. LNS 141 J.

Fig. 124
Detail of watercolor and gold painting of Prince Khurram, later Shah Jahan. Mughal Empire, ca. 1616. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, acc. no. IM.14-1925.


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The Spanish came across the Chivor and Muzo mines in 1537, when Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, conqueror of Colombia's interior, entered the valley of Guachetá and received nine emeralds as a gift from the Chibcha tribe. The Spanish did not, however, begin large-scale mining operations, near Chivor, until 1558. They found the site of the present-day Muzo mines in about 1594. For at least fifteen years the output was considerable until production ceased in the mid-seventeenth century.

For part of the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal were united under one kingdom.[2] The emeralds mined in South America first traveled by sea from Colombia to the port of Seville. After Portuguese traders opened up a sea route to India, via southern Africa and the Gulf of Arabia, emeralds were sent onward from Lisbon to Goa in India, Muscat in Oman, and Hormuz in Persia. In return, the Portuguese obtained spices and silk. Large, high-quality emeralds like those Post acquired did not begin to appear on the international gem market until the late seventeenth century, at least a century after the Portuguese began trading with India and Persia. The Portuguese did not cut or polish the stones but Indian gem cutters did, retaining as much weight as possible, as Indian taste dictated. The aim was simply to maintain the size and reveal the color.

Reliable documentary evidence points to emeralds not reaching India until the second half of the sixteenth century. The Sultan of Gujarat drowned in 1537, and Portugal took the opportunity to seize his state and his property. A detailed inventory of his jewels listed diamonds, rubies, pearls, and turquoises, but no emeralds. By 1619, however, when the Mughal ambassador to the Portuguese in Goa left the city without paying a Portuguese merchant for his purchases of emeralds, the dealer followed him to Agra and took him before Prince Khurram, the future Emperor Shah Jahan, to secure payment (fig. 124).

Emeralds are beryllium aluminum silicates, $Be_3Al_2(SiO_3)_6$, colored green by trace amounts of chromium, with a range of refractive indexes allowing for exact geophysical identification. Post's finest stones can be identified as coming from Muzo, where emeralds commonly form long hexagonal crystals, and the largest of Post's examples retain that shape. Emeralds range in hardness from 7 to 8.5 on the Mohs scale and are prone to fracturing and chipping. By contrast, diamonds, the hardest gems, are a 10. The relative fragility of emeralds is due to internal flaws called "jardin" (French for garden), veils of lighter and darker green within the stone. Where these veils reach the surface, tiny fissures appear that make the stone porous. Colored oils can be used to "improve" the emeralds' color, but such treatment may not last and can seriously impair the stones' integrity.

Indian gem polishers preferred the stones in the simplest form possible to reduce the risk of damage

as well as to retain the intensity of the green. If a stone had a great deal of jardin but was of significant size, carving the surface with foliate scrolls or geometric patterns helped disguise the changes in internal color (fig. 123). This is evident in several of the largest emeralds in Post's collection, while others with a Mughal or Persian association and a deep, untrammeled color were simply polished as cabochons. A Farsi inscription on the large central emerald of the brooch that Post bought from Cartier in about 1925 translates as "Servant of Shah Abbas," making reference to the Persian ruler to whom it once belonged (fig. 125). The placement of the words and thin characters indicate that the inscription was added after the stone was carved and probably became the shah's by gift or plunder from the Mughal court.

The fall of the Mughal Empire, the sack of Delhi by the Persians in 1739, and the arrival of the British to colonize meant that vast quantities of emeralds became plunder and served as tribute. These gems thus began slowly to make their way into the hands of jewelers and gem dealers in Western Europe and by the 1920s to America.

Notes

1 Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne*, ed. William Crooke, trans. Valentine Ball, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 81–82.

2 From 1580 to 1640, Spain and Portugal had the same kings: Philip I, Philip II, and Philip III.

Fig. 125
Carved inscription on side of central emerald of Hillwood's Cartier emerald and diamond pendant brooch. Emerald, 17th century.

Burma — The Land of the Midnight Blue

Martin D. Fuller, Gemologist Appraiser, Martin Fuller Appraisals, LLC

Fig. 126
Gem mining in Mogok, Burma (Myanmar), ca. 1906.

Deep in the humid heart of Southeast Asia, nestled in a sacred valley, lies one of the most revered sources of sapphires and rubies since ancient times. Mogok, Burma (Myanmar) is where the best of the blue and the red are found side by side.

The rubies and sapphires discovered by Burma's earliest inhabitants were appreciated as bright crystals of red and blue sparkling in the jungle's rivers. Millennia of weathering and erosion released the gems from their earthly entombment and sent them

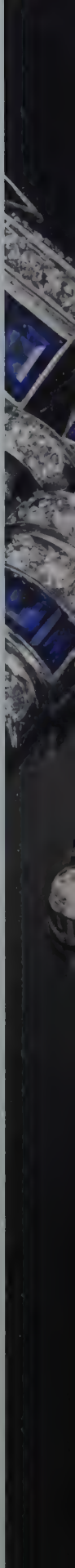
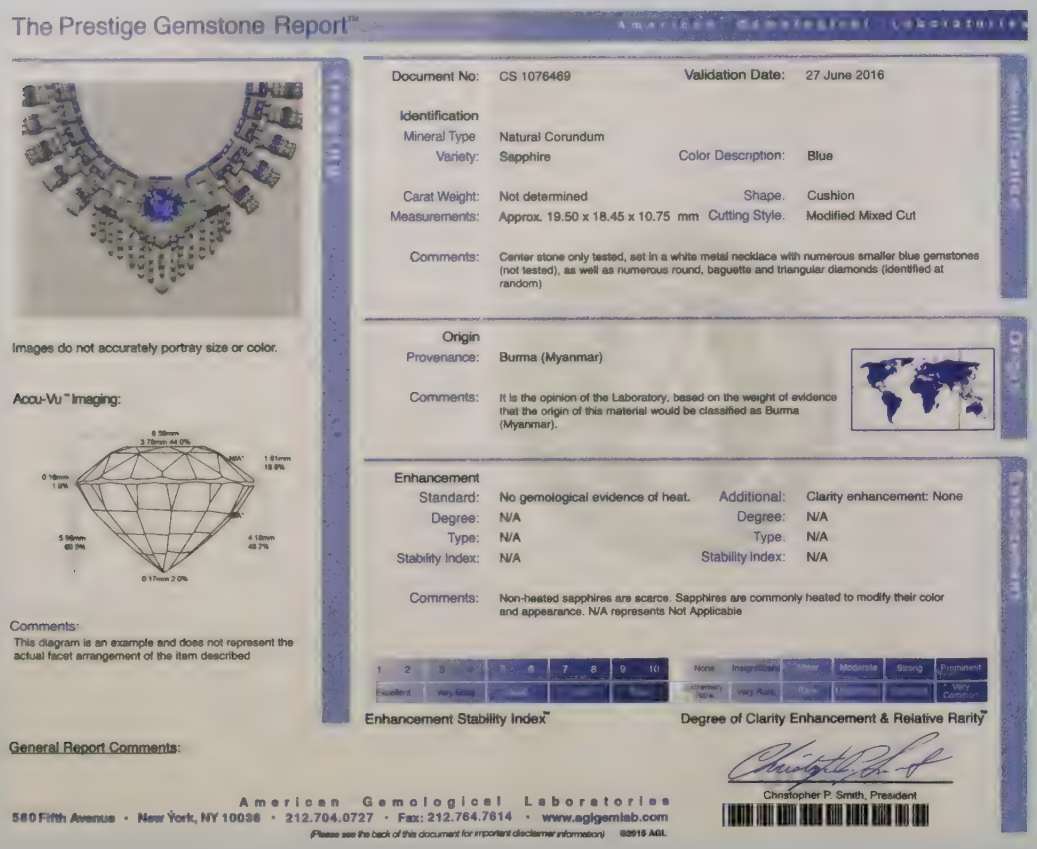


Fig. 127
Detail of central element of sapphire and diamond fringe necklace. Cartier New York, 1937. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 17.68.

Fig. 128
[illegible] central sapphire in Cartier fringe necklace
[illegible] an Gemological Laboratories, 2016


The Prestige Gemstone Report™

Document No: CS 1076469 Validation Date: 27 June 2016

Identification
Mineral Type: Natural Corundum
Variety: Sapphire Color Description: Blue
Carat Weight: Not determined Shape: Cushion
Measurements: Approx. 19.50 x 18.45 x 10.75 mm Cutting Style: Modified Mixed Cut
Comments: Center stone only tested, set in a white metal necklace with numerous smaller blue gemstones (not tested), as well as numerous round, baguette and triangular diamonds (identified at random)

Origin
Provenance: Burma (Myanmar)
Comments: It is the opinion of the Laboratory, based on the weight of evidence that the origin of this material would be classified as Burma (Myanmar).

Enhancement
Standard: No gemological evidence of heat. Additional: Clarity enhancement: None
Degree: N/A Degree: N/A
Type: N/A Type: N/A
Stability Index: N/A Stability Index: N/A
Comments: Non-heated sapphires are scarce. Sapphires are commonly heated to modify their color and appearance. N/A represents Not Applicable

Images do not accurately portray size or color.
Accu-Vu™ Imaging:
Comments:
This diagram is an example and does not represent the actual facet arrangement of the item described
Enhancement Stability Index™
Degree of Clarity Enhancement & Relative Rarity™
General Report Comments:
Christopher P. Smith, President
American Gemological Laboratories
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tumbling down the mountains in the monsoon rains, to rest in the surging streams on the valley floor.

The earliest evidence of organized mining indicates that indigenous tribes sifted through these alluvial deposits for various gems, including the treasured Burma blue sapphire. This primitive process continued for thousands of years. Among the earliest Western accounts of such practices is that of Venetian adventurer Niccolò dei Conti, who describes mid-fifteenth-century traditional mining techniques, involving the washing of gem-bearing sands and gravels to obtain sapphires and rubies.

There was no mining in the sense of burrowing into the mountainsides as we see today.

The Burmese kings were very secretive regarding their mining operations, and much mystery lies in the early days of excavating the Burma sapphire. We do know they commanded that any gem over a certain size was to be the property of the king. The penalties for disobedience were swift and severe; the inhabitants of entire villages could be burned alive if one of them proved to be a thief.

The first evidence of hard-rock mining in Mogok is given in 1889 by G.S. Streeter, author of *The Ruby Mines of Burma*. He speaks of a deserter from the British Navy being sent into the heart of Burma by King Phagyidoa in 1830 to blast rock at the royal ruby mines.[1] The British period of mining and trading, from 1886 to 1947, is well documented.

British-ruled India controlled all mining operations until Burma declared independence in 1947 (fig. 126). Since then, there have been several mining systems and ventures in place, from total state control to a variety of government, military, and private company cooperative enterprises. In

the past few years, trading in Burma has undergone a quiet revolution. According to sapphire expert, gemologist, and Mogok explorer, Richard Hughes, private gem trading was illegal until a few years ago. Today, rough and cut stones can be freely purchased by foreigners with dollars to spend from licensed traders, with only a 10 percent export tax to be paid to the Burmese government. Thus, for the first time in over thirty years, the private trading and export of gems is both simple and legal.

One must behold these midnight-blue gems to understand the grip they have on the marketplace. Wherever the finest Burma sapphires are found, so too are the top names in the world of jewelry. From Tiffany and Harry Winston, Cartier and Fabergé, to the British crown jewels and the treasures of Hillwood, excellent examples of the Burma sapphire are held in the highest esteem.

Cartier does not lend their name to just any gem with a few facets and some sparkle. Rarely will they craft a jewel with ordinary gemstones provided by a client. Yet Marjorie Merriweather Post brought them no ordinary gems and was hardly a typical client.

The magnificent sapphire and diamond necklace we admire today was conceived from two matching bracelets Marjorie Post purchased in the 1930s (fig. 127). These bracelets are comprised of three interlocking segments, allowing for their conversion into a collar. Post brought the bracelets along with the Burma sapphire to the workshop of Cartier in 1937. With the collaboration of Pierre Cartier, the centerpiece of the now famous necklace was created. This necklace has been an integral part of several world-class exhibitions on the work of Cartier and is a significant part of Hillwood's jewelry collection.

The necklace is set with a total of 237 square step-cut sapphires with a total weight of approximately 100.48 carats. It is also adorned with a total of 1,181 diamonds, including old European-cut and single-cut diamonds as well as more modern rectangular-, baguette-, triangular-, and bullet-cut diamonds. The total weight of the diamonds is approximately 64.43 carats. The necklace centers on a fine cushion-cut Burma sapphire weighing approximately 38.81 carats. Whereas the vast majority of sapphires today are heated to improve their color and clarity, this magnificent gem has the documented distinction of being totally natural, with no technological enhancements. The process of sophisticated scientific testing to determine the country of origin is akin to advances in DNA research for gemstones. The central sapphire has undergone rigorous advanced instrumentation examination to bestow the coveted Burmese provenance as well as to divine its natural, unenhanced beauty (fig. 128). The necklace is handmade and weighs a total of 227.70 grams.

Notes

1 G. Skelton Streeter, "The Ruby Mines of Burma," *Journal of the Society of Arts* 37, no. 1892 (February 22, 1889): 267.

HISTORIC JEWELRY

Marjorie Merriweather Post's interest in historic jewelry was manifest from the 1920s. Historic jewelry perfectly agreed with her criteria for collecting beautiful works of art that were exquisitely crafted and of royal or aristocratic provenance. Post's scrapbooks provide evidence that, as early as 1922, she was clipping newspaper articles about historic jewelry coming up for sale. That year, a necklace with an enormous emerald of about 100 carats came onto the market. It reputedly once belonged to Catherine the Great of Russia. The *New York Times* reported Cartier's principal in New York, Pierre Cartier, as remarking that "the Russian revolution and the disastrous situation in Austria [have] brought into the market a large number of the world's most beautiful and renowned jewels ... Many of these have already found their way to America and others will follow."[1]

Post could never have guessed that years later she would have firsthand experience of Russian jeweled treasures. After a visit to the Kremlin Armoury in 1938, while in Moscow as wife of the American ambassador, she offered very personal insights about what she had seen:

> We were taken into a vault-like room with pairs of iron doors; two at a time would be opened. Inside the shelves displaying the jewels were covered with black velvet ... The brilliance and the glitter as the doors were opened was

Fig. 129
Ruby, diamond, silver, and gold necklace (acc. no. 17.71.1) with boxes from dressing table set (acc. nos. 12.188.3, 12.188.10-12, and 12.188.13-15).

> almost blinding. The imperial Russian crown is extremely large, and surprisingly enough, in the most delicate and dainty jewel work that one could imagine, all white with the exception of the huge ruby at the top … It is in very great contrast, for instance, to the British imperial crown, which is full of color and much heavier in design and work.

She further assessed the jewels, noting in particular

> a huge sapphire weighing 296 grains, of a very unusual cut … Then, of course, the Orlov [diamond], mounted in the imperial scepter … It also is cut in the same manner, cabochon, and with facets. It is a bad color, not white and not yellow. There was also an enormous emerald of 140 carats, square, and of magnificent deep color … What a fabulous country this Russia is![2]

Historic jewels are as irresistible as they are enigmatic, often surrounded by an aura of mystery that makes it difficult to separate fact from legend. The so-called "Marie Antoinette" earrings are no exception (fig. 130).

Fig. 130
Marie Antoinette diamond earrings. Diamond tops added by Cartier, 1928. Current setting by Harry Winston after the original, 1959. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G5018.

Fig. 131
Detail of portrait of Queen Marie Antoinette of France. Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, 1788. Oil on canvas. Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, acc. no. MV 2097.

The extremely large pear-shaped diamonds at the center of each earring—one 20.34 carats, the other 14.25 carats—may have belonged to Queen Marie Antoinette of France. These "brilliant" diamonds—the term coined in the late seventeenth century for a diamond that was faceted for maximum sparkle—are typical of the eighteenth century. Until the end of the seventeenth century, diamonds were simply polished or table cut and therefore lacked the extraordinary dazzle of these stones.

For more than a century, the earrings have been identified as Marie Antoinette's, but this fact can be argued both ways at present (fig. 131). The earrings have been confused at times with another pair that King Louis XVI gave his queen at the beginning of his reign and that she wore constantly. In his history of the French crown jewels, Germain Bapst describes them as "girandoles" with large pear-shaped diamonds.[3] *Girandole* references a style of earrings characterized by a larger stone surrounded by additional dangling stones. Thus, these earrings do not correspond with the pair owned by Post.

Jeanne Louise Henriette Campan, a lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, also makes reference to the above-mentioned earrings in her memoirs. Campan relates that in 1774, the court jeweler, Bœhmer,

offered the queen six large pear-shaped diamonds that had previously been destined for Madame du Barry, Louis XV's mistress.[4] These were mounted as *girandoles*, each with three large pear-shaped diamonds. To lower their price, the queen asked Bœhmer to remove the diamonds at the posts and substitute them with her own stones. Campan's description of the earrings, though traditionally mentioned in relation to Post's, does not correspond with her single-drop earrings.

Post's Marie Antoinette earrings, however, could be identified with another pair of earrings Madame Campan discusses in her memoirs and that the queen managed to retain at the beginning of her imprisonment during the French Revolution. Campan helped Marie Antoinette wrap her diamonds, pearls, and rubies and pack them in a casket to send to Léonard, her hairdresser, with the purpose of taking them to London for sale. Madame Campan later recalled,

> Her Majesty retained nothing but a suite of pearls and a pair of earrings, composed of a ring and two drops, each formed of a single diamond. These earrings and several fancy trinkets, which were not worth the trouble of packing up, remained in her Majesty's chest of drawers at the Tuileries, and were, of course, seized by the committee which took possession of the palace on the 10th of August [1792].[5]

Fig. 132
Marie Antoinette diamond earrings on display at exhibition about the queen at Versailles, 1955. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Whether this story relates to the earrings in question is uncertain. It could be argued that if they were a favorite of the queen, she would have kept them until her death. On the other hand, it is likely that such valuable pieces would have been removed for safekeeping. Marie Antoinette's personal jewelry was mostly sent abroad in two lots. One, as mentioned, was entrusted to her hairdresser, Léonard, to take to England. These jewels were sold and the money given to an intermediary appointed by Marie Antoinette. A second set went to Brussels and was delivered to Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI's only surviving child, Marie Thérèse. Some of these latter jewels were sold shortly after Marie Thérèse's marriage to the Duke of Angoulême in 1799. Such is the case of a large diamond and ruby parure purchased by one of her cousins, Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria.[6] Marie Thérèse must have also sold some of her mother's jewels to survive in exile and to pay the gambling debts in Russia of her and her husband's dissolute uncle, the Comte de Provence.[7] Unfortunately, no detailed lists of what was sent to London or Brussels survive.

After the French Revolution, the earrings came into the possession of the Yusupovs, one of Russia's wealthiest and most prominent families.

Prince Felix Yusupov sold them to Cartier in 1928. An affidavit signed at the time of the transaction by Felix's mother, Princess Zinaida Yusupov, states that the Polar Star diamond—a splendid cushion-shaped stone of more than 41 carats from the famed Golconda mines in India—and the Marie Antoinette earrings were acquired by her great-grandmother, Princess Tatiana Yusupov, at the beginning of the nineteenth century and that the earrings had never been reset (see fig. 155). As Wilfried Zeisler notes in his essay on the Yusupov collection in this volume, there is no evidence of the earrings entering the Yusupov family holdings until the 1870s. According to family tradition, the earrings were found in Marie Antoinette's pocket after the arrest of the royal family at Varennes in June 1791.

Always attracted to jewelry with royal associations, Marjorie Post bought the earrings from Pierre Cartier in London in late 1928. The original silver mounts were replaced with platinum and the old mounts retained. Cartier also added triangular diamonds to the tops and surrounded the pear-shaped diamonds with small modern faceted diamonds. In 1955 the earrings were displayed in an exhibition dedicated to Marie Antoinette at Versailles (fig. 132) along with a desk by Abraham and David Roentgen. The desk was the star of Post's furniture collection, and was thought at the time to have been made for Marie Antoinette when she was Dauphine of France.

Marjorie Post recalled later in life how, at a dance at the Meadow Club in Southampton in the 1920s, she and her then-husband E. F. Hutton encountered Serge Obolensky, a gallant White Russian, then married to Alice Astor, and who would become a friend for life:

> The first time he came to ask me to dance, he suddenly stopped in the middle of the floor and looked. He looked first from one ear to the other [and] all of a sudden he said: "You have on my aunt's earrings, where did you get them?" I did not know that his aunt was Princess Yusupov, so I told him that I had been in London and had bought them at Cartier's.[8]

In the aftermath of World War II, additional historic jewels appeared on the market, as families struck by the ravages of war were forced to sell part of their jewelry to survive. During those years, Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, and Harry Winston, among other jewelers, had momentous opportunities to transact with royal households and aristocratic families and obtain pieces of great importance.

Marjorie Merriweather Post acquired two pieces formerly belonging to Empress Marie Louise of France in the 1960s. The historic Marie Louise diadem was the work of Nitot et Fils, court jewelers to Napoleon I (fig. 133). The marriage between the emperor of France and the Austrian

Fig. 133
Marie Louise diadem. Created by Nitot et Fils, Paris, 1810. Outfitted with turquoises by Van Cleef & Arpels, 1956–62. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G5021.

archduchess in 1810 sealed an alliance with the Habsburgs and gave Napoleon entry into the inner sanctum of the royal houses of Europe. For the occasion, the emperor showered Marie Louise, his second wife, with jewelry. The wedding gifts she received included two grand parures from Nitot et Fils in Paris: one in emeralds and diamonds and the other in diamonds and opals. Both were delivered to the empress in 1810. Such matching ensembles were the quintessential form of court jewelry during the First Empire. The perfect harmony of their elements created a uniform sparkling effect.

Marie Louise's formidable emerald parure consisted of a diadem, necklace, comb, belt buckle, and earrings. The ensemble, part of the empress's personal jewelry collection, remained in the hands of the Habsburg family until the 1950s. After Marie Louise's death in 1847, the set was inherited by her aunt, Archduchess Elisabeth of Austria, who in turn passed it on to her son Leopold. Leopold died without issue in 1898 and left the emeralds to one of his cousins, Archduke Karl Albrecht, whose seat was in Poland. Karl married a Swedish commoner who held the title of Princess of Altenburg. Following the German occupation of Poland in 1939, the couple were interned and sent to labor camps. They managed to move to Sweden after the liberation of Poland, taking with them only their most precious jewels, including the Marie Louise parure. After her husband died in 1951, Princess Alice of Altenburg, well aware

Fig. 134
Marjorie Merriweather Post wearing the Marie Louise diadem at the Red Cross Ball in Palm Beach, Florida, 1967. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

Fig. 135
Model wearing the Marie Louise diadem with its original emeralds. Shot by Erwin Blumenfeld for the January 31, 1955 issue of *Life*. Erwin Blumenfeld Estate.

that she would not have many more occasions to wear the diadem and belt plaque, sold them to Van Cleef & Arpels.[9] The rest of the set remained in the family for several more years.

The empress's diadem was originally set with seventy-nine large emeralds and more than one thousand diamonds. At the request of several clients and collectors, Julien and Louis Arpels agreed to exhibit the tiara in the window of their Fifth Avenue shop in New York City. The jewelers later gave in to pressure from clients who wanted to buy the emeralds individually. In January 1955 *Life* magazine ran the article "Napoleonic Tiara Is Torn Up," which discussed the piece's disassembly (fig. 135).[10] From 1954 to 1956 the seventy-nine emeralds that adorned the imperial diadem were remounted in rings, brooches, and bracelets. The diadem's diamond-studded mount was subsequently reset with turquoises, a semiprecious stone *très à la mode* at the time because of its advantage of being less costly and easier to cut and fit into an existing structure.

Tiaras made a comeback in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1970 the *New York Times* devoted an article to their resurgence, quoting famous jewelers and featuring glamorous women wearing jeweled tiaras, antique and new, with great confidence. Marie Louise Whitney, the wife of Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, stated in the article how a "tiara moves up a lady greatly." Claude Arpels chimed in, "At Van Cleef & Arpels,

tiaras are always in demand."[11] The piece noted the jeweler's reluctance to lend tiaras due to their high value, but, despite such reticence, the firm made exceptions for important clients.

Sometime in 1966, Van Cleef & Arpels must have brought the Marie Louise diadem to Marjorie Post's attention. In a savvy marketing move, the jewelers lent it to her in 1967 to wear at the Red Cross Ball, an event held each January in Palm Beach and one of the few occasions, as Estée Lauder said, to wear "white tie and tiara" (fig. 134).[12] After the event, Post wrote to Claude Arpels, "I do want to thank you very much for loaning to me the beautiful Marie Louise tiara for the Red Cross International Gala. It really is a lovely thing and I enjoyed wearing it enormously."[13] The press in Palm Beach raved about how regal Marjorie Post looked in the tiara with such headlines as "White Ties and Tiaras Sparkle for Red Cross" and "Palm Beach Turns on the Glamor."

Aside from the aforementioned stone replacements, the Marie Louise diadem remains in its original form, with diamonds outlining the symmetrical arrangement of alternating diamond and oval shapes and palm motifs derived from Greco-Roman designs. Post purchased the diadem from Van Cleef & Arpels for the Smithsonian Institution in 1971. The accompanying necklace and earrings, still bearing their original emeralds, were purchased by the Louvre in 2004 for the highest price ever paid by a museum for items of jewelry (fig. 136). These pieces

Fig. 136
Emerald, diamond, gold, and silver necklace and earrings belonging to Empress Marie Louise. Nitot et Fils, Paris, 1810. Musée du Louvre, Paris, acc. nos. OA 12155 and OA 12156.

Fig. 138
Studio photograph of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria wearing the Marie Louise necklace. Adèle, Vienna, ca. 1890. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv, Vienna.

remain on permanent view in the Galerie d'Apollon at the Louvre.

Although some historic jewels were remounted and refashioned, others were fortunately left in their original settings. Harry Winston knew that, for a discerning client like Marjorie Merriweather Post, the Marie Louise diamond necklace (also referred to as the Napoleon necklace)—which he would sell to her in 1962—held an irresistible allure (fig. 137). The necklace was another gift from Napoleon to Marie Louise. Though less shrewd and formidable than Josephine, Napoleon's first wife, Marie Louise was of higher rank and fit to bear heirs for the empire. She quickly became pregnant and gave birth to a long-awaited son, who received the grand title of King of Rome. The diamond necklace, completed by Nitot et Fils in 1811, was a sumptuous way to mark the happy occasion. The firm had previously been entrusted with creating the most elaborate jewelry ensembles for Napoleon's coronation in 1804, jewels for Empress Josephine as well as pieces for the emperor's marriage to Marie Louise in 1810, including the spectacular emerald parure. The silver- and gold-mounted necklace features twenty-eight oval- and cushion-cut diamonds suspending a fringe of nineteen oval- and pear-shaped briolette-cut diamonds. The briolette—a

Fig. 137
Marie Louise diamond necklace. Nitot et Fils, Paris, 1811. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G5019.

pear- or drop-shaped gemstone with the entire surface covered with facets—had been favored by royalty and the aristocracy since the seventeenth century for its lavish cut in the round and optimal dispersion of light. A description written prior to the necklace's delivery detailed the cut, weight, and price of each stone.[14] As Honoré Balzac wrote in 1830, "Diamonds profusely in use in parures ... provided a stark contrast with Republican austerity ... Never before had one seen such 'fireworks,' diamonds have never before been deemed so valuable."[15] Marie Louise was portrayed on several occasions with this magnificent necklace, including in a portrait by Giovanni Battista Borghesi (fig. 139).

The stones for this necklace would have been extremely hard to source. At that time, India and Brazil were the only two significant diamond-producing areas. A gemological study conducted by the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History ascertained the notable quality of the necklace's colorless-to-near-colorless diamonds and pointed to India's Golconda mines as the possible source.[16]

After the signing of the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1814, Napoleon was exiled to Elba and Marie Louise made Duchess of Parma. She took up residence there in 1816. The crown jewels remained in France as part of the Crown's treasury, but the former empress departed with her numerous personal jewels, including the diamond necklace and emerald parure. In Parma, Marie Louise ruled benevolently with her companion,

Fig. 139
Portrait of Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma, wearing her diamond necklace. Giovanni Battista Borghesi, 1837–39. Oil on canvas. Galleria Nazionale di Parma, Parma, acc. no. 1032.

Count von Neipperg, whom she had met in 1814. Four months after Napoleon's death in 1821, Marie Louise and Neipperg married. From this union, three children were born. After Neipperg's death in 1834, Marie Louise married Count Charles-René de Bombelles, her chamberlain. She died in Parma in 1847.

Marie Louise's necklace passed on to her sister-in-law, Archduchess Sophie of Austria, who shortened it by removing two stones and making earrings out of them, the whereabouts of which are unknown. At her death in 1872 the necklace was bequeathed to the archduchess's son, Archduke Karl Ludwig of Austria. Karl Ludwig's third wife, Maria Theresa, inherited the necklace upon his death in 1896 (fig. 138). The archduchess wore it at the coronation of Alexander III of Russia in Moscow, where it was so admired that it was put on display for the court ladies to see.[17] Maria Theresa's mistress of the robes remarked, "Our archduchess is very well liked here, but I only expect proper enthusiasm when she appears in her gowns and diamonds."[18]

In 1929 Archduchess Maria Theresa sent the necklace to New York to be sold. Unfortunately, she fell prey to an unscrupulous cadre of crooks. The necklace was excessively undervalued and sold for the lowly sum of $60,000. The archduchess only received a meager $7,270. When the swindle was brought to light, the case was tried in the New York courts. The crooks were indicted in 1930, though never brought to justice, and the necklace

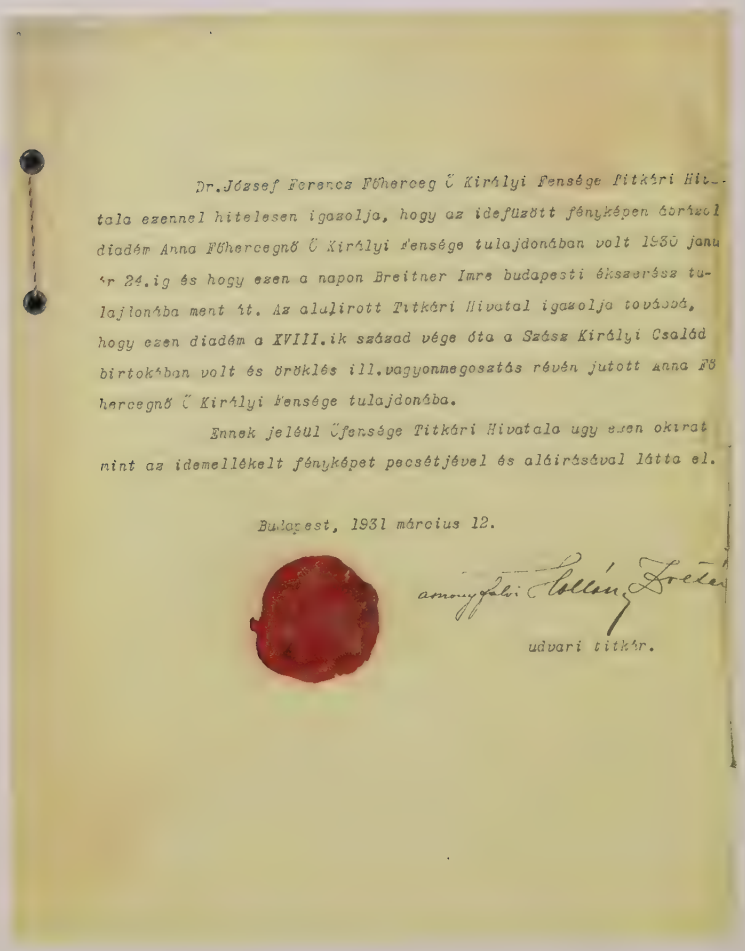
Fig. 140
Antique diamond floral tiara ("Anna"). 1830s. National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. 254327.

returned to the archduchess. The affair of the necklace is further detailed in Jennifer Levy's essay in this volume.

The necklace remained in the Habsburg family until 1948, when Archduke Karl Ludwig's grandson, Prince Franz Joseph II of Liechtenstein, inherited it. That same year, the archduke sold it to Paul-Louis Weiller, a Paris industrialist and patron of the arts. He, in turn, sold it to Harry Winston, around 1960. Marjorie Post purchased it from Winston in early 1962 and presented it to the Smithsonian Institution soon thereafter (see fig. 10).

Though Marjorie Post purchased the majority of her historic jewelry, a floral tiara dating to the 1830s is a notable exception, in that it was a gift from her husband, Joseph E. Davies (fig. 140). The light and airy floral tiara originally belonged to the royal house of Saxony.

The tiara was inherited by Princess Anna Monika Pia of Saxony, who married Archduke Joseph Franz of Austria in 1926. It remained in her possession until it became the property of a jeweler in Budapest in



Dr. József Ferenc Főherceg Ő Királyi Fensége Titkári Hi...
tala ezennel hitelesen igazolja, hogy az idefűzött fényképen ábrázol
diadém Anna Főhercegnő Ő Királyi Fensége tulajdonában volt 1930 janu
'r 24.ig és hogy ezen a napon Breitner Imre budapesti ékszerész tu-
lajdonába ment át. Az alulirott Titkári Hivatal igazolja továbbá,
hogy ezen diadém a XVIII.ik század vége óta a Szász Királyi Család
birtokában volt és örökles ill.vagyonmegosztás révén jutott Anna Fő
hercegnő Ő Királyi Fensége tulajdonába.
Ennek jeléül Őfensége Titkári Hivatala ugy ezen okirat
mint az idemellékelt fényképet pecsétjével és aláirásával látta el.

Budapest, 1931 március 12.

udvari titkár.

Fig. 141
Affidavit certifying the provenance of "Anna," 1931. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

1930.[19] A 1931 affidavit signed by her husband's secretary to certify the tiara's provenance coincides with this change in ownership (fig. 141). Marjorie Post became its happy owner a few years later. In a photo album chronicling her 1937 trip to Vienna, she wrote, "It was here in Vienna that 'Anna' came to live in our family. There is no doubt Joe spoils me beyond words. How I love it!"[20] In late 1938, while *en poste* in Brussels, where her husband was the US ambassador, Post wore the tiara for the first time. She noted alongside pictures from the occasion, "I do hope you have noted 'Anna.' It was her debut" (fig. 142).[21]

In the late 1960s, Marjorie Post began searching for another historical tiara, with her curator Marvin Ross leading the quest. In pursuit of the best piece, Ross went to Chaumet, where among other examples he saw a Belle Époque tiara from the Yusupov collection. He likewise contacted Van Cleef & Arpels, who sourced a tiara worn by Princess Murat, and visited Bowater Galleries in London to look at another Yusupov family tiara. Post finally set her eye on a tiara from the 1830s coming up for auction at Sotheby's, London, in 1970.[22] The New York jewelry dealer A La Vieille Russie acted as an intermediary in the bidding process.

Fig. 142
Scrapbook page showing Marjorie Post Davies wearing the "Anna" tiara, 1938. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

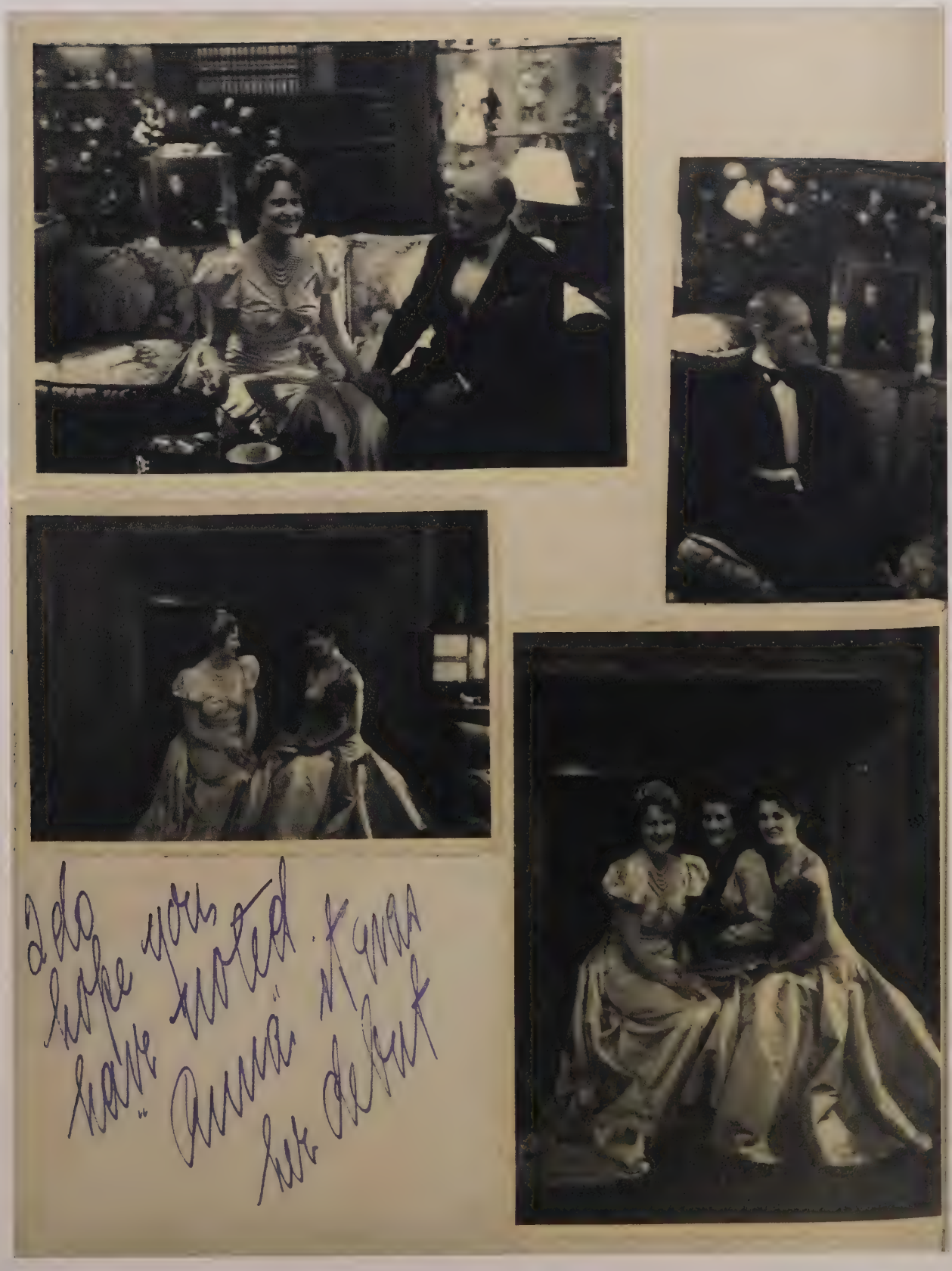


Fig. 143
Rose diamond, silver, and gold floral tiara. Possibly English, ca. 1830s. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G5026.

The tiara, possibly of English origin, belonged to the family of Lord Methuen at the time it was sold at Sotheby's (fig. 143). Floral jewelry had been popular in England in the 1830s. The tiara is an excellent example of a floral design set *en tremblant*—with flowers and leaves mounted on coils to tremble at the slightest movement—derived from a mid-eighteenth-century jewelry technique. All the flowers are set with large cushion-shaped rose diamonds at their centers. The tiara is complemented by two matching spray brooches that can be attached to make the head ornament larger or be worn separately. Very few floral tiaras of this period have survived, most having been broken into separate sprays and sold as brooches.

The Romantic movement's attitude toward nature heavily influenced jewelry of this type. During the early to mid-nineteenth century, research in botany and zoology advanced notably. New flower specimens were constantly arriving from the many plant-hunting expeditions. Botany as a discipline was widely studied, and young ladies were expected to be able to paint flowers with reasonable skill as part of

Fig. 144
Ruby, diamond, silver, and gold earrings and drop necklace. Probably French, first quarter of the 19th century. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 17.71.1-3.

their drawing instruction.[23] In this milieu, floral jewelry bloomed and was even exported to France.[24]

In addition to Western European historic jewelry, the Merriweather Post Collection boasts several examples with imperial Russian connections. Marjorie Post became particularly interested in Russian art during her sojourn in Moscow between 1937 and 1938, when her husband Joseph E. Davies was the US ambassador to the Soviet Union. In 1966 Post acquired a ruby and diamond necklace that reportedly had belonged to Eugenia Maximilianovna, Duchess of Oldenburg (fig. 144). The duchess was the daughter of Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, eldest child of Tsar

Fig. 145
Portrait of Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna (later Duchess of Leuchtenberg). Vladimir Lukich Hau, 1838. Private collection.

Fig. 146
Portrait of Maximilian de Beauharnais, Duke of Leuchtenberg. Petr Fedorovich Sokolov, 1840s. Private collection.

Nicholas I, and Maximilian de Beauharnais, 3rd Duke of Leuchtenberg, son of Eugène and grandson of Empress Josephine (figs. 145 and 146).

The necklace could have entered the family through the Beauharnais branch. Josephine, the grandmother of Maximilian, was a famous spendthrift and lover of jewelry. A profligate and generous soul, she gave sumptuous jewels from her personal collection to both her daughter Hortense, Queen of Holland, and her son Eugène, Viceroy of Italy.[25] Josephine owned at least two parures with rubies and diamonds.[26] Maria and Maximilian's Mariinsky Palace in St. Petersburg abounded

Detail of fig. 144

with precious works of art, including family heirlooms ranging from Empress Josephine's diamonds to locks of her and Napoleon's hair.[27] Eugenia Maximilianovna's husband, the Duke of Oldenburg, managed to save their important jewelry by fleeing to Bavaria immediately before the Russian Revolution. In the 1920s, their jewels were sold in Switzerland to the jeweler Seiler of Vevey.[28]

The necklace is designed as a series of diamond and ruby clusters supporting a fringe of round- and oval-shaped rubies. These are suspended from diamond bows and capped with palmette motifs. The

Fig. 147
Diamond, gold, and enamel bracelets set with miniatures of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV and Queen Elisabeth of Prussia. Berlin, ca. 1840. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. nos. 11.130.1-2.

central cluster bears a large pear-shaped ruby drop. The necklace is decidedly French in style and possibly dates to the First Empire, with later alterations during the Restoration of the Bourbon kings. The most comparable necklace surviving from this period is part of a parure designed by Evrard Bapst and executed by Paul-Nicolas Menière in 1816 for the Duchess of Angoulême reusing elements of an ensemble made for Empress Marie Louise a few years earlier.[29]

A letter written by Count Sergei Sheremetev indicates that he had a set of sapphire jewelry originally belonging to his grandmother, the aforementioned Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, mounted in the same way.[30]

A pair of portrait bracelets set with miniature portraits of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV and Queen Elisabeth of Prussia at the center is

Fig. 148
Study of Princess Alexandrine of Prussia presumably wearing one of the portrait bracelets. Adolph von Menzel, 1863–65. Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, acc. no. SZ Menzel Kat. 968.

both characteristic of nineteenth-century court jewels and illustrative of a new sentimentality popular in jewelry (fig. 147). These pieces were viewed as tokens of appreciation as well as reminders of one's lineage, since they could be given and passed on to family members. The rigid blue enamel bands are adorned with crowned eagles on the sides and surrounded by scrolls all set in diamonds.[31] They could have been made by any of the various court jewelers working in Berlin at the time of Friedrich Wilhelm IV's accession to the throne in 1840. He was called the Romantic King, and, in 1857, suffering from mental illness, transferred rule to his brother Wilhelm, who served as prince regent until his death in 1861.

A sketch of Princess Alexandrine of Prussia by the court artist Adolph von Menzel shows her wearing a bracelet identifiable as one with a miniature of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV (fig. 148). Dating between 1863 and 1865, the drawing is one of the many preparatory portraits Menzel made before he began work on his monumental painting of Wilhelm I's coronation in 1861. Alexandrine was the daughter of Prince Albrecht, the king's younger brother. In 1865 she married Duke Wilhelm of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Since King Friedrich Wilhelm IV

and his wife died without issue, it is possible that the bracelets were given to Alexandrine upon the death of her uncle in 1861, and they thus descended through the Mecklenburg-Schwerin line. After Alexandrine's death, the bracelets may have returned to the German treasury and then been dispersed with other jewelry in 1918 after the abdication of the last German emperor, Wilhelm II.[32]

A museum acquisition closes this chapter. In 2015, Hillwood purchased an important hummingbird brooch that once belonged to Marjorie Post (fig. 149). The brooch is modeled as a hummingbird in flight, diving as if to extract the pollen of a plant. Post acquired it in 1952 and wore it frequently, as evidenced by the many photographs in which it appears (fig. 150). After it was sold, along with other Post jewelry, at Christie's in 1982, it disappeared from the public eye and only recently resurfaced. Previously unattributed, the brooch is French and bears a remarkable resemblance to a late nineteenth-century hummingbird piece from the longstanding Parisian jewelry firm of Chaumet (fig. 151).

Europe's fascination with the hummingbird developed in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1851 British ornithologist John Gould displayed his stuffed hummingbird collection during the Great Exhibition in London. He mounted 1,500 stuffed specimens in revolving cases at the Zoological Gardens, where more than 75,000 visitors flocked to see

Fig. 149
Ruby, diamond, emerald, and gold hummingbird brooch. French, ca. 1890. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, acc. no. 2015.3.

Fig. 150
Marjorie Post May wearing the hummingbird brooch at a party at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. honoring Queen Elizabeth II, ca. 1960. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.

the display. During the course of the 1850s and 1860s, Gould published his five-volume *Family of Hummingbirds*, which catalogued all then-known species. During this period, the painter Martin Johnson Heade traveled to South America, determined to record live birds for his illustrated *Gems of Brazil*. As the title suggests, hummingbirds were greatly admired for the jewel-like iridescence of their feathers (fig. 152).

The first examples of hummingbirds in jewelry were crafted in England using actual taxidermied specimens. The fashion quickly reached France. Empress Eugénie was seen wearing a dress embroidered with flies made from hummingbirds' wings while vacationing in Biarritz.[33] By the mid-1870s, public outcry had stopped such practices.

Fig. 151
Ruby, diamond, gold, and silver hummingbird aigrette-brooch.
Chaumet, ca. 1880. Chaumet Collection, Paris, inv. MUS 122.

Fig. 152
Cattleya Orchid and Three Hummingbirds. Martin Johnson Heade, 1871. Oil on wood. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., acc. no. 1982.73.1.

Unsurprisingly, removing the birds from their natural habitat as well as using their plumage in jewelry and fashion was beginning to decimate populations at alarming rates.

Gem-set examples first appeared in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Mesmerized by these fluttering birds, English and French jewelers began immortalizing them in precious stones. Post's piece, a large, highly sculptural bird, is outfitted to serve as a brooch and alternatively as a head ornament. A couple of hooks in the back allowed for the insertion of exotic plumes, such as those of birds of paradise, to convert it into a hair piece or *aigrette* (fig. 153).

Marjorie Merriweather Post's historic jewelry is the one area of her collection to have survived largely intact. Thanks to her vision, these stunning pieces are on view today at Hillwood and the Smithsonian Institution's National Gem Collection for all to admire.

Fig. 153
Reverse of Hillwood's hummingbird brooch.

Notes

1 "Doubts Soviet Will Sell Royal Jewels," *New York Times*, August 27, 1922.
2 Description of Kremlin Armoury visit, Hillwood curatorial files, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
3 One account of the French crown jewels notes that six crown diamonds, four of which were Mazarins, were mounted in three pairs of earrings: two of pendant shape, the other of button form. See Bernard Morel, *Les Joyaux de la Couronne de France* (Paris: A. Michel, 1988), 204.
4 Jeanne Louise Henriette Campan and François Barrière, *Memoirs of the Private Life of Marie Antoinette*, vol. 1 (New York: Brentano's, 1917), 86.
5 Jeanne Louise Henriette Campan and François Barrière, *Memoirs of the Private Life of Marie Antoinette*, vol. 2 (New York: Brentano's, 1917), 141.
6 Morel, *Joyaux de la Couronne de France*, 211.
7 Ibid.
8 Marjorie Merriweather Post, interview by Nettie Leitch Major, Hot Springs, Virginia, December 30, 1964.
9 For a full account, see Vincent Meylan, "From Napoleon to Stalin: The Trials and Tribulations of Empress Marie Louise's Emeralds," in *Van Cleef & Arpels: Treasures and Legends* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Antique Collectors' Club, 2014), 278–85.
10 "Napoleonic Tiara Is Torn Up," *Life*, January 31, 1955, 45.
11 Enid Nemy, "From Sultan or Store, A Tiara Can Be Woman's Crowning Glory," *New York Times*, April 12, 1970.
12 Ibid.
13 Letter from Marjorie Merriweather Post to Claude Arpels, February 3, 1967, Van Cleef & Arpels, New York archives.
14 Record of the Maison de l'Empereur certified and signed by Nitot et Fils, a copy of which is in the Hillwood curatorial files, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
15 "Les diamants répandus à profusion sur les parures ... contrastaient si bien avec l'indigence républicaine ... jamais on ne donna tant de feux d'artifice, jamais le diamant n'atteignit à une si grande valeur." Honoré Balzac, *La Paix du ménage*, quoted in L. Vandensande et al., *Pour l'honneur et pour la gloire: Napoléon et les joyaux de l'empire* (Brussels: Fonds Mercator, 2010), 137.
16 Eloïse Gaillou and Jeffrey E. Post, "An Examination of the Napoleon Diamond Necklace," *Gems & Gemology* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 356.
17 Affidavit signed by Archduchess Maria Theresa, Hillwood curatorial files, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
18 Letter from Elisabeth Schönfeld to "Toni," May 24, 1883, in *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben der Obersthofmeisterin Elisabeth Reichsgräfin von Schönfeld, geb. Gräfin Festetits de Tolna*, ed. Heinrich Graf Schönfeld (Vienna: Gerald & Co., 1907), 190–91.
19 Copies of this affidavit and its certified translation are in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and Hillwood curatorial files, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
20 *Sea Cloud* scrapbook, 1937, Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
21 Belgium scrapbook, 1938–39, Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.
22 *Important Jewels*, Sotheby & Co., London, May 14, 1970, lot 109.
23 Charlotte Gere and Judy Rudoe, *Jewellery in the Age of Queen Victoria: A Mirror to the World* (London: British Museum, 2010), 170–71.

24 Examples from jewelers like Hunt & Roskell went on display at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. For an illustration, see ibid., fig. 126.

25 Morel, *Joyaux de la Couronne de France*, 264.

26 One consisted of a diadem, comb, necklace, a pair of bracelets, and a pair of earrings. A second *rubis d'Orient* set was delivered by Maison Nitot on May 10, 1809 and consisted of a diadem, necklace, a belt, and two pairs of earrings. The latter parure appears in the inventory of Malmaison at the time of Josephine's death. See Serge Grandjean, *Inventaire après décès de l'Impératrice Joséphine à Malmaison* (Paris: Ministère d'État–Affaires Culturelles, 1964), no. 33.

27 Zoia Belyakova, *Honour and Fidelity: The Russian Dukes of Leuchtenberg* (St. Petersburg: Logos, 2010), 29.

28 Stefano Papi, *Jewels of the Romanovs: Family and Court* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 160.

29 The bracelets are now in the Louvre (acc. no. OA 10576). For a full description, see Morel, *Joyaux de la Couronne de France*, 313–18.

30 This surely must allude to the Leuchtenberg sapphire parure, now part of the Swedish royal jewels. Memo from Sergei Sheremetev to curator Marvin Ross, October 26, 1966, Hillwood curatorial files, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.

31 A similar pair of bracelets with a green enamel ground was sold at Christie's, Geneva, November 21, 1991, lot 442.

32 Baron Edward Francis Twining, *A History of the Crown Jewels of Europe* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1960), 508–10.

33 Gere and Rudoe, *Jewellery in the Age of Queen Victoria*, 229.

The Yusupov Diamond Earrings

Wilfried Zeisler, Curator of Russian and Nineteenth-Century Art
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

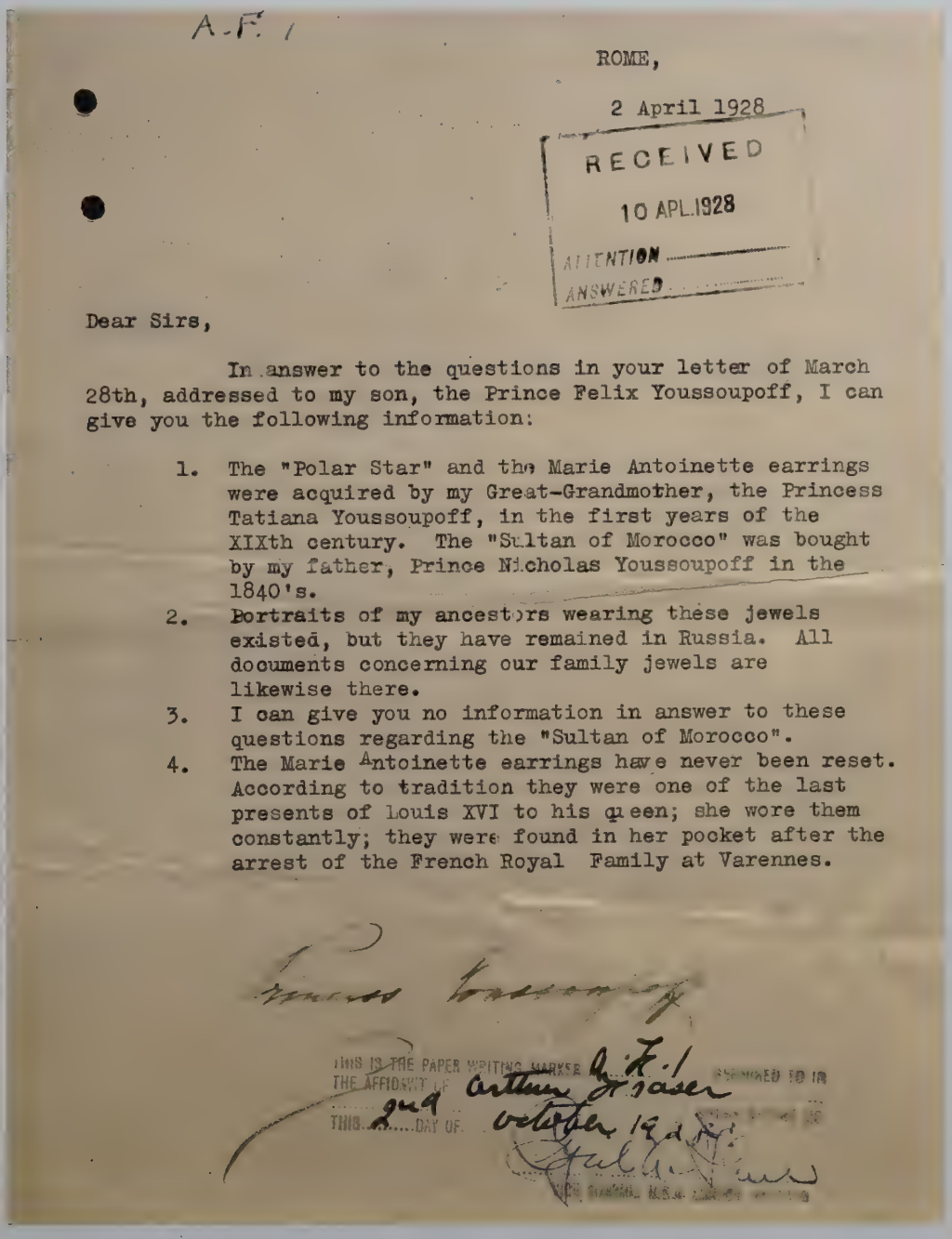
The diamond pendants known as the "Marie Antoinette" earrings were among several Yusupov family heirlooms acquired by Marjorie Merriweather Post beginning in 1924 (fig. 154). She purchased the earrings from Cartier London in October 1928.[1] The firm had obtained them from Prince Felix Felixovich Yusupov (1887–1967) earlier that year. An affidavit signed by Prince Felix's mother, Princess Zinaida Nikolaevna (1861–1939), attested to the authenticity of the two large pear-shaped diamonds (fig. 155), stating,

> The Marie Antoinette earrings have never been reset. According to tradition they were one of the last presents of Louis XVI to his queen; she wore them constantly; they were found in her pocket after the arrest of the French Royal Family at Varennes.[2]

The validity of this attribution has been debated by historians at large as well as in this publication.[3]

Fig. 154
Yusupov diamond earrings (Marie Antoinette earrings). Diamond tops added by Cartier, 1928. Current setting by Harry Winston after the original, 1959. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. G5018.

Fig. 155
Affidavit signed by Princess Zinaida Yusupov certifying the provenance of the earrings, 1928. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.



A.F. 1

ROME,

2 April 1928

RECEIVED
10 APL.1928
ATTENTION
ANSWERED

Dear Sirs,

In answer to the questions in your letter of March 28th, addressed to my son, the Prince Felix Youssoupoff, I can give you the following information:

1. The "Polar Star" and the Marie Antoinette earrings were acquired by my Great-Grandmother, the Princess Tatiana Youssoupoff, in the first years of the XIXth century. The "Sultan of Morocco" was bought by my father, Prince Nicholas Youssoupoff in the 1840's.
2. Portraits of my ancestors wearing these jewels existed, but they have remained in Russia. All documents concerning our family jewels are likewise there.
3. I can give you no information in answer to these questions regarding the "Sultan of Morocco".
4. The Marie Antoinette earrings have never been reset. According to tradition they were one of the last presents of Louis XVI to his queen; she wore them constantly; they were found in her pocket after the arrest of the French Royal Family at Varennes.

Princess Youssoupoff

THIS IS THE PAPER WRITING MARKED A.F.1 REFERRED TO IN THE AFFIDAVIT OF Arthur Fraser
THIS 2nd DAY OF October 1928

The aim of this essay is therefore to shed light on the earrings' Yusupov provenance.

Prince Felix was the sole heir to the Yusupov family, renowned for its immense wealth, philanthropy, and important art collections. During the Russian Revolution, Felix managed to save some of the family jewels and take them abroad. A letter written in 1924 from New York to his mother-in-law, Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna, recounts his experiences selling these treasures, including a large black pearl and a collection of snuffboxes.[4] In his memoirs, Prince Felix states that the family's jewelry collection was formed by Princess Tatiana Vasilievna von Engelhardt (1769–1841), who had married Felix's

Fig. 156
Portrait of Princess Tatiana Alexandrovna Yusupov, née Ribeaupierre. Jean-Baptiste-Marie Fouque, 1875. Oil on canvas. State Museum of the History of St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, acc. no. I-A-147-ж.

great-great-grandfather Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yusupov (1751–1831), a famous art connoisseur:

> She [Tatiana] was particularly fond of jewelry, and her collection became the nucleus of a larger one . . . She bought a diamond called the "Polar Star," several sets of jewels which came from the French Crown, the jewels of the Queen of Naples and, lastly, the unique and splendid "Peregrina" [sic], a celebrated pearl which had belonged to Philip II of Spain and, in ancient times, or so tradition has it, to Cleopatra.[5]

Records in the Yusupov archives in Russia provide insight into Princess Tatiana's early nineteenth-century acquisitions, particularly from the Russian jeweler Klassen.[6] Family inventories from the 1860s likewise list important pieces inherited by her descendants, such as a diadem of pearls with the Queen of Naples's diamonds, a necklace with sixty-three diamonds, two pearl pendants, including the Pelegrina, and precious bracelets.[7] These documents describe a few diamond earrings but make no mention of the so-called "Marie Antoinette" pendants.

Other members of the Yusupov family played a significant role in the growth of the collection begun by Tatiana, among them Prince Felix's

grandfather (and talented musician) Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yusupov (1827–1891). Prince Nikolai made many purchases from jewelers like Mellerio *dits* Meller while *en poste* in Paris during the Second Empire. His great fortune and extraordinary jewels were frequently commented upon in the city's newspapers.[8] The pieces he bought in France include a diamond and turquoise necklace from Dumoret, a diamond parure from Petiteau, and one large diamond called Acerado, from Mellerio.[9]

An 1875 portrait by French artist Jean-Baptiste-Marie Fouque depicts Nikolai's wife, Princess Tatiana Alexandrovna Ribeaupierre (1828–1879), wearing the family jewels, including the Marie Antoinette diamond earrings and the Polar Star mounted in a diamond diadem (fig. 156). This may be one of the portraits Princess Yusupov refers to in the 1928 affidavit: "Portraits of my ancestors wearing these jewels existed, but they have remained in Russia. All documents concerning our family jewels are likewise there."[10]

The Marie Antoinette earrings are listed for the first time in 1893 in the will of Prince Nikolai's mother, Princess Zinaida Ivanovna Narishkin (1810–1893).[11] Princess Zinaida married Tatiana Vasilievna's son, Prince Boris Nikolaevich Yusupov (1794–1849), in 1827, so she may have received the earrings from her mother-in-law. Remarried in 1861 to the French official Charles de Chauveau, Princess Zinaida divided her time between St. Petersburg and Paris until her death in 1893. In her will, she specifies that the jewels kept at her residence in St. Petersburg, including the Polar Star and her "earrings, so-called pendants of the Queen Marie Antoinette," go to Princess Zinaida Nikolaevna, Prince Felix's mother, the last owner of these historic pieces.

Notes

1 Cartier invoice addressed to Mrs. E. F. Hutton at the Ritz Hotel, Piccadilly and dated October 1, 1928. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.

2 Affidavit signed in Rome by Princess Zinaida Yusupov and dated April 2, 1928. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C. I would like to thank Jennifer Levy for sharing this document with me. See also Hans Nadelhoffer, *Cartier: Jewelers Extraordinary* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 286.

3 Bernard Morel, *Les Joyaux de la Couronne de France* (Paris: A. Michel, 1988), 208.

4 Letter addressed to Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna, April 2, 1924, sold at Olivier Coutau Bégarie, Paris, November 13-14, 2014, lot 12.

5 Prince Felix Yusupov, *Lost Splendour* (London: J. Cape, 1953), 20–21. The Polar Star is a 41.28 carat, cushion-shaped diamond once owned by Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon I's elder brother, and later owned by Lady Lydia Deterding. It was auctioned at Christie's in Geneva on November 20, 1980, lot 653. The history of the Pelegrina and Peregrina pearls goes back to the sixteenth-century Spanish crown jewels. Their names are sometimes confused. The Pelegrina belonged to the Yusupovs, and the Peregrina was owned by Elizabeth Taylor. See Françoise Cailles, *Merveilleuses perles: répertoire raisonné des perles célèbres* (Luxembourg: Argusvalentines, 2006), 213–14.

6 Archives of Ancient Documents, Moscow (RGADA), fund 1290, division 2, document 537, pages 22–23.

7 RGADA, fund 1290, division 2, document 2469, pages 10–18.

8 Alfred Busquet, "Visites parisiennes: service du Prince Nicolas Youssoupoff, exécuté par M. Gueyton, orfèvre," *L'Artiste*, March 28, 1858, 215.

9 Wilfried Zeisler, "The Yusupov French Jewelry Collection, 1856–1914," in *Moscow: Splendours of the Romanovs*, ed. Brigitte de Montclos (Monaco: Grimaldi Forum, 2009), 202–6. See also Wilfried Zeisler, *L'Objet d'art et de luxe français en Russie (1881–1917)* (Paris: Mare & Martin, 2014), 268–71.

10 Affidavit signed in Rome by Princess Zinaida Yusupov and dated April 2, 1928. Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.

11 Archives Nationales, Paris, MC/1119/CXVI.

The Curious Case of the Napoleon Necklace

Jennifer Levy, Curatorial Assistant, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

In the early months of the Great Depression, an intriguing story appeared in US newspapers: Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria had been swindled out of a family treasure. The treasure in question was a diamond necklace that Napoleon had given to Empress Marie Louise to mark the birth of their son in 1811. Passed down through her Habsburg descendants, the piece came into the possession of Maria Theresa upon the death of her husband, Archduke Karl Ludwig, in 1896 (fig. 157).

The archduchess had sent the necklace to the United States in 1929 in the hope of selling it. Previous offers for the piece, including one from King Fuad of Egypt, had been rejected due to their falling short of the approximately $400,000 asking price. To facilitate a sale in America, she selected "Colonel" Charles Townsend, purportedly a former member of the British Secret Service, and his wife, "Princess" Gervée Baronte, to represent her interests. Who exactly were the Townsends? Their identities have never been fully established, but it seems clear that "Princess" Gervée was not of

Fig. 157
Studio portrait of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria wearing the Napoleon necklace. Adèle, Vienna, ca. 1900. Private collection.

Fig. 158
Agnes DeForest Manice Alexander modeling the necklace in support of the Charity Carnival. Photographed by the *New York Times'* studio, 1930.

Detail of fig. 137

Fig. 159
Archduke Leopold and two of his lawyers in court, ca. November 1930.

royal blood. She was in all likelihood an American who had been writing novels in Shanghai prior to returning to the United States in the mid-1920s.[1] All that is known of "Colonel" Charles is that he was of English origin and Gervée's third husband.[2]

Upon arriving in New York, the necklace was deposited at a bank. Accompanying it were documents authenticating the piece as well as affidavits authorizing the Townsends to sell it. Letters written by the couple indicate that they sought to sell the jewel to a "rich American boob."[3] The stock market crash muddled their plan, however, altering both fortunes and attitudes toward such extravagances. Interestingly, one of their supposed prospective clients was a "Mrs. Hutton"—a probable reference to Marjorie Merriweather Post, who was married at the time to financier Edward F. Hutton.[4] Given Post's attraction to works of imperial provenance, including Habsburg heirlooms, it is plausible that their correspondence alludes to her.[5] By mid-January 1930, Maria Theresa had become dissatisfied with the state of affairs and revoked Charles Townsend's power of attorney in favor of Baroness Anna Eisenmenger, her friend and occasional agent. Shortly thereafter, the necklace disappeared and the Townsends along with it.

The necklace resurfaced a few weeks later in the hands of Manhattan jeweler David M. Michel. Michel admitted that he had purchased it from the Townsends for $60,000, the monetary value of its forty-seven diamonds.[6] Further investigation revealed that not only had the Townsends undersold the piece, but they had also sent the archduchess a check for the meager amount of $7,270, keeping the balance to meet "expenses incurred" from the sale.[7] To complicate matters, Archduke Leopold, a grandnephew of Maria Theresa, had been present when the necklace was sold. An impoverished member of the Habsburg dynasty, Leopold had been supporting himself in the United States with menial jobs such as selling sausages and working as a film extra.[8] His reputation for trustworthiness

was, according to Baroness Eisenmenger, equally poor.[9] When questioned about his involvement in the sale, Leopold initially stated that he had simply witnessed the transaction. He subsequently acknowledged, however, that he had received a $20,000 commission.[10]

The archduke and still-missing Townsends were quickly indicted for their roles in the disposal of the necklace. Leopold was charged with aiding in the theft of the jewel and partaking in the proceeds from its sale.[11] Meanwhile, unable to sell or dismantle the piece due to an injunction, Michel restored it to Maria Theresa for $50,000.[12] In an even odder turn of events, it was then reported that socialite Agnes DeForest Manice Alexander would wear the necklace in the pageant of New York City's annual Charity Carnival.[13] A photograph of her modeling it helped promote the occasion (fig. 158). It is unknown whether Alexander actually wore the necklace, but if she did, Post may have had a second encounter with it in connection with her duties as honorary chairman of the carnival.[14]

Despite attempts by Leopold to hasten his appearance in court, he stood trial for his participation in the theft in November 1930 (fig. 159). After several days of testimony, the archduke's counsel was able to eliminate two of the counts against him and submit the third to a jury, which ultimately acquitted Leopold of the remaining count.[15] Two weeks later, the second indictment—the unlawful division of Michel's money—was dismissed. The Townsends were never apprehended and brought to justice.[16]

After the necklace was returned to the archduchess, it remained with the Habsburgs until 1948, when a private collector in Paris acquired it. Harry Winston bought the piece around 1960 and sold it to Post soon after. She in turn donated it to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, where its beauty and rich history continue to dazzle the public.

Notes

1 Letter from Mrs. Rodney Gilbert to Herbert M. Bratter, March 16, 1963, Hillwood Archives, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.; letter from Ruth Benedict to Herbert M. Bratter, March 8, 1963, ibid.

2 Letter from Gilbert to Bratter, March 16, 1963.

3 Tom Pettey, "Effort to Sell Famed Necklace to 'Boob' Bared," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 21, 1930.

4 "Trial of Archduke Bares Gem Tangle," *New York Times*, November 21, 1930. In her memoir, Gervée claims to have met with Post in New York in an effort to persuade her to buy the necklace. The veracity of this account has never been confirmed. See Gervée Baronte, *Life and Loves of a Prodigal Daughter: Being the Intimate Memoirs of Gervée Baronte* (London: Baronte Press, 1935), 318–19.

5 Around 1925 Post had purchased the veil worn by Princess Stéphanie of Belgium when she married Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria. Her eldest daughter, Adelaide, wore it at her own wedding in 1927.

6 "Bonaparte Jewels Found, Seller Gone," *New York Times*, March 2, 1930.

7 "Napoleon Necklace Returned by Buyer," *New York Times*, March 22, 1930.

8 Richard O. Boyer, "Archduke Hopes to Make Fortune Here from Napoleon's Necklace," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 3, 1930.

9 "Trial of Archduke Bares Gem Tangle."

10 "Archduke Fights Gem Theft Charge," *New York Times*, June 4, 1930.

11 "Archduke in Court in Necklace Case," *New York Times*, April 25, 1930.

12 "Archduke on Trial for Necklace Sale," *New York Times*, November 20, 1930.

13 "Plan to Show Napoleon Gems Here," *New York Times*, April 4, 1930.

14 "Charity Carnival Attended by 15,000," *New York Times*, April 30, 1930. Articles published in the days following the carnival make no mention of the necklace or of Alexander having worn it. However, a segment of the pageant titled "The Romance of History" presented performers as famous couples in history, mythology, and the arts. Among the couples portrayed were Napoleon and Josephine.

15 "Archduke is Freed in Gem Theft Trial," *New York Times*, November 25, 1930.

16 Research by Herbert Bratter suggests that Gervée died in Florida around 1960. No further information is known about Charles Townsend.

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Fig. 160
Pearl, diamond, and platinum necklace (acc. no. 17.69).

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Front Matter

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Gems

Fig. 12 SquareMoose Inc.; **fig. 13** Original photograph by Chip Clark, Smithsonian; manipulated by SquareMoose Inc.; **fig. 14** Photograph © 2017 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Oscar Heyman Bros., American, founded in 1912
For: Marcus & Co., American, 1892–1941
Marjorie Merriweather Post brooch
American, 1929
Platinum, diamond, and emerald
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

William Francis Warden Fund, Marshall H. Gould Fund, Frank B. Bemis Fund, Mary S. and Edward Jackson Holmes Fund, John H. and Ernestine A. Payne Fund, Otis Norcross Fund, Helen and Alice Colburn Fund, William E. Nickerson Fund, Arthur Tracy Cabot Fund, Edwin E. Jack Fund, Frederick Brown Fund, Elizabeth Marie Paramino Fund in memory of John F. Paramino, Boston Sculptor, Morris and Louise Rosenthal Fund, Harriet Otis Cruft Fund, H.E. Bolles Fund, Seth K. Sweetser Fund, Helen B. Sweeney Fund, Ernest Kahn Fund, Arthur Mason Knapp Fund, John Wheelock Elliot and John Morse Elliot Fund, Susan Cornelia Warren Fund, Mary L. Smith Fund, Samuel Putnam Avery Fund, Alice M. Bartlett Fund, Benjamin Pierce Cheney Donation, Frank M. and Mary T.B. Ferrin Fund, and Joyce Arnold Rusoff Fund, 2008.179

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A Dazzling Collection of Twentieth-Century Jewelry

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