

THE MOST FABULOUS JEWELS
IN THE WORLD



GRAFF

The name 'Graff' has been synonymous for three decades with some of the most fabulous jewels in the world. Famous and historic diamonds and the rarest of modern diamonds are Laurence Graff's consuming passion; their mystery, their history and their future. Diamonds which he sets into sinuous jewels worn by some of the most renowned people in our world. This book reveals the history behind the mystery as Laurence Graff tells, in his own words, how he became one of the world's most famous jewellers. The book takes us from his early years in London's East End to his travels selling jewels in remote parts of the world in his twenties, to his newest and most beautiful diamond jewels, some of which are the result of collecting exquisite diamonds for many years in order to make a unique piece. We learn of his inspirations, of his adventures all over the world and in doing so, understand the well-springs of his genius for creating fabulous jewels for the most fabulous people in the world.



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Photograph: Fadil Berisha, New York.

G R A F F

FEAR

BLE





There are many different kinds of table diamonds, some going back to the dawn of human history. In the late 19th century, a young prince. The story of Graff is a glittering tale of one man's obsessive quest from humble beginnings to the King of Diamonds, the jeweller of choice for emperors, queens, heads of state, and celebrities, but also of the richest people on every corner of the planet; the elegant, slightly mysterious *façonné* and the artist. He travels by yacht or flies in his private plane to reach his clients, with a suitcase, a pocket watch, and a pocket which he has just created from a handful of diamonds.

Graff, the company known for selling the most valuable pieces ever created, is the creation of one man.

Laurence Graff started what has become an international jewellery empire nearly half a century ago with just one ring set with 33 very small diamonds to create the biggest flash he could.

This tale starts in the impoverished East End of London, where in 1921 Laurence Graff was apprenticed at the age of 14 to a watchmaker and jeweller, before flights up in Hatton Garden. Graff found his early artistic release at the Central School of Arts and Craft, and went on to study watchmaking at the

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work. After three months he was called for a good job because of some circumstances, and he lost his job.

Eventually, Graff found an odd job at 155, 156 & 157, where he learned how to make jewellery by Mr. C. an experienced jeweller. He learned how to repair rings, how to solder and shape them, and how to make simple jewellery. By the time he was seventeen, he commenced to work in his spare free time, made very small things of his own design, and gave them to friends of the family.

Then Segal & Co. went into business, and he went to work for them, where he met an older jeweller called Frank. He had a room, and they should set up in business together. They formed a partnership, making a just big enough for two benches, and he made in his spare time necklaces, chains, offering a 24-hour service for repairs, and he made half-shanks.

Eventually, Graff and his partner started to make copies of Victorian jewellery, as well as repair it, and the business grew. Graff met an engraver who would pierce the metal shanks to make the ring look more like a diamond. They decided that it was time to get a larger work shop. Frank would handle the buying and Graff would do the selling. They went well at first. From the £3,000 to their suppliers of gold and gemstones. Frank had a good

Left: Hatton Garden at the time Laurence's was open (1910).

of the business and the debts. He went to the suppliers and persuaded them to give him more credit - and paid back every penny within six months.

He took the first steps on the long road to selling jewels worth millions.

He started to make samples of semi-precious rings using citrines and amethysts

in a then fashionable Victorian style with engraved and pierced bezels,

and claw settings. The engraver he used suggested he take these rings round

jewellery shops and that is when Graff says he learned about marketing and

to just always have samples to show, so that you can always be ready to

sell. He travelled round Britain with his samples and sold rings for

£100. Not content with this growing business, he decided to upgrade his

samples with semi-precious stones into rings set with diamonds, because he

had a good idea to try to sell something for £50. He had seen diamonds

set in hoop earrings and thought they looked rather pleasing.

When Segal's had gone out of business, Graff had met a diamond dealer

named Rabinowitz, who he persuaded to advance him 33 small diamonds,

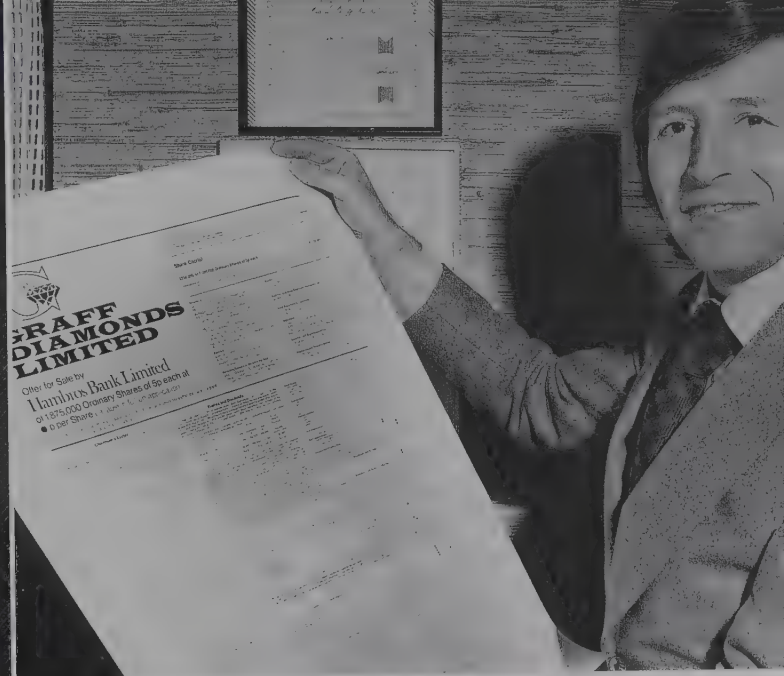
which he used to make into his first diamond hoop. It cost him £60. This

was really well made, remembers Graff. It was fabulous - there was a big

diamond set with diamonds and underneath was beautifully engraved piercing.

He sold it to a jeweller in Blackpool for £100. When Graff got back to London,

his telephone rang in his tiny office and the owner of the Blackpool shop told



Laurence Graff (JEWELLERY CREATIONS) Ltd



him he had sold the ring and wanted more precious commodities. It took Graff a moment to realize that it was unbelievable that he had sold £500 worth of things for £100. He was already accumulating. One Graff diamond ring will sell for millions.

Graff went back to Mr Rabinowitz, organized to create for himself and himself 100 other ways to create unique rings that everybody would want. He started collecting 1000 of stones. First, he took one diamond and put a sapphire around it, then a ruby, then a diamond around that to create a nineteen-stone cluster. After making all these rings, he started working with diamonds and emeralds, diamonds and rubies, diamonds and sapphires. And then he made a candy-striped collection.

Graff soon found himself in the diamond business. He started to be fascinated by these mysterious stones from the earth's core, looking at them closely, studying the small round diamonds or moles. He began to be able to see their quality and to begin to understand their purity and the way they had been cut. He was sure that he had found his true profession. Without realizing it, he was becoming a world-class expert gemmologist and he felt that this was what he had been born to do.

It wasn't long before Graff started accepting huge orders of diamonds from clients and began to make a name for himself as an original designer. He had travelled across the country with samples, he decided to open his own retail store in all the big cities. This he did in 1962, with La Petite Bijouterie in London. Over the years he had developed Laurence Graff Jewellery Creations in Halfway Street, London. (London)

He opened a retail store in what had traditionally been solely a wholesale and export business. The front part of the store was the shop, while Graff worked on his designs in the back, buying diamonds and precious stones that he would send out to jewellers in the area to be made up.

In 1958, his design talents were recognised by the industry when he won the De Beers Diamond International Award, competing against 300-plus designers from around the world. His winning design was an amethyst, emerald and diamond bracelet with the stones set together to obtain the maximum effect.

He was frustrated. He felt the next step would be to sell his designs to the big department stores, but they were not interested. The eager young designer met a jeweller in a small town and he had to sell his creations to a lower bracket of jewellers and dealers around the country. Graff has never claimed to be an artist, but he wanted to create unique and interesting pieces. He wanted to make bigger and bigger pieces, but who would buy them?

Impatient to get ahead, he decided the only way to do this was to travel, taking his designs out into a wider world of opportunity and adventure.

He set out on the first of his extraordinary voyages, beginning in 1960. He travelled with his nineteen-stone clusters in a suitcase. Soon



1. [Illegible text]

After arriving, he found a wholesaler and made him his distributor. Then he took his samples further afield around South East Asia, going first to Singapore, which he had heard about from his father who had been there during World War II.

When he arrived he asked where the centre of town was and was directed to Raffles Hotel, where planters from up-country and the Malaysian aristocracy met and socialised. He had a stroke of luck, or coincidence, one of many in his life. He walked into Robinson's, Singapore's leading department store at the time, the equivalent of Harrods but smaller. One of the managers caught sight of the young man with the sample case and hailed him as an old friend. He had been the manager of a shop in the north of England to whom Graff had sold rings. He was in the process of starting a jewellery department at Robinson's and didn't have any stock.

Graff immediately showed him his samples, but the manager told him there weren't enough to stock a department. Graff assured him that he could go back to London immediately and return with more than enough new pieces to put on an exhibition, which he did. He remembers how exciting this adventurous phase of his life was, travelling into the unknown.

He was a young man in an exotic wonderland, a faraway place where there were a lot of very wealthy Malaysians, Indians and Chinese, all of whom really loved jewellery.

The exhibition at Robinson's attracted all the smart women from Singapore, from up-country Malaya, and other parts of South East Asia, who came to buy his 'big flashes'.





Early examples of Graff's jewellery design.
Above: The necklace set in 18 carat white gold was made in honour of The Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

Right: The amethyst, emerald and diamond bracelet won the Diamond International Award in 1966, competing against 321 designers from 23 countries.





Mount diamonds in necklace.
Mount all yellow gold.

C. A. Cadby.



Mount rubys & diamonds
necklace.
Mount all yellow gold.

C. A. Cadby.



MOUNT SAPPHIRE & DIAMOND
NECKLACE IN YELLOW GOLD
LOTS OF MOVEMENTS

G. A. Carter



MOUNT DIAMOND SET
IN PLATINUM KEEP CORNETS
VERY FINE

G. A. Carter

went to India to look for diamonds to sell to European royalty, especially Louis XIV. Like him, Graff was truly a pioneer at a time in Asia when people would turn around and look at Europeans in the street. He must have been an interesting sight to them: a young man, well dressed and carrying a suitcase full of gems. The first time he was seen, a pearl of the powerful Nawab, a top Indian jeweller, was looking at him with a look of disbelief. Through selling a little more, he was able to get a letter of introduction to the Nawab's wife, who invited him to his palace for dinner, which was how Graff began to get to know royalty and the wealthy in the area. He was a novelty; friendly, presentable and he had a story to tell that they wanted to hear.

He decided to travel even further, from the South Pacific to the East Indies and beyond. He was always on the move, always with his case of samples, always looking for new sources of gems and always trying to get into the local wholesale markets. But he did not neglect the domestic market. He began to create unique theme diamonds at Earl's Court amongst other venues.

He also began to create an aura of myth and excitement around his jewels,

notably in 1970 when he designed 'Hair and Jewel', a million-dollar necklace using a combination of silver blonde hair and an enormous number of diamonds and

Right: A 1980s Graff advertising image.

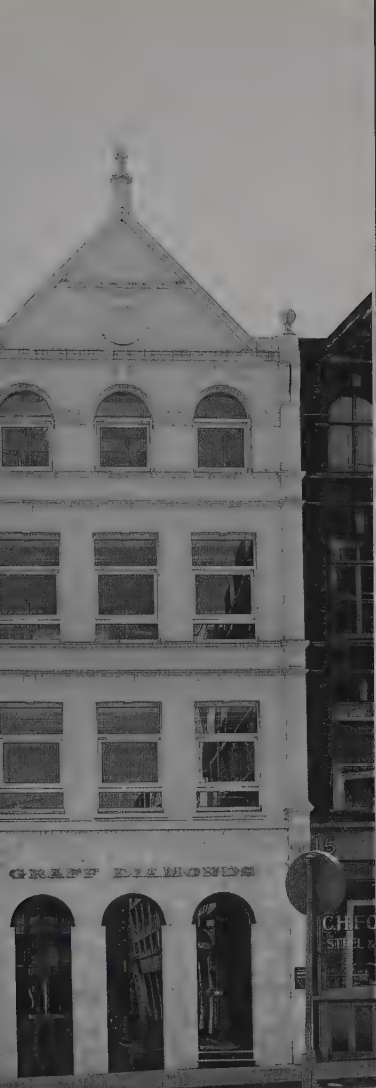


gemstones, inspired by royal coiffures at 18th-century Versailles – a glittering variant on the big flash, the original foundation of his business and his eventual fortune.

His success was not unopposed and, in 1973, he became the first recipient of the award (with the Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade). His success had increased more than five times in the preceding three years and over the next five years the company's total output went abroad. Since that first Award, Graff has used it as a talisman towards the future in his life.

His success had grown so much, both at home and abroad, that Graff had to change his company public, appointing Hambros Bank, which already had financed his personal investments, as his bankers. He was 39 and he was going public, a decision which he had not intended to do. He is proud of this achievement to this day. When he was 40 he wanted to retire, but he quickly found that running a public company meant that he had lost control of the business he had so painstakingly built up. It was not easy to search for new business because difficult now that he was 40 to be a public company. Within four years he bought his business back and since then he has never brought in any outside shareholders, nor has he chosen to re-capitalise. Graff looks back on that four-year period and credits it with teaching him to become a sophisticated businessman.

In 1974 Graff opened a state-of-the-art retail shop in Knightsbridge, his new headquarters. He still travelled the world doing exhibitions, but at that time there was an





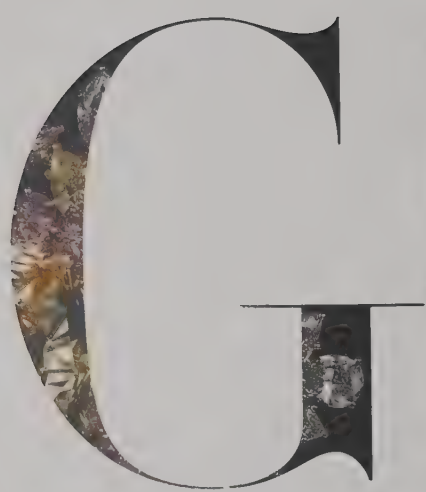
Graff jewels, 1989

influx of Middle Eastern oil money in London, so he concentrated on welcoming his clients from all over the world, drawn to Graff by seeing his jewellery at exhibitions, in the increasingly sophisticated advertising he was doing in glossy magazines, or from buying from him during his visits to their countries. When they visited London in the summer to shop, they came to see him. His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei, who had become a faithful client during Graff's visits to his country, walked in really early on. So did many members of the Saudi Arabian and Gulf royal families and the many other Middle Eastern families he had got to know.

They treated his shop and the office behind it like their own palaces, using it to change their clothes when they bought something new to wear.

Sometimes there were so many clients in the store they were not only lounging on the settees, but perching on the tables and even sitting on the floor. They liked Graff, because he was young, had a sense of humour and had exactly what they wanted to buy. Moreover, he knew how to trade with them. He could bargain with them and he made it amusing.

The deals became even bigger and more subtle. Once Graff packed a trunk with 400 pieces of jewellery to show to a prince who'd bought a lot of diamonds. It was not uncommon for him to sell 50 watches at a time. There was always a cash flow, and it was better that Graff was available to his clients in his shop than travelling to meet them. Sometimes other traders would go to Saudi Arabia and sit there for three days

A large, stylized letter 'G' in a black serif font. The interior of the 'G' is filled with a collage of images: a floral pattern on the left, a portrait of a man in the middle, and a textured, abstract pattern on the right.

rall has always believed that
features one really big client;
These days, a new generation
Asia are coming through his

at any one time his list of clients
and as one door closes another one opens,
of clients from America, Europe and
open doors.

...into three months, whilst Graff was entertaining clients daily in ...
 ...exception he made during these years of plenty was to go and ...
 ...Brunei. He had a special relationship with them. He ...
 ...with them: he was lent an Aston Martin to drive himself ...
 ...: he was royally entertained. At one stage he was going there ...
 ...month and was a constant guest at the palace.

**The Brunei patronage was, indeed, fabulous.
 It enabled Graff to express himself in what he
 designed and made.**

...him to be financially liquid, and thus very strong in the diamond ...
 ...in the rest of the industry was depressed. This royal patronage ...
 ...very rare stones when they became available – the blues, the ...
 ...the ‘D’ Flawless whites – and put magnificent and fabulous jewels ...
 ...was making everything from tiaras to necklaces to bracelets, ...
 ...and every idea possible in diamonds and gemstones.

...Middle Eastern families he had met on his travels were his first ...
 ...group of supporters, followed by the Royal Family of Brunei, who were ...
 ...more time in London. Graff has always believed that at ...
 ...one time his list of clients features one really big client; and as one door



His Majesty The Sultan and the Queen of Brunei, an early and very important client of Griffe Corbis.



closes another one opens. These days, a new generation of clients from America, Europe and Asia are coming through his open doors.

In the 1990s the influx of oil money began to wind off. The Middle East's Black Diamonds visited London only twice a year, and the Arabs stayed at home. The Diamond Dealers' Club changed again – and he noticed that the world was changing, and he wanted to reflect the changes he had observed with more refinement and class. He felt that the Georgian Knightsbridge was dated in comparison with the beautiful shops and stores he had seen on his travels.

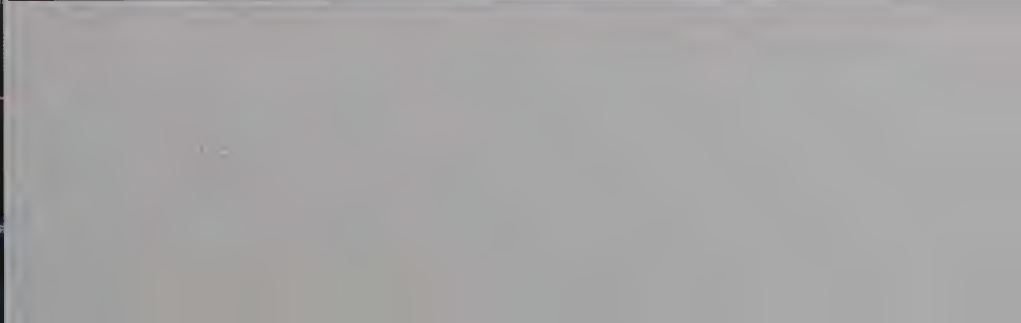
So he managed to secure a 19th-century townhouse in historic New Bond Street, at the time a quiet backwater and not the high-fashion centre it has now become.

In 1993 Graff was the first to restore an entire townhouse in the district. He earned glory. It was officially opened by HRH Princess Michael of Kent. At the 1994 party Dame Shirley Bassey thrilled the guests by giving an impromptu concert to the shop. The large windows glittered with rare and beautiful stones shown on rotating window displays, a system invented by Graff to enable jewels to be displayed from the front rather than the back as had been the custom.

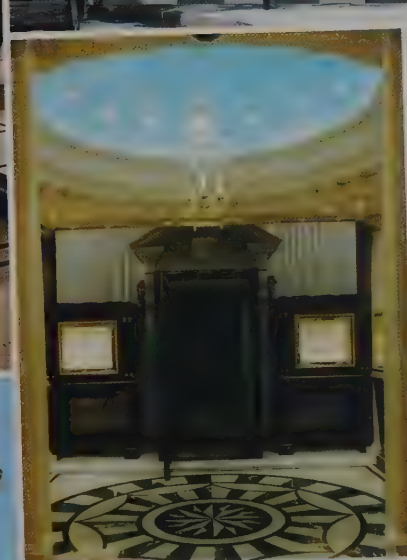
At first this belle époque building was leasehold, but eventually the townhouse became available together with five other properties on New Bond Street, and Graff



Miller on Carter's Center
1000 1000







bought them all. Subsequently, he has added more properties as they have become available. He has also bought many other properties in Mayfair.

The success of the New Bond Street outlet in attracting international royalty, celebrities and the very rich started Graff thinking about opening similar retail shops abroad. A *salon privé* opened in Monte Carlo, on the mezzanine of the Hotel de Paris, which was a great success. Another shop was opened in Courchevel, a ski resort in the French Alps, with regular exhibitions in the arcade shop. There are also shops in Courchevel, all of which are for clients coming to Switzerland to ski.

Graff also realised that the U.S.A. was under-developed in terms of high-level retail jewellery shops. In 2001 he opened a shop on Madison Avenue. To celebrate this in typical Graff style, an exceptional and unique 'D' Flawless diamond of 100.57 carats, the Star of America, was unveiled to great acclaim at a star-studded opening that made Manhattan sit up and take notice.

The Madison Avenue store was followed by the purchase of a palatial 12,000 square foot U.S.A. corporate headquarters on East Street. There are now Graff stores in New York, Palm Beach, Las Vegas, Chicago and Bal Harbour. There is also an increasing number of concessions in Saks stores across America as well as the main shop in Saks Fifth Avenue.

Graff believes that the early years of finding clients, by travelling with 79



At the opening of the Graff New York store,
which introduced the Star of America diamond.

1. George Hamilton and Princess Michael of Kent.

2. Mrs Laurence Graff, Francois Graff and
Angelica Houston.

3. Count Ruffredo, Ivana Trump, Mr and Mrs Laurence Graff.

4. The Star of America, an exceptional diamond
of 100.57 carats.



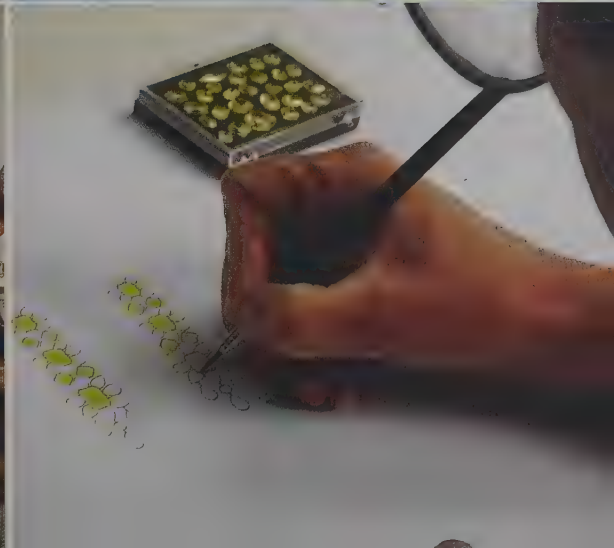
sample rings to up-country Malaya or the Middle East, have gone forever. His major clients travel globally as a matter of course, and now almost anywhere they go they are never far from a Graff shop. Here they can be sure that the most fabulous jewellery in the world is in stock and for sale, and that they will always be able to find the perfect multi-coloured diamond *sautoir*, or a ring set with an historic diamond that could have belonged to a maharajah, or a glittering flash of Graff-cut gems.

For his growing number of clients in Asia there is a magnificent shop in Hong Kong, and the Graff empire has stretched ever outward to Tokyo and, in the Chinese century, to Shanghai and Beijing. Russia has always been a particular enthusiasm of his and this enthusiasm has been keenly reciprocated. Coming from a Russian and Eastern European background as he does, he had always wanted to go there. So, as soon as Perestroika was declared, he paid a visit that resulted in the first Graff store being opened in Moscow, followed by another outside the capital in the Luxury village, together with four other outlets. Then there are the sores in the Middle East, two in Wafi City, Dubai, and in Bahrain and Kuwait.

But Graff's expansion has not been limited to retail shops.

His business became the first in the international, and very competitive, diamond industry to be vertically integrated: able to take a diamond all the way from acquiring it in the rough through to selling it in one of his shops. Granted, Graff was already a dealer

Left: A diamond in the rough.







The staff of the South African Diamond Corporation, Johannesburg, 2000.



Faded, illegible text, likely a list of names or a program, located on the right side of the page.

Antwerp, on the other hand, is a city of rough stone that are sold to the world and flourished and it is now a park in Botswana. A diamond diamond production in South Africa in the 19th century imports diamond sights to Botswana for cutting and polishing. The infrastructure of a huge park complex supports both science and the country's stable government.

In the 21st century the many Graff stones in 18th-century townhouses in Mayfair, restored to the splendour of their heyday as aristocrats' city palaces. From there a never-ending, glittering stream of gems flows on daily to Graff shops all over the world to be sold to the wealthiest clients on the planet.

Graff's long-time clients, yesterday, have been joined by the Graff first met on his solitary journey.

Presidents, kings and queens, billionaires, global celebrities, new money millionaires from Russia, China or Japan are all familiar sights in Graff's elegant salons, drawn to the unique array of rare and precious stones set in the inimitable, fluid, slightly mysterious Graff style that aims to

show the splendour of the component diamonds and gems in the design and flatter the wearer through settings that shimmer and move with the body.

Louis Vuitton and his family have managed to globalise the brand he has built. His is a family business, and he works with his son François, his brother Raymond and his daughter. Louis Vuitton still oversees the finding and production of the unique, high-quality diamonds he has always loved with a passion. He is passing on to those close to him the minutiae of the jewellers' trade, which has been his lifetime's vocation and which in its global, 21st-century incarnation owes much to his sense of adventure and innovation.

The story of how a one-man business in a tiny workshop in Hatton Garden in London has become a contemporary fable. The name Graff is known all over the world of wealth and fame as it always delivers the most fabulous jewels in the world.

The poor East End boy has truly become the King of Diamonds.



Laurence Graff with Andy Warhol's *5/5*

F

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FRUIT





full-time jeweller, the world of the rare is not one of easy access. The world: rare because of their scarcity, their unique character, their history. Advertising always confidently says and sells. It's a hard job to do. And he does. Whether it is a pair of diamonds or the crown of King Edward VIII to Wallis Simpson in 1936. The time of the crown of King Edward VIII is a time of sunlight that belonged to a long road that was paved with the stones of a tragic emperor, Graff has only the very best stones of history and craftsmanship to make extraordinary pieces of jewellery.

**There has got to be mystique in a jewel,
something mysterious and beautiful about it to capture
the imagination.**

He believes that, having the finest quality stones, is not enough. Jewellers they don't go out of fashion, they have a timeless quality. They don't follow trends, we do what we do. In 1936, a crown was made for King Edward VIII. To Graff himself it's very simple. "I had from the beginning, I had the stones. When you have the very best stones, there is no other way to make a marvellous piece of jewellery."

When Graff sees an extraordinary stone for the first time, he knows he must buy it: "I don't hesitate, I just buy it. I don't hesitate, I just buy it."







PAGES FOUR AND FIVE



and it takes a lot of judgment and investment. But you are not just a trader, you are a collector and custodian of these stones. When I buy such an extraordinary stone, I always know I have found something special, something of what the stone is. It is unique. And,' he points out,

'A diamond can never be too big. I have never seen a diamond that couldn't be worn. They are never, ever vulgar.'

His designs are elegantly simple in design terms. As he explains, 'The Graff designs were not knit the stones together, how you play with them, how you set them. The designs were done with a pen or paintbrush, which is why they are hand-drawn and hand-signed, but by Graff himself 'sitting at a table with the stones, laying them out in shapes. I then take wax and make a model of the design.'

He explains the manner because his early pieces, starting with the original ring, were made of many small stones to create a 'big flash'. 'I used the stones to create a shape, and then I then filled that shape up with small diamonds. I didn't make that style through my career when there was a boom in slightly larger stones, which couldn't take too many big stones, so I started using *pavé* and animalistic forms.'





Graff always talks of his designs as being like knitting with jewellery – ‘It’s so soft, so subtle after you have put the stones together and joined them up. He made his jewels to be very mobile so that

When a woman wears a piece it becomes sensual when she moves – ‘you can see the stones shimmer and move too’.

He invented the wire setting in which there is a collet [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] and another collet. The collet takes the stone, then there is a little [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] a peg, another collet and a space. ‘You can open it up and [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] waterfalls and tassels. Everybody has copied this setting, but it is [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] previous ways of setting, notably in the 18th century.’⁴

In the mid-1980s coloured diamonds became extremely desirable [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] out of favour for nearly two centuries, but people in Hong Kong, Singapore [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] started buying them. Graff became enthralled by these rare diamonds, which [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] (and are) few and far between. ‘Then, as luck would have it, the Australians [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] the Argyle mine, which yielded up a small amount of pink diamonds. I tender [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] first pinks and bought all of them for \$3.5 million. It was unheard of,’ he [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] ‘Other professionals thought I was too adventurous; they didn’t believe they [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.] sell. They were really small stones, mostly 0.25 of a carat to one carat, of an un [A collet is a ring-shaped device used to hold a workpiece in place during machining.]



I look at historic European jewellery past and present. I am inspired by tribal jewellery, the exquisite craft and by shapes, forms, patterns and different things I see around me

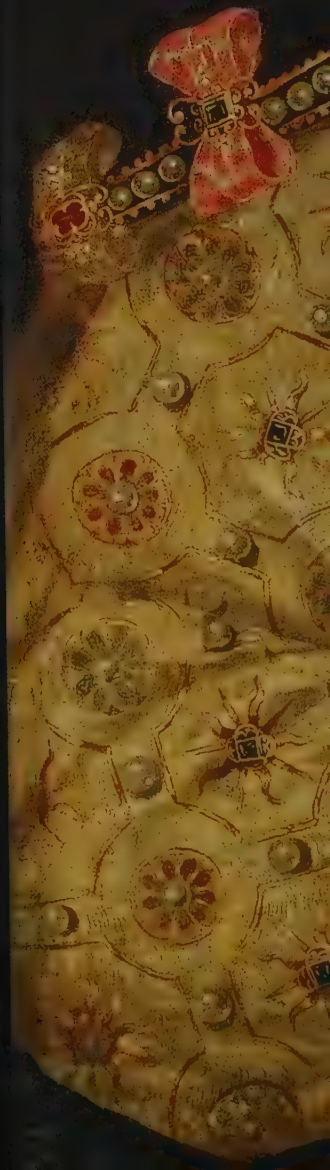
but I also look at costume jewellery
Moghul jewels from India, African
of traditional Asian jewellery
prints, flowers and animals. So many
inspire me ;





1900. Necklace of diamonds and emeralds.

Emeralds, diamonds, and pearls.
The necklace is made of diamonds
and emeralds.





...one that hadn't been seen before.' As with his original 33-diamond ring, he decided to use all the pinks to make one single big creation and produced a *cut tremblant* flower.

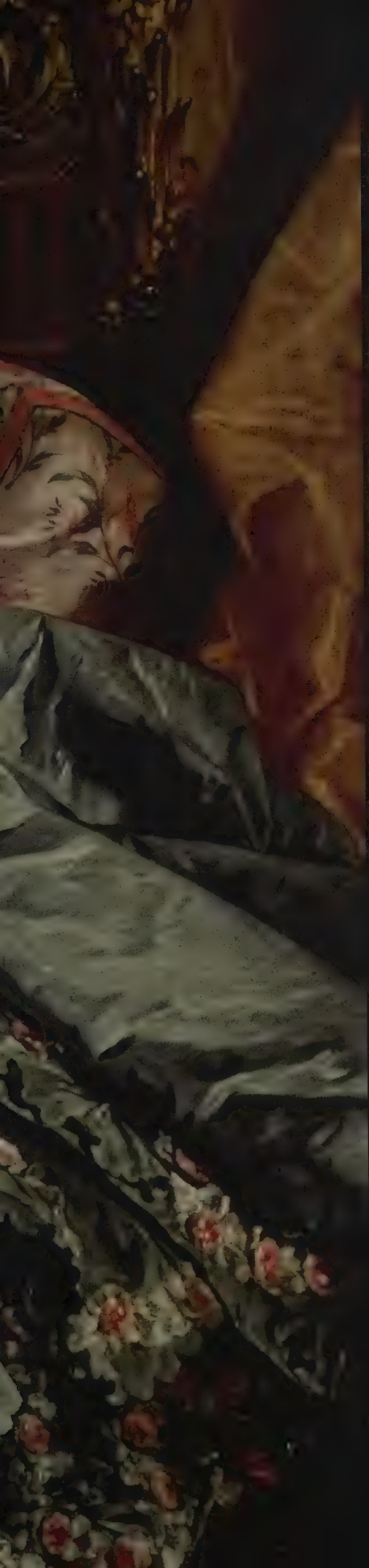
Tremblant flowers are not new, they date back to the 18th century and had a history of their own. In the 1930s, Graff's contemporary version was composed of all the different red shapes of pink diamonds from the Argyle mine put together in one fabulous design. 'It was amazing!' he says. 'I remember it was finished at four o'clock one afternoon, just then I had a call from the Sultan of Brunei who granted me an audience in Manchester - he had just bought the hotel. During our meeting, he asked me if anything I would like to show him. I had slipped this amazing piece into my pocket and while we were talking I pulled out the flower and said "Your Majesty, can you think of this?" He opened his hands to have a look at it and I could see his eyes beam with excitement at this absolutely unique and beautiful jewel and I was gone in two minutes. I was out of all the pink diamonds in two minutes!'

It's not so easy to acquire 'D' Flawless white diamonds or the blues, yellows and the pinks says Graff, in a time of innovation, reacted by the adventurous mood of the era and started to create multi-coloured diamond jewellery. 'The mayness of the radiant cut inspired me to create pieces that had never been created before,' he says. Other jewellers tried to copy him, but Graff had already become synonymous with these rare designs in coloured diamonds.





Madame de Pompadour
by François Boucher; Bridgeman.





Dilip Singh,
Maharajah of Lahore
1854,
painted by
Franz Xavier Winterhalter;
Bridgeman.











Left: A Maasai bride in Kenya.





Greta Garbo in *Mata Hari*. Corbis.



André Marty, *La Gazette de Bon Ton*, 1922.





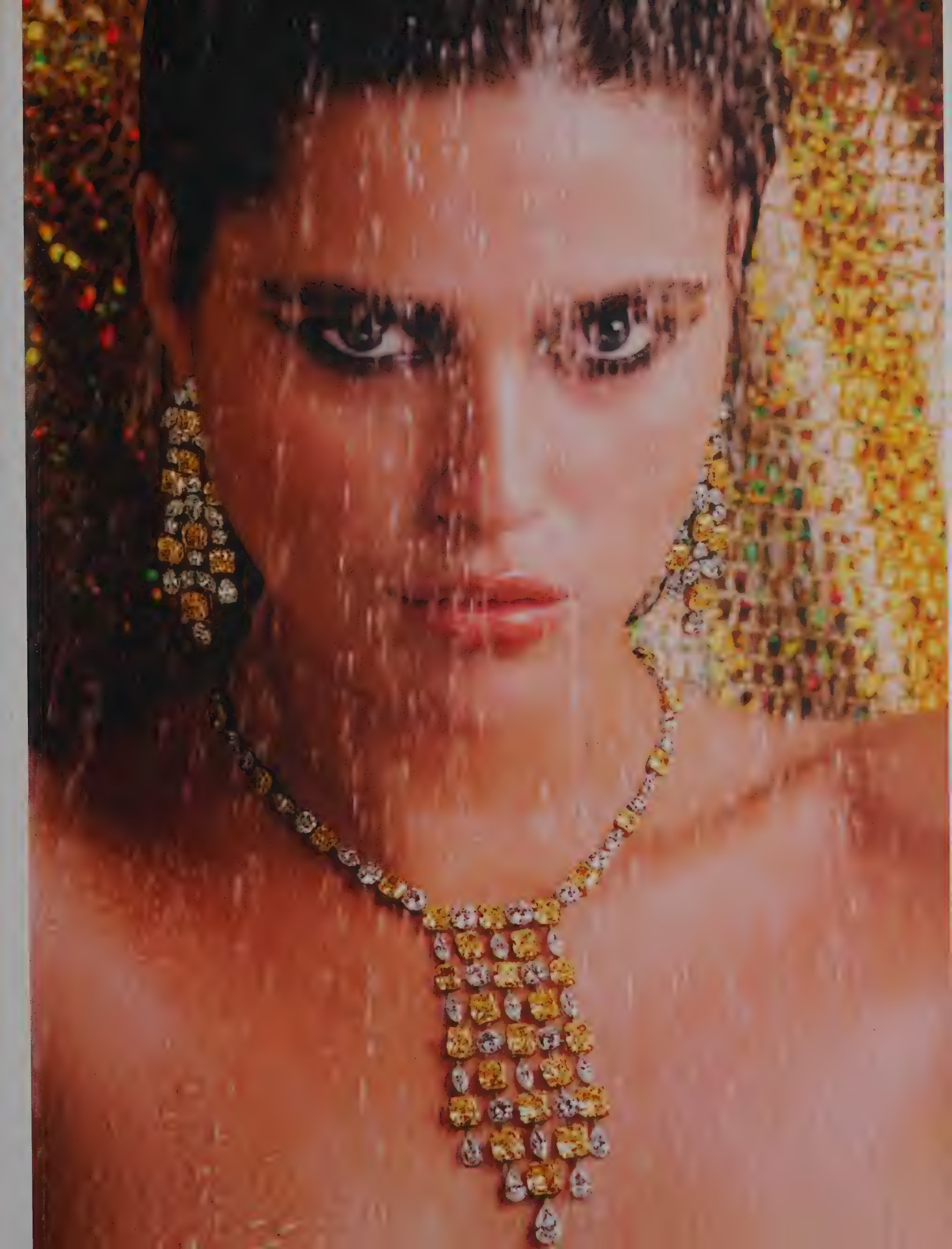


‘I have always been fascinated by the colour of diamonds and I had more and more ways to set them. I started with colourless diamonds, then I started with pink diamonds, yellow diamonds, blue diamonds and they became more and more valuable.’

‘Before any really important diamond is incorporated into a necklace, a ring or a brooch at Graff, it is given a name if it doesn’t have one and sometimes a book about the diamond is written. These books tell the story of the stone and its history. Photographs are taken as the diamond is cut to show its brilliance. Then Graff will create a beautiful piece of jewellery using the stone as a centrepiece in an intricate and glittering spider’s web.’

‘But Graff doesn’t just design jewels around the centrepiece of a large and rare diamond. The house also sells ‘designed’ jewellery too, such as the waterfall jewellery where a myriad stones flow down in a shimmering, fluid mass. It makes necklaces and other pieces, weaving together diamonds and coloured gems – rubies, emeralds and sapphires. ‘When we have an exhibition, coloured stones add to the excitement, to the spectrum of all the gems,’ Graff contends. ‘What we do is design,’ he points out, ‘but it is always very simple, very classical to show off the diamonds.’

‘But where does he get his ideas, of which there seem to be a never-ending stream? ‘I look for inspiration back to ancient jewels.’ ‘I am inspired by everything,’ Graff says. ‘I look at the great antique jewellery, but I also look at costume jewellery



and present. I am inspired by Moghul jewels from India, African tribal jewellery and traditional Asian jewellery. Shapes, forms, flowers, animals and trees inspire me. I look at what people are wearing.' He has always studied books on design, on paper design, on carpets, on Western, Islamic and Indian art.

The long voyages he made in his youth opened his mind to other cultures and that gave him many ideas based upon those travels. He continues to travel for inspiration; to Morocco, for instance, to look at the palaces and see the shapes and patterns. The Tiara and crown jewels in the Hermitage have inspired him. The crown of the Tsars and, when diamond crosses were used, was inspired by his glimpse of the crown of the Tsars. His many visits to Africa gave him ideas based on tribal jewellery and his visits in the Far East also opened his mind to the jewels of Asia.

His visits to museum shows such as an exhibition of Holbein court portraits. 'In his portraits, all the men and women were wearing rings,' he says. 'I have never seen rings that have better shapes than those rings, and I knew they would inspire me. I looked out for new ideas to work on.' A passionate collector and designer, he does not cite one particular artist as a special influence. He says that his influences are widespread. 'I can't say I was inspired by one artist. I look back and one gets feelings that spark off ideas. Because the things that I deal with today are so valuable and so









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THE SULTAN'S DIAMONDS

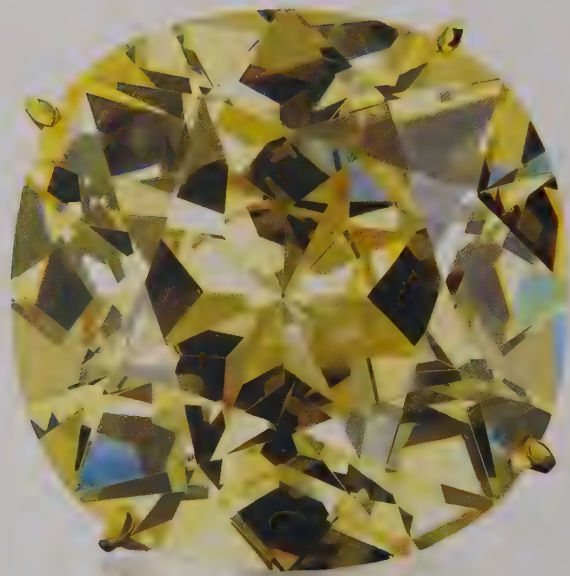
The Idol's Eye



The Sultan, formed a huge collection of jewels that were kept in the harem at the Topkapi Palace. One of the most famous was the Idol's Eye: a diamond of 70.21 carats, in shape of a heart cut and a triangular brilliant, with a very slight indentation. It was mined in the Golconda mines in Hyderabad in the 17th century. It was, by repute, the Persian Prince Rahab, from whom it was bought by the East India Company against a debt. The story is that it was the eye of an idol in Benghazi, hence its name, and that Benghazi has been Muslim since the 8th century. The story about the stone is that it appeared at auction on 4 July 1817 as 'a large, splendid diamond known as the Idol's Eye, set in a frame of small brilliants and a frame of small brilliants'. It was sold to the British collector J.B. who might have represented the Ottoman Sultan, who was a collector of unique and precious jewels. The Sultan had hidden the stone before he had sent his jewels to safety. The stone ended up in the hands of the dealer Salomon Habib, who sold it to a Spanish grandee. It was kept in a safe in a chest box in London until the end of World War II, when it was sold to the dealer who then sold it to May Bonfils Stanton of Colorado. Her good fortune, Mrs Stanton was typical of those obsessed with diamonds. Her important stones since she was a girl.

Idol's Eye diamond: 70.21 carats.





She lived in an isolated mansion reputedly copied from the Petit Trianon Versailles. She was rumoured to wear the Idol's Eye every morning at her solitary breakfast. After her death in 1962 it came up for auction at Sotheby's and a decade later, came into the possession of Laurence Graff. It was the first diamond he bought.

'I looked into the stone,' he remembers. 'It was more interesting than beautiful when I learnt about its history, I got very taken by it. It was a light blue, but not a fancy blue, and when I first saw it, I intended to cut it into a heart shape because it was already similar in shape. Then I thought, "with all this history, I shouldn't touch it", so I decided to reset it in the original diamond necklace that I had bought it in.'

The Sultan Abdul Hamid II Diamond

Weighing 70.54 carats this is an antique brilliant cut fancy light yellow diamond owned by the Sultan which, when it was bought by Graff in 1981, was set as a pendant with diamond sprays. Graff reset it as the focal stone for a superb necklace with a fringe effect falling from the diamond.

Left: The Sultan Abdul Hamid II Diamond; 70.54 carats.



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At the Grand launch of the Jew's Eye.







DIAMOND IMPERIAL

The Emperor Maximilian Diamond

This is one of two diamonds named after the tragic Archduke Maximilian of Austria (1832-1867), Emperor of Mexico, supposedly bought by him in Brazil in 1850 during his first visit to the New World on a botanical expedition. It is 41.94 carats, a cushion antique cut modified brilliant.

In 1863, under pressure from Napoleon III, Maximilian consented to accept the Mexican crown, and landed at Vera Cruz on 28 May 1864. From the outset his reign was troubled and by 1866 it was obvious that he should abdicate. However, Maximilian refused to desert his followers. His wife, the Empress Carlotta, returned to Europe to plead for help. But in 1867 Maximilian was court-martialled, sentenced to death and executed by firing squad. This story captured the imagination of Manet, who depicted the scene in his work *The Execution of Maximilian*, a fragment of which is in the National Gallery.

Legend has it that the Emperor was wearing the Emperor Maximilian Diamond round his neck in a small bag when he faced the firing squad. Following the execution, his remains were returned to Europe and the diamond to his widow. Subsequently it was sold to help pay expenses during her mental illness. It then disappeared for nearly half a century until 1919 when it was purchased by a Chicago gem dealer and subsequently displayed at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair. Mr Hotz always refused to sell the diamond and it remained in his possession until his death. Subsequently, it was acquired by a titled private owner who sent it for sale in 1982.

Left: The Emperor Maximilian Diamond: 41.94 carats.



‘The Emperor Maximilian Diamond was not a high-coloured stone,’ says Graff, ‘but it was fascinating. It had fascinating fluorescence and I just had to have it. I overpaid for it, because of its history.’ At the time Graff used an advertising agency who came up with the idea of dressing a woman in a Maximilian costume similar to a portrait of the Emperor. ‘We went to a tailor who made a costume – the first one was blue,’ Graff remembers, ‘and the idea was to photograph a model, but not her whole face, just her lips, the costume and the piece of jewellery.’

The resulting advertisement was so radically different from any other jewellery advertisements of the time that it caused a lot of attention. ‘Over the years, we changed the colour of the uniform,’ Graff says. ‘White, red, green, and we wove the word “Graff” into its material.’

*Above: The Execution of Maximilian 1870 by Manet; Bridgeman.
Right: Graff advertising inspired by Imperial uniforms.*



18K YELLOW GOLD CARRIFF
 FROM THE MOST FABULOUS COLLECTION OF JEWELS IN THE WORLD.

Graff
 Unmistakably

15 BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON SW1 1TL TEL: 020 7493 8800

18K YELLOW GOLD CARRIFF
 FROM THE MOST FABULOUS COLLECTION OF JEWELS IN THE WORLD.

Graff
 Unmistakably

15 BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON SW1 1TL TEL: 020 7493 8800

"LE COLLIER ROUGE ET BLANC" (RUBIES 133.55 CTS, DIAMONDS 140.53 CTS.)
 FROM THE MOST FABULOUS COLLECTION OF JEWELS IN THE WORLD.

Graff
 Unmistakably

15 BROMPTON ROAD, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON SW1 1TL. TELEPHONE: 020 7493 8800. TELEX: 20296

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN GRAFT

RARE COLLECTION OF 14 FLAWLESS DIAMONDS - 2.01 CTs
FROM THE MOST FABULOUS COLLECTION OF JEWELS IN THE WORLD

Graft
Unmistakably

100 RIVER STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10038
NEW YORK, GENEVA, TAKASHIMAYA, TOKYO AND WORLDWIDE BY APPOINTMENT

HAPPY CHRISTMAS WITH ALL OF OUR HEARTS
FROM THE MOST FABULOUS COLLECTION OF JEWELS IN THE WORLD

Graft
Unmistakably

THE PHILIPPINES EPISODE

1976, Graff was invited to visit the Philippines after a lady-in-waiting to the wife of the President, saw an exhibition he had put on in Hong Kong. He took with him three diamonds – the Idol’s Eye, the Sultan Abdul Hamid II Diamond and the Emperor Maximilian Diamond – and was invited to the Malacanang Palace to dine with Madame Marcos. That evening Graff was invited on the yacht for dinner. He arrived with the three diamonds in his pocket and, the President and Madame Marcos arrived on board. ‘The yacht pulled out of the harbour and started to cruise round the harbour – or so I thought. I was having a great time. I suddenly wondered where we were and I could not see the lights in the harbour getting dimmer and dimmer and we were going out to sea surrounded by warships.’

The next morning, the yacht slowed down and Graff thought it had come back to the harbour. It hadn’t. ‘We had arrived on Bamboo Island, a private island owned by the President. Everything was made from bamboo; the houses, the furniture, everything. I bought a house to myself and a wardrobe of *barong tagalongs* [traditional Filipino shirts]. I remember phoning home saying, “don’t worry about me, I’m being looked after by the President and his wife.”’ They stayed on Bamboo Island for nearly a week, during which Graff sold the three diamonds for a figure in excess of \$10 million. ‘It was the biggest diamond deal ever to one individual at the time – although,’ says Graff, ‘much larger transactions have happened since.’

Right: Madame Imelda Marcos photographed by Norman Parkinson; Corbis.



A DIAMOND FOR THE QUEEN OF ROMANCE

The Deepdene Diamond



The Deepdene Diamond was thought to have been discovered in 1830 in the village of Deepdene, Surrey and was named Deepdene after the estate of the Marquess of Waterford, who eventually loaned it to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. In about 1954, the stone was sold to an American buyer. Thirty years later it was put up for sale by the German jeweller who then owned it and was purchased by a French jeweller – rumour had it that it was the result of a French mission.

The stone was purchased by the late Mrs. G. G. Graff. It was sold as an untreated stone but the jewellers who had a problem with it. When they tested it, it was found to be irradiated. In 1984 the stone came back on the market but the jewellers were not sure if it had been irradiated or not. I bought it for \$100,000. It is 10.5 carats, cushion cut of a wonderful fancy colour. It is a very interesting diamond and we studied it and decided not to do anything with it. Later, I sold the diamond to a collector. It is one of the most successful novelists in the world today. It is one of the most beautiful diamonds in the world.



THE MARLBOROUGH DIAMOND MYSTERY

The Marlborough Diamond

Lawrence Graff was quietly sitting in his office at the back of the building reading a telegram, when he saw two masked men burst into the room. He ordered his staff and clients to lie face down on the floor. Graff himself was taken from sight, while one of the men cleared out the contents of the safe. The other then picked out a necklace which contained a magnificent cushion cut white stone called The Marlborough. 'The finest white diamond I had ever seen,' Graff comments, 'had attracted me to it.'

Because it had belonged to Gladys Deacon, a famous American actress, the necklace was the second wife of the 9th Duke of Marlborough. In her youth she had been a beauty in Paris, Rome and London. In 1902, she was so well-known that her photographs named 'Miss Deacon' were on sale to the general public. Proust had written about her, so had Anatole France. Epstein had sculpted her, Boldini had painted her. Her marriage to the Duke was not happy and she ended her days as a recluse, the result of a failed operation on her face.

The police had a single clue as to the perpetrators. Their getaway car's number had been noted by a passerby. It was easily traced and so were the thieves - they had been using their own identities.

After abandoning their car, the thieves took a taxi and stopped at a post office where the driver was asked to post a parcel. From there they went to Heathrow Airport and

Right: The Marlborough Diamond: 45, 47 carats.



... 'Withyhand' because he had been ... and within 'The Genius' Rachel, a thief and ... at the airport and their bags ...

... and served thirteen years apiece ... interviewed on television. ... but don't know where it was. The trail ... Diamond ... Maybe it was stolen ... Laurence Graff may have the last ... was also in the shop ... Marlborough and I suspect it ...





Stadys, Duchess of Marlborough
New York





THE BRUNEI ADVENTURE

Magnificent jewels for a royal family: Le Grand Coeur d'Afrique Diamond and Le Petit Coeur d'Afrique Diamond

When Brunei celebrated Independence in 1985, Mr and Mrs Laurence Graff and François attended the celebration as guests of the Royal Family. This was the beginning of an increasingly friendly relationship with His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the 29th Sultan of Brunei Darussalam (the Raja) and Pengiran Anak Saleha, His Majesty's Consort.

On his voyages around East Asia, Graff had met the then Crown Prince and Princess during their frequent visits to Singapore and often visited Brunei, where he offered himself jewels to the Sultan and other members of the Royal Family. The pieces became more and more elaborate. 'The ladies used to wear long dresses on which they pinned three brooches of semi-precious stones joined up on a chain. I offered them diversions set with diamonds, and connected with a diamond chain. They were delighted with their approval.'

The pieces became more daring, buying more and more stones to make the elaborate pieces made incredible creations surrounded by pink, blue and yellow diamonds, inspired by the Malay jewellery tradition and by motifs I had seen in Persian rugs. The major stones in these pieces would be unique, historic diamonds I had bought, or very large modern ones I had had cut and polished. The pieces got bigger and more valuable because we were selling more and more stones set into one piece of jewellery.'

Right: Le Grand Coeur d'Afrique Diamond 7

Le Petit Coeur d'Afrique Diamond 95,29 car







Over the years, the Sultan has bought many extraordinary diamonds from Graff. For instance, he bought Le Grand Coeur d'Afrique Diamond, a 70.03-carat heart-shaped diamond, the largest heart-shaped diamond in the world, which has a sibling, Le Petit Coeur d'Afrique Diamond, also heart-shaped. The diamonds came from Conakry, the capital of Guinea, and they were fabulous! Fabulous! said Hans Graff. He set them both into a necklace in which Le Grand Coeur suspends over Le Petit Coeur. I sold it to the Sultan and it was the first really major piece he bought from me. There were many, many more.





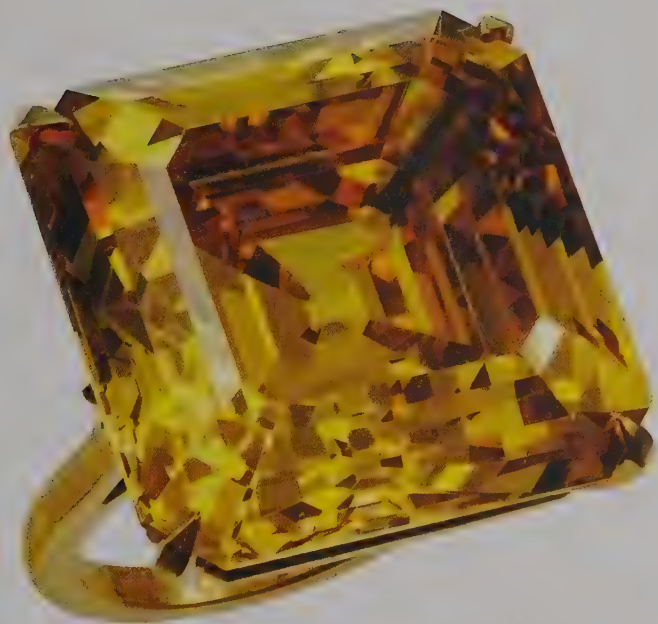


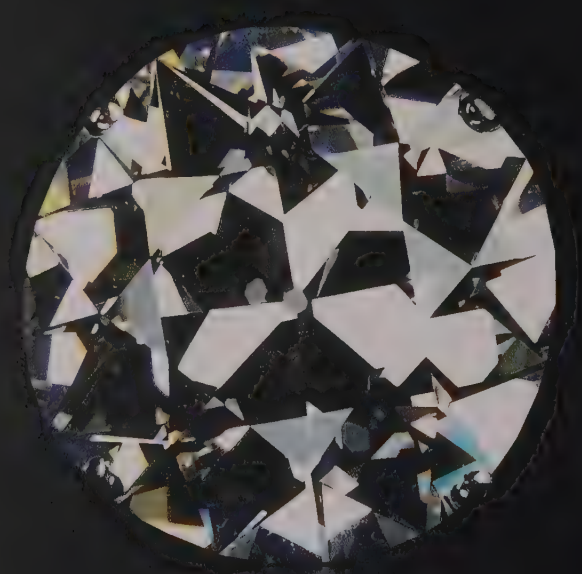
HISTORIC INDIAN DIAMONDS

The Star of Bombay Diamond, the Maharajah Diamond and the Golconda ‘D’ Diamond.

Over the centuries, the Moghul emperors the Golconda mines in the Kingdom of Golkonda, part of the Indian state of Hyderabad, have produced some of the most beautiful diamonds, notable for their soft brilliance. Graff has owned several of these stones. The Star of Bombay Diamond, an unnamed yellow diamond, was the first major diamond that was named by Laurence Graff. He bought it in 1974 from a European dealer, who sold it for the benefit of a charity. It was emerald cut and it had probably been set in a maharajah’s ring. The Maharajah Diamond is, as Graff describes it, ‘my diamond. It is a nine brilliant cut diamond of 78.10 carats, it was in a bank for 50 years before I bought it in 2006. He sold it the next day. ‘I owned, even for 24 hours, one of the most beautiful diamonds in the world, because of its clear brilliance like a crystal. The life in that stone, is beyond anything I have ever seen.’ The Golconda ‘D’ Diamond was a ‘D’ Flawless 47.29-carat antique brilliant cut diamond, and very, very rare because it is unusual to find such large ‘D’ diamonds,’ says Graff. ‘It had come from an Indian family and was in a jewelry store in New York, where I bought it in 1984 from a dealer selling it on behalf of the family. I made it into a single stone ring, which I sold to a Middle Eastern prince. It was the largest ‘D’ Flawless brilliant cut diamond in the world. I also owned the Leon Diamond, another ‘D’ Flawless brilliant round diamond of 47.29 carats, the size.

Right. The Star of Bombay Diamond: 47.39 carats.





Above: The Golconda 'D' Diamond; 47.99 carats.
Right: The Maharajah Diamond; 78.10 carats.



BLUE AND ROSE

The Imperial Blue Diamond and The Empress Rose Diamond

is a 39.31-carat flawless pear-shaped diamond and, at the time, was the largest blue diamond in the world. At the same time, the largest pink diamond, The Empress Rose Diamond, at 72.79 carats, is, if you imagine! I owned the largest blue diamond in the world and the largest pink diamond. I remember doing the double-cutting of two extraordinary diamonds, using the Graff uniform; one side was blue, the other side was pink.' Perhaps this advertisement, more than any other, had become a force to be reckoned with in the rarefied world of diamonds because, as he explains, 'I had stones of a size never seen before.'

The Imperial Blue Diamond: 39.31 carats.







The Empress Rose Diamond: 72.79 carats.

EXCELSIOR

The Excelsior I Diamond

A worker at the Jagersfontein mine in South Africa found the largest rough diamond in the world at the time, when he saw it in the gravel he was shovelling into a bucket. Weighing an astonishing 995.2 carats, it was only superseded by the Cullinan I, found twelve years later and now part of the British Crown Jewels. The Excelsior I still remains the second largest rough diamond ever mined. The worker who discovered this astonishing rough diamond from his overseer and delivered it to the mine manager, who rewarded him with a horse, a saddle and bridle, and a modest sum of £500 in cash.

The name Excelsior – meaning higher – was inspired by the original shape of the diamond which was flat on one side and rose to a peak on the other. It was of a pure white colour. It wasn't cut until ten years after it had been found, when it was sent to Asscher's Diamond Co. in Amsterdam, the leading diamond cutters of the time. Asscher decided to cut the stone into several smaller diamonds, rather than one large stone, as there were quite a number of black spots within the original diamond. So it was cut into 21 diamonds, the largest being 69.68 carats and known as the Excelsior I; and it is this magnificent diamond that Graff bought in 1984. Subsequently, he sold it to a member of the Saudi Arabian Royal Family for over \$7 million.

Right: The Excelsior I Diamond: 69.68 carats.





THE WINDSOR YELLOWS

The Windsor Yellow Diamonds

In 1987 the most successful jewellery auction ever was held in Geneva of the jewels belonging to Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor: one of the most fashionable and famous women in the world. The potent combination of the greatest jewellery of the 20th century, which linked the old-fashioned and the modern, and the high quality and design of the jewels to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, became an international sensation.

Laurence Graff was among the first to buy the jewels, and he sold them to the world, and acquired two of the most famous diamonds. The two diamonds photographed in the Windsor Yellow were purchased by Graff in 1987. The diamonds of 51.01 and 40.23 carats respectively were cut by Graff in 1987 into another pair of elliptical 10.10 carat diamonds. The diamonds were re-cutting to bring them to their full potential. The diamonds were eventually made the Windsor earrings, which were then bought by Rafic Hariri, then Prime Minister and founder of the new Lebanon, of which he was the single driving force in rebuilding. He bought the Windsor earrings in 1998 in his first year as Prime Minister and was gifted by his family.

Graff also bought the large 10.10 carat diamond of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's 19-carat emerald ring in 1987. It is the largest emerald ever seen, he says. 'The story is that the Duke, whilst still King, wanted to give Wallis Simpson, as she then was, a major emerald for an engagement ring. An enquiry was



Mrs Wallis Simpson; Sotheby's/Beaton Archive.



asked to inquire whether any such stones were available. He was employed to search among the treasures of France, and he found the princely families for the most fabulous diamonds he could find. The stone was a bead — a *briolette* — which was attached to a ring to be worn on the hand. This half was the superior gem, the other half was a much less perfect one, explains. "I've got the original jeweller's name, which was something like 'Dessart'." Graff gave the ring to his wife, Anne-Marie, and the stone was buried in a chest.

(Left) Mr and Mrs Ruffe Hume, 1840.

A QUEEN, AN EMPRESS, A DUCHESS, A MAHARANI

The Porter Rhodes Diamond

The Porter Rhodes Diamond is generally believed to be one of the finest ever found in South Africa. It was mined during the very early days of the Kimberley mine, in the latter part of January 1880. It is a colourless octahedron weighing 57.04 carats (11.408 grams). It was first seen by one of the first directors of the South African Diamond Mines. So rare and beautiful did he think it that Porter Rhodes sent the extraordinary pure white stone to London, where a reputable dealer and at the time, Edwin Streeter, exhibited it at his office.

It was the news of the existence of this extraordinary diamond, which reached the ears of the Queen and Rhodes was asked to travel to the Cape to show her the stone. The Queen, who had a taste for the Isle of Wight, to show her the stone. She was an expert on diamonds, possessing as she did some of the most beautiful examples, including the Koh-i-Noor, part of the Crown Jewels. She wondered whether the stone had really come from the Cape, hitherto considered as a source of lesser diamonds.

Next the deposed Empress Eugenie of France, living in a cottage on the Queen's orders, also asked to see the stone. She was also an expert on diamonds, having had a large collection of diamonds in the royal cabinet of jewels, which included some of the most famous diamonds collected by Louis XIV and Louis XVI. She too thought it was so beautiful and pure a white that it could not have come from the Cape, it having been thought that Cape diamonds were usually yellowish in colour.

Note: The Porter Rhodes Diamond: 57.04 carats.





...of the Blue Bird Diamond single-handedly established the
... on the type
... and was ultimately into an old-mine cut stone and eventually,
... as a present for his third wife, Loelia.
... who had it re-cut into an emerald cut
... of taste and lover of rare jewels, the
... in Philadelphia and Texas and was
... I decided no one would buy that
... I added it to the Royal Family of Brunei. It was
... demand



REDS

The Mogok Ruby and the Graff Ruby

“The Mogok Ruby is probably the finest ever seen by anybody,” says Graff. The Mogok region in Burma has been worked since 1597, when the King of Burma discovered it. The region was internationally famous for producing beautiful rubies until the late 1800s, when the British took them over in 1886. Since British rule and the rise of power in Burma in 1948, the Mogok region has been almost completely abandoned, still producing wonderful gems. “When I saw it, the King of Siam had given it to a New Yorker who had hunted for twenty years that he had found the finest ruby in the world, a laurel leaf to all rubies.” But eventually he decided to donate it to a charity, and I bought it in 1987 for a little over \$2 million. The man who had acquired this ruby, he had never seen one to compare with and gave me 9 rubies (107 carats). Later it was sold to a European client.

The Graff Ruby, a cushion cut Burmese ruby of 8.60 carats, was also from the Mogok region and was set in a ring. “I remember when I bought rare stones for Louis XIV, he said, ‘Any ruby over 5 carats has no price.’ This stone has no price. This ruby,” says Graff, “I mounted it into a fabulous ring—a ruby of this size has never been seen before, and I had to pay a world-record price for it.”







Above: The Graff Ruby: 8.62 carats.

TIARAS

... tiaras and recall them, may seem an anachronism ... grander age. Far from it. Still ... they are worn for state dinners ... and the British Royal Family owns some superb historic examples. ... private dance. But tiaras are still very ... Middle East and ... East Asia, where they are much in ... which might necessitate a different tiara for ... of the celebration.

... Graff has made ... contemporary tiaras for queens, ... including a tiara made entirely of pink ... Queen of Brunei. His tiaras have featured at royal Middle Eastern ... of the jeweller's art. 'We always ... it is surprising how many we sell,' says















HEARTS

The Morning Star Diamond, the Star of Lesotho, the Birthday Diamond, the Golden Africa Diamond

Heart-shaped diamonds are one of the distinguishing marks of Graff jewels and he has owned and set some superb examples of romantic jewels over the years. The Morning Star is 16.77 carats and was set as a pendant in a necklace of diamond hearts. The Star of Lesotho, a 55.11 carat diamond, was acquired in 1972 and set in a necklace of diamond hearts. The Birthday Diamond, a 10.00 carat diamond, was named in honor of Graff's birthday because the stone was finished on Graff's birthday. Another notable heart-shaped diamond acquired by Graff was the Golden Africa Diamond, a fancy intense yellow 10.00 carat diamond.







Left: The Star of Lesotho: 53.11 carats.
Above: The Birthday Diamond: 56.42 carats.



Modeling amount: 46.44 carats.



ETERNAL LIGHT

La Favorite Diamond, the Eternal Light Diamond, the Excellence Diamond and the Icon Diamond

The La Favorite Diamond was mined in South Africa and first made a public appearance at the 1933 World's Fair in 1933. At the time, it was owned by a Persian and valued at \$1 million, for those days, of one million dollars. At the height of the diamond boom, the emerald cut 'D' coloured diamond of 50.01 carats was a huge attraction, with enormous queues.

It was set in a ring and Graff acquired the diamond in New York in 1934. 'It was an amazing stone which I bought during the week in New York store,' he remembers. 'It was also the same week we bought the Excellence Diamond. That was a major week for me! We kept the Excellence Diamond for many years and then sold it, but I loved that diamond, it was a very special and fruitful associations for me.'

The Excellence Diamond at 85.91 carats was one of the first of the large new diamonds discovered in 1987. It was pear-shaped, 'D' Flawless and no one else had it at the time except Graff, who paid \$10 million for it and sold it before selling it to a member of a Royal Family.

The Icon Diamond of 50.01 carats was a 'D' Flawless emerald cut stone owned by the singer and film star Pia Zadora, who was painted by Andy Warhol. She sold the stone to a Parisienne, who sold it back to Graff some time ago. He then made it into a magnificent ring.

La Favorite Diamond: 50.01 carats



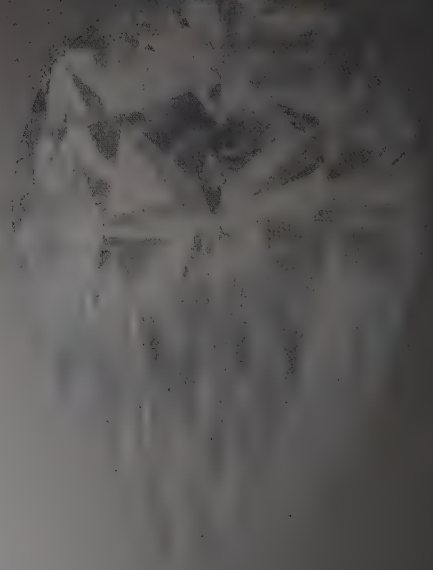
The Leon Diamond, now called the Safia, is, as Graff put it, 'a most unbelievable diamond' of 99.97 carats, 'D' Flawless and round - the largest round 'D' Flawless diamond in the world, cut from a piece of rough of over 300 carats which he had bought in South Africa direct from the mine. It took 30000 days to negotiate the price. It was finished just in time for the opening of the Monte Carlo Salon and was the star of a gala evening at the Monte Carlo casino for 350 guests. 'Ironically, one invited guest who did not attend called to see the stone the next day, bought it for over \$12.5 million and renamed it the Safia after his wife.'

Right: The Leon Diamond, 99.97 carats.





Excellence Diamond
Eternal Light Diamond: 85.1 carats.







THE BLUES

The Begum Blue, the Graff Blue Heart, the Whitney Blue



The Begum Blue Diamond was the largest fancy deep blue heart-shaped diamond to have appeared at auction at the time and can be considered as its cataloguing suggested, with some of the finest ever seen examples of blue diamonds ever, including the Idol's Eye and the Graff Blue Heart. The Begum Blue, weighing 13.78 carats, was set in a necklace by Poiray, and suspended from a heart-shaped pendant of 3.4 carats, which in turn was suspended from a line of smaller heart-shaped diamonds. This magnificent necklace had belonged to Princess Lalla Begum Aga Khan, who sold most of her jewellery in 1956. This attracted a great deal of attention at the time, especially to the necklace and its magnificent heart-shaped blue diamond, the Begum Blue. Graff acquired it for over \$7 million.

The Graff Blue Heart, at 6.68 carats, is a beautiful deep blue colour, and is set in a necklace of heart shape. It was purchased in New York and originally belonged to a aristocratic European family who left Europe for the U.S.

The Idol's Eye Diamond originally belonged to Betsey Cushing Roosevelt, one of the most beautiful and elegant Cushing sisters, daughters of a prominent middle class Boston mother, who married them all off into the aristocracy several times over.







Betsey Cushing was the mistress of the most famous man in the world, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At first meeting, he was a young, handsome, charming, and successful diplomatic entertainer. Betsey was drawn to his wit and charm and found herself in the White House and at the White House and at the White House.

Betsey's marriage was a scandalous affair, and she was even richer member of the town. She collected extraordinary jewelry and a list of the most famous diamonds, including the Whitney Blue Diamond. The Whitney Blue Diamond was a 10.64 carat diamond he called the "Whitney White" which he had bought at an auction in New York to be used as a pendant earring, the other pendant earring was

After he bought the diamond, he became respectively a great blue diamond. The blue diamond was a 10.64 carat diamond he called the "Whitney White" which he had bought at an auction in New York to be used as a pendant earring, the other pendant earring was it's a major, major stone and it was sold at a price of \$10 million.

Left: The Whitney Blue Diamond (10.64 carats) and the
Above: Betsey and Jock Haas

THE HARCOURT EMERALDS AND THE HARCOURT TIARA

The Harcourt emerald parure and tiara were wedding presents to Mary Hayes Burns from her mother, when she married Lewis, 1st Viscount Harcourt in 1899. Lady Harcourt's mother was a sister of J. Pierpont Morgan, the banker. The tiara was worn at the 1917 coronation of King George VI; and her daughter, Lady Ashburton, wore both the tiara and the parure at the 1953 coronation of The Queen. Both parure and tiara are composed of ancient and very beautiful step-cut emeralds, set within sprays of emerald flowerheads and ribbon motifs.

'I originally bought the magnificent parure some years ago,' Graff recollects. 'I bought the tiara some time later. When the tiara came up recently I bought the necklace and earrings to complete the set. I bought them together with other top quality pieces of jewellery. I am a collector as well and I possess all the stones. I am fascinated by the history of jewels, but I am more interested in the history of individual gems. If you wish to know the emeralds used for the necklace and the tiara probably came from an earlier piece of jewellery. Stones are always being recycled and given new leases of life. My challenge,' he says, 'is to acquire great gems and pass them on to my clients.'

Photo: The Harcourt Tiara: Christie's.







Left: The Harcourt Emeralds: Christie's.

Below: The Harcourt Emeralds reset by Graff into a magnificent necklace.

MILLENNIUM

The Millennium necklace and the Paragon Diamond



For the millennium celebrations, Graff created a truly magnificent Millennium necklace formed of fancy intense blue, yellow and pink diamonds. A central facet was suspended an extraordinary diamond called the Paragon, a very unusual seven-sided stone, and at the time the world's largest 'D' Flawless diamond at the time. The necklace was shown at the House, London, attended by H.R.H. The Queen Mother in 2000. The Millennium, the finale of the show presented by the supermodel, wearing this unique Graff necklace.







THE GOLD AND THE YELLOW

**The Golden Drop Diamond, the Sarah Diamond,
the Golden Star Diamond, the Golden Maharajah Diamond,
the Rojtman Diamond, the Graff Vivid Yellow Diamond.**

The Golden Drop Diamond is one of the most intense and pure yellow diamonds ever seen, 18.31 carats. By repute it was part of the collection of diamonds formed by the eccentric Duke of Brunswick. The Golden Drop was in the possession of Louis Winans, one of those rare diamonds who occur (like the Duke of Brunswick) throughout the Winans family fortune had been made in railways in Russia. This quiet recluse had formed a superb collection of

1-1920s and the collection was inherited by a female relation. She was concerned that Britain might be invaded, so she commissioned a smith to make an iron casket into which she put the Golden Drop diamonds and jewellery she had inherited. The casket was hidden and when the war was over it was still safely in the same location and re-mounting the diamond in a ring, it was sold to a Hong Kong collector for £5 million.

The Sarah Diamond, cut by Laurence Graff in 2000, weighing 132.43 carats, is a yellow cushion cut diamond, the largest ever known of its kind. The Maharajah is a wonderful golden-brown pear-shaped diamond very unusual that it has been widely exhibited during its history.

Golden Drop Diamond: 18.31 carats.







originally belonging to a merchant, it was exhibited in 1937 at the World's Fair in Paris where it attracted international attention. In 1939, and again in 1940, it was on exhibition at the New York World's Fair. In 1976 it was a star attraction at the opening of the Hall of Minerals and Gems at the Museum of Natural History in New York, where it was on loan from an anonymous New Yorker. There it remained until 1990, when it was sold in 2006 to Graff.

The Rojzman Diamond is a fine cushion-shaped lilac yellow natural coloured round of 107.46 carats. Unusually, nothing is known of its history, prior to 1957, when it bears a resemblance to the 107.50-carat 'Star of Diamonds' found in the African mines and mentioned by the jewellery historian Edwin Streeter in 1882. This was referred to by Louise Dieulafait, a 19th-century gem expert, as 'a lovely stone which revealed under the microscope a prospect of pointed mountain crests, and by broad sunlight in all the colours of the rainbow.' Could these two stones be related the same?

In 1957 the diamond was acquired by Mrs. Marc Rojzman of New York, who then exhibited it at the Diamond Pavilion in Johannesburg in 1966. Later, it was acquired by Graff on one of his many visits to New York.





‘When I first saw the Graff Vivid Yellow Diamond, recalls, ‘I was mesmerised by its colour. It was as if it were on fire with flames of orange and sensational yellows which resembled a golden sun radiating glory and heat.’ The rough diamond, of 190.7 carats, was of such an unusual and exceptional colour that it was sent to the Gemmological Institute of America by natural. It was. Now came the challenge of preserving the splendid colour of the stone alongside the magical weight of 100 carats. Graff’s master cutter, Antonio Bianco, witnessed the heart-stopping moment when, after a period of nine months, he and his team realised the orange fire burning outside hid a 100.09-carat pure vivid yellow dream diamond of magnificent quality.

‘It was truly the experience of a lifetime to see the Graff Vivid Yellow Diamond revealed in all its splendour. It is a diamond that is truly a masterpiece and one that is hard to be surpassed.’

Left: The Graff Vivid Yellow Diamond, 100.09 carats, and a D Flawless pear-shaped brilliant-cut diamond, 100.00 carats.

GRAFF'S UNBORN DIAMONDS

The 5th largest rough diamond ever discovered is also the 10th largest white rough diamond, weighing 603 carats. Laurence Graff paid a record sum of over \$12 million for the stone, which will eventually emerge from this rough as a series of brilliant-cut diamonds. The 603 carat piece of this historic and huge stone will be cut into a series of diamonds that will witness the eventual jewellery creation of a diamond worth a thousand by the rough.



Graff does what he has always done: finding unique gems and dreaming up new and interesting ways of using them in the most fabulous jewels in the world.

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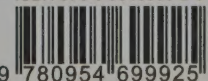


Meredith Etherington-Smith is Editor in Chief of Christie's Magazine and a contributor on the contemporary art scene to many newspapers and magazines. Her previous books include a biography of Salvador Dali, 'The Persistence of Memory', published in twelve languages, and 'Axel Vervoordt, The Story of a Style'.

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Cultureshock Media,
27b Tradescant Road
London SW8 1PX

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