

Once again, Fashion Week can be defined as four intense days of meetings and presentations where attendees can admire la crème de la crème of jewelry collections that are unveiled in Paris. Traditionally, independent designers have introduced their new creations during Fashion Week, but many high-end jewelry houses have recently chosen to kick off the festivities almost a month in advance. In doing so, they offer a unique experience to their most privileged customers to view the new lines before the final rush during the first week of July.

Paris — The New World Platform for Jewelry Designers and Brands

By Marie Chabrol

Imperial necklace by Rubeus, in gold, diamond, spinel and a 69.37-ct Russian alexandrite, reported natural and untreated by Gübelin Laboratory. (Photo: Rubeus)

Dior opened the ball in Venice during a luxury event held in June. On Saturday, June 11, in the heart of the Palazzo Labia, the French house unveiled the 99 pieces that compose its new *GemDior* collection. At the same time, it celebrated the 20th anniversary of Victoire de Castellane as the Jewelry Artistic Director of the famous fashion brand.

In the following days, Cartier lifted the veil on its *Magnitude* line during a grandiose evening in London, while Bulgari went to Capri for the launch of *Cinemagia*. Louis Vuitton traveled to Prague to celebrate medieval heroines, choosing a place worthy of telling the story of the collection, *Riders of the Knights*, by taking over the Royal Palace in the Prague Castle, one of the world's oldest castles where the jewels of the Bohemian crown are kept.

We started our tour of Paris Fashion Week with three particularly interesting presentations: De Beers and Rubeus. For its new collection, the global diamond brand, founded in London in 2001 and subsidiary of the eponymous enterprise founded in 1888, presented a collection developed around Nature's flora and fauna. The number of fancy color diamonds was impressive, showcased with bold and colorful combinations. One of the most memorable was the *Knysna* line, inspired by the polychromatic ability of the Knysna Chameleon to change color.



Knysna Chameleon ring by De Beers features two lines of colored rough diamonds embracing a 4-ct emerald-cut, fancy color solitaire. (Photo: De Beers)



Boucheron's *Nuri* earrings set with a 1.32-ct pear aquamarine, a 1.55-ct yellow beryl, multicolored sapphires, tsavorites, onyx and diamonds. (Photo: Boucheron)



Ciottoli ring, featuring a 4.52-ct Colombian emerald, accented by emeralds, chrysoprases, sapphires and diamonds by Mellerio. (Photo: Mellerio)



Bracelet by Dior featuring cobalt blue spinels in a gold double ring. (Photo: Dior)

The first day of Fashion Week was marked by a noteworthy presentation by the Milanese company, Rubeus. Founded by a Russian couple—Nataliya and Viktor Bondarenko—the designer brand presented its first collection of high-end jewelry whose designs are entrusted to the French atelier Ebroussard. They included about 16 pieces designed by French designer Frédéric Mané. Their primary characteristic revolves around the center stones—Russian alexandrites from the Urals (Mariinsk Mine) that were mined before the Russian Revolution of 1917. Although this deposit is now known for its emeralds, it produced some very beautiful alexandrites during the first half of the 19th century.

The Rubeus collection highlighted 47 alexandrites, with the largest weighing in at more than 69.37 carats. One ring featured a stone of more than 29 carats. The gems presented an extremely pronounced color-change phenomenon. Rubeus' unique pieces apparently interested many buyers. While prices were not published, it was whispered that the necklace could exceed many millions of dollars. This seems on the high side, since we know that some alexandrites are trading at around \$US25,000 per carat. The stones have been reported to be untreated by Gübelin Laboratory.

Speaking of alexandrites, another worthy event was the conference by Dr. Laurent Massi, who enlightened the public on this beautiful gemstone.

Fashion Week is a prime opportunity for many houses to express themselves while they remain rather discreet during the rest of the year. Reza presented very interesting pieces, including the *Turban* ring that is adorned with a 6.93-carat Zambian emerald. Reza's creations are always a subtle balance between modernity and classicism.



Turban ring by Reza, featuring a 6.93-ct Zambian emerald accented by 48 baguette diamonds (5.85 ctw) in 18K gold. (Photo: Reza)

Buccellati also displayed an incredible refinement in its craftsmanship. The brand took this occasion to celebrate its 100th anniversary by unveiling a 57-facet Buccellati-cut diamond that echoes the brand's logo.

From Japanese brand Tasaki, the *Elysium* collection stood out with its artistic use of blue topaz. The collection was designed by New York-based designer Prabal Gurung, who has been designing for the house since 2017.

The American artist Sarah Jane Wilde presented her new jewelry, manufactured in Los Angeles, at the Hôtel du Crillon in Paris. Her *Bubble* ring is, like the designer here, unclassifiable, but so cool!



Bubble ring in emeralds and gold by Sarah Jane Wilde. (Photo: Sarah Jane Wilde)



Elysium earrings by Tasaki in white gold, blue topaz, sapphire and diamond. (Photo: Tasaki)



Above the Cloud Ring by Francesca Villa by Objet d'Emotion, in 18K rose gold with amethysts (1.60 ctw), garnets (1.60 ctw) and pink opal. (Photo: Objet d'Emotion)



Hypnotic Light ring in rose gold by Piaget, featuring a 2.68-ct pear-shaped Luc Yen pink spinel and diamonds. (Photo: Piaget)



Earrings in gold, diamonds and rough spinels by Suzanne Syz (Photo: Suzanne Syz)



Budelli ring by Buccellati, in gold, diamonds and a 19.20-ct kunzite. (Photo: Buccellati)



Necklace by Melanie Georgacopoulos in white mother-of-pearl, 12mm white south sea pearls, with an 18K white gold clasp and silk thread. (Photo: Melanie Georgacopoulos)



Tori necklace by Sharon Khazzam for Objet d'Emotion, one-of-a-kind, in 18K gold and platinum, set with diamonds, amethysts, rubies, apatite, hessonite garnets, Mexican fire opal, bi-color tourmaline, tsavorites, pink tourmaline, citrine, rubellite and a pink tourmaline cabochon that serves as the clasp. (Photo: Objet d'Emotion)



Jaipur bougainvillea Muzo earrings by Alice Cicolini for Objet d'Emotion, in 18K gold with lacquer enamel and Muzo trapiche emeralds (55.565 ctw). (Photo: Objet d'Emotion)



Galaxia earrings by Colette Jewelry, in white gold, diamonds and malachite. (Photo: Colette Jewelry)



Tavous pendant in 18K pink, yellow and white gold, with a 12.14-ct oval apatite center and other gemstones and diamonds. (Photo: Objet d'Emotion)

Paris also hosted one of the most beautifully curated collections in contemporary jewelry. Valerie Demure set up shop at the Hôtel du Crillon to present *Objet d'Emotion*, a group of some of today's most inspiring contemporary designers, including: Mélanie Georgacopoulos (Greece), who uses mother-of-pearl like no one else and who also designs for Tasaki; Francesca Villa (Italy) who re-purposes items, integrating them into her jewelry with undeniable poetry; Sharon Khazzam (USA), who loves gems and creates colorful and fun jewelry; and Alice Cicolini (Britain), a jeweler and research associate at Central St Martins, where she graduated in 2009 with a Masters in Jewelry Design.

Formerly director of Arts & Culture for the British Council in India, Cicolini is still involved with Indian craft and design, whose jewels blend gold, meenakari enameling traditions and amazing gemstones, such as the emeralds in her *Jaipur Bougainvillea* earrings.

For the second year, international fashion consultant, Muriel Piaser, organized her *Precious Room* gathering in the lovely Palais Vivienne, featuring many young international brands and designers. It was a pleasure to see the creations of these designers, including Eugenia Shekhtman (Ibiza), Adelya (Dubai), Colette Jewelry (USA) and GFG Jewelry (London). Most of these brands were founded by women. Good job girls!

The historic French brands introduced impressive new collections comprised of more than 70 pieces. The *Romeo & Juliet* line by Van Cleef & Arpels was inspired by Benjamin Millepied's new ballet. The dancer, married to Natalie Portman, is now based in California where he dances with his own company, the LA Dance Project.

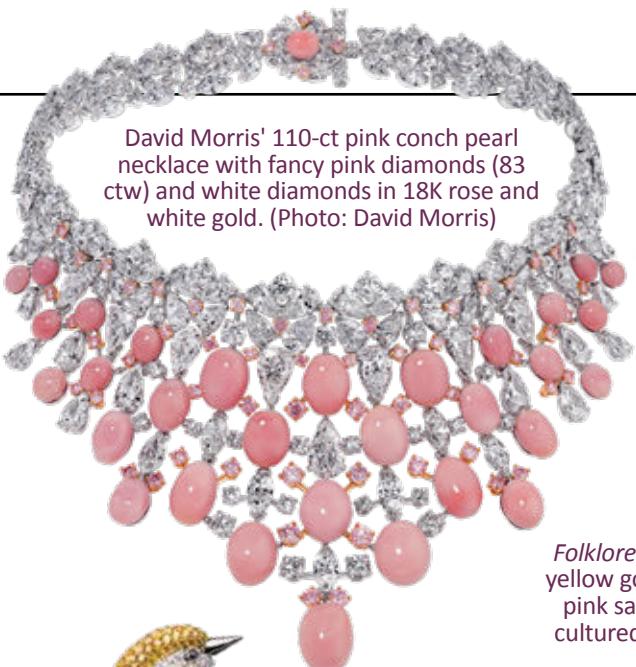
The French jewelry house will also produce the third choreographer's ballet, *On the Other Side*. For this new opus, VCA offers—as usual—a remarkable choice of stones and fine workmanship, among them the *Fiore* bracelet with two top-quality aquamarines totaling more than 100 carats.

This year, Chanel explores Russia, a country that Coco Chanel never visited. On the other hand, it is in the creation of the brand's famous perfume N°5 that we find links to Russia. After Ernest Beaux (perfumer to the court of the Tsar) created the revolutionary formula for Chanel N°5 for Coco, her fashions began to take on Russian accents. A looming figure behind this change—one of elegance and discretion—was the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich, a seductive young man with light-colored eyes, who was a cousin of Tsar Nicholas II.

Gabrielle Chanel met the Grand Duke in 1911 and reconnected with him in Biarritz in 1920. They had a brief but intense affair. A fallen hero from one of the wealthiest courts in Europe, the Grand Duke introduced her to a universe of motifs and designs that would reverberate powerfully in her creations.



Goralska's *Chaos* pendant in gold and diamonds, with a 6.53-ct center diamond. (Photo: Goralska)



David Morris' 110-ct pink conch pearl necklace with fancy pink diamonds (83 ctw) and white diamonds in 18K rose and white gold. (Photo: David Morris)



Folklore ring by Chanel Joaillerie, in white gold, yellow gold, enamel, pink spinel, blue sapphires, pink sapphires, Mandarin garnets, tsavorites, cultured pearls and diamonds. (Photo: Chanel)



Golden Pheasant with Hibiscus brooch in 18K gold, with a 26.70-ct Imperial green jadeite, 732 fancy color and white diamonds, pink and purple sapphires, black spinels, amethysts and rubies. (Photo: TTF High Jewelry)



Inspired by a Dali sofa, this gold ring is set with sapphires, morganites and black diamonds by Lydia Courteille. (Photo: Lydia Courteille)



Pink Maple Leaf earrings, featuring 111 pieces of double rose-cut pink spinel (38.72 ctw), yellow and rose-cut diamonds in 18k gold by Feng J. (Photo: Feng J)



Leaping Koi brooch featuring a 30.48-ct rubellite with sapphires, tourmalines, rubies and diamonds. (Photo: Anna Hu)

In its pieces, Boucheron evokes Paris and its famous monuments: the Place Vendôme's cobblestones became a necklace with rock crystal; the horses of the famed Opera transformed into a large cuff; and the Grand Palais turned into a long necklace of dazzling emeralds.

For Chaumet, the sky's the limit... or not. To infinity and beyond could be the perfect definition of Claire Devé-Rakoff's latest collection where everything is related to the sky—clouds, storms, sun, comets and, of course, stars. Large black opals and unusual spinels provided a celestial color contrast evoking the sky before the storm. It was definitely one of our favorite collections of this week. It seems highly likely that this collection will enchant Asian customers to love the *Blue Store* brand so much.

When talking about Asian customers and jewelry brands that unveiled new collections at Fashion Week, we must mention Chinese designers TTF High Jewelry, Anna Hu and Feng J. They all displayed a creative range of jewels featuring diamonds, colored gems, pearls and top-quality jadeite, normally not seen in Paris' window cases.

Lydia Courteille introduced one of her most undressed collections with pieces directly inspired by the underwear of Chantal Thomas and the so-called Parisian ability to seduce. With Lydia, the French kiss is not a legend! The reason, perhaps that strangers love Paris, the capital of love, so much.

Finally, we conclude the week with a look at the incredible jewels of London-based Davis Morris, where Jeremy Morris (the son of the founder) offered truly rare gemstones. Among them was his necklace featuring more than 110 carats of conch pearls. Definitely, Paris Fashion Week continues to enchant us all! ■