

# PUSHKIN ANTIQUES

The recently opened fine antiques & luxury interiors emporium on the Tunbridge Wells High Street. In this interview meet the couple behind this new exciting venture & destination.

Alexander and Olga Pushkin have recently opened their eponymous antiques and interiors emporium on the Tunbridge Wells High Street. Eileen Leahy met the couple to find out what makes their high-end retail offering so very special for both the curio collector and home lover.

If you're a regular on the High Street in Tunbridge Wells then you can't have failed to notice the addition of Pushkin Antiques and Interiors. With its smart black and gold livery on its shop frontage and eye-catching array of vintage curios and collectables in the windows it has certainly caused quite the stir since it opened at the beginning of last month.



PUSHKIN ANTIQUES

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HIGH STREET



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# PUSHKIN ANTIQUES



Located on the corner of Castle Street and the High Street, just a few doors down from the Queen's jeweller G Collins & Sons, it occupies a prime spot on the town's upmarket shopping area and it's already proving to be a big hit thanks to its wealth of covetable and unique pieces, all expertly sourced by owner Alexander Pushkin.

After a vintage Louis Vuitton woven travel trunk from the 18th century? No problem, Alexander has not just one but four in store, all in excellent condition retailing at around sixteen thousand pounds. Or how about giving your lighting scheme a lift courtesy of an oversized 20th century palm tree floor lamp by Maison Jansen? Well, you've come to the right place - if you have a spare £15,995. But although there may well be some incredible high-end pieces chez Pushkin, Alexander says he also has more than enough to offer for those whose pockets aren't so deep but still want something of value.

*"We have plenty of investment pieces but we are also affordable too,"* he tells me as we sit down to chat alongside his wife Olga in a stylish seating area of the double fronted shop. It's made up of a vintage Chesterfield sofa, two leather art deco chairs, a huge



black and white animal skin rug and a gleaming gilt edged glass top table complete with an impressive collection of paperweights and enamel cigarette cases all prettily glimmering from inside it. So far, so wow!

*"These are some of our most popular items,"* says Alexander gesturing towards the table and also up to the vintage James Bond framed posters hanging on the wall. *"We've tried not to alienate people. We don't want customers to make up their minds quickly about what we do here. There are things that will cost you £20,000 or £20. We want people to come in and pay for something and feel they have got some value and that they love it."*

During our chat the shop's front door buzzer goes on numerous occasions with many clients popping in to browse which instantly proves that trade is brisk – even on a dreary Wednesday in September.

Alexander and Olga, who are both Russian, tell me they like to think of Pushkin as an interiors emporium and antiques gallery. So how did they get here?

*"I established Pushkin in 2012. The business was mainly at Gray's in London where we deal in mostly silver items but I also trade in interiors online. So until we opened this shop last month we had never had a customer facing business,"* explains Alexander.

*"We never planned anything really, it was all very spontaneous. We were living in Essex but have had enough and wanted a change. We came to Tunbridge Wells about ten years ago and we'd just had our daughter. I remember thinking it would be nice to live somewhere like this."*

Fast forward another nine years and the couple were back this time visiting the ice rink with some friends.

*"Tunbridge Wells was so beautiful at that time of year so we had more of a look around. We visited The Pantiles, a few parks and the High Street and just fell in love with the place. In two weeks we had moved here!"*

The couple found somewhere to live and a school for their two young children. *"It was very easy to settle here,"* says Olga.

*"We still had a good business in London and couldn't complain but then lockdown happened and we ended up spending more time together. We realised we wanted to be*

*together more as a family and that it would be a lot more beneficial to have a business here in Tunbridge Wells to run,"* reveals Alexander.

So the search began for a premises in which he and Olga could style up and showcase their ever growing collection of antiques and interior finds that are so popular with customers all over the world thanks to their online shop. In it you'll find items as diverse as antique maps, Italian marble and mosaic tables and vintage children's Bentley toy cars – some of which have made it into the couple's bricks and mortar store here in Tunbridge Wells.

*"When we looked at the High Street we thought it looked a little sad and that we could help lift it up – give it some life and excitement,"* Alexander smiles.

*"We couldn't find a lot of antique shops here in Tunbridge Wells,"* adds Olga. *"There was one around the corner but it was always closed."*

Alexander says *"My pieces are interior focused, specialising in fine silver and quirky curiosities. I mainly cater for men's taste."*



So is Alexander saying he wanted to offer a retail venture that had a more masculine appeal to it?

*“Exactly! One thing I noticed in this town is that the majority of things are aimed at women and kids. There are a lot of jewellery and clothes shops. I saw the opportunity to offer something different...”*

Alexander says his specialist retail vision has paid off: *“A lot of men have been just blown away by what we offer here. And this has translated very well into sales. We’ve had some very interesting people come to visit since we’ve been open. It’s a bit of a boys’ club. Some customers told me they think of the Pushkin shop as their man cave to which I replied ‘what does that make me? The caveman?’ I said OK I can live with that – I can be the caveman of Tunbridge Wells!”*

And what pieces does his newfound customer base seem to favour the most?

*“I think people are mainly looking for statement pieces and gifts,”* says Alexander. *“Yes, and a lot of James Bond vintage posters,”* laughs Olga.

*“I started buying the posters recently as I thought if I’m to open a gallery I need something to hang on the walls,”* continues Alexander. *“I’ve never dealt in vintage posters*

*before but now I have around 30 of them so in a matter of a year I’ve cornered the market.”*

And after working in the trade for many years and establishing an amazing global network of contacts plus two large warehouses in Essex and Buckinghamshire and a huge online presence which counts for around 90% of Pushkin’s business, it’s fair to say that Alexander knows exactly what he is doing.

*“It’s my passion. When we started the company nearly ten years ago I had no background in the arts. I was studying graphic design and advertising. I never set out to do this but it has just grown organically by buying and selling. Our success is driven by pure hard work and my reputation which is second to none. Before the pandemic I would travel all across Europe, America, you name it I’ve gone there, I’ve bought it there.”*

As we tour around the shop gliding by glittering decanters, gleaming silver decanters and a retro table football, I ask how Alexander values pieces. *“Prices vary according to their rarity – I don’t just pull a price tag out of a hat. I do my research and look at auction results. I try to keep the prices the market dictates. They are not inflated at Pushkin, they are all based on research and experience. I have sold these pieces many, many times so I know the value.”*



What’s most popular with customers right now?

*“Anything bar related – especially on a Saturday!”* chuckles Alexander. *“We’re also selling a lot of soft furnishings, furniture and sculptures. We have a lot of stock online too so if it’s not here in the shop we will have it online or in one of our warehouses.”*

Since opening Alexander and Olga say the feedback has been amazing. *“Lots of people locally have said you’ll do very well. It’s nice to hear as we didn’t really concentrate on retail until now. We worked with clients by appointment and with the trade.”*

Did the couple do much research or go in feet first? *“The latter - that’s my way. I’m a bit like a wrecking ball! I go in and then think let’s see what happens,”* laughs Alexander. *“He has done pretty much everything to his taste,”* adds Olga. *“It’s very welcoming: we wanted it to feel like home.”*

Talking of which, Alexander reveals that the couple’s nine-year-old daughter has been working the door most Saturdays. *“She’s been greeting families saying let mummy and daddy look around while we play table football! It is such a great experience for her and she is learning something new every Saturday. She’s learning business acumen, communication skills and growing in confidence. If I can pass that onto my kids here then this place will have*

*paid for itself a hundred times.”*

Alexander says that he buys from everywhere: *“from auctions, other dealers, across the board. The main thing is condition – reputation is everything to me.”*

He admits that he has been duped on occasion but not very often. *“Those purchases are the painful ones and the ones you remember but we all make mistakes. As time goes on you make less and less mistakes. I now can’t remember the last time I made a big error. That stems from pure knowledge and handling thousands of these objects all the time: you eventually know what is right and what’s wrong.”*

Other Pushkin services include restoration, customisation and creating a bespoke item too.

*“We can make things from scratch as we work with some of the world’s finest. So if you want a gold beaker with your child’s name on it then we can do this. Our silversmiths and restorers are some of the best which is a great unique selling point for us. We can also offer part-exchange on any item and we also give valuations. I’m interested in everything but I’m not here to trick someone. I’ll say this is what it’s worth and this is what I’m prepared to give you.”*

And with that there’s another buzz at the door and more customers eager to step over the threshold into the wonderful world of Pushkin...

# LOUIS VUITTON

Louis Vuitton's journey to success is the ultimate rags-to-riches story.

The story behind the Louis Vuitton brand is just as fascinating, as the biography of its founder. Born in Anchay, eastern France, to a family of farmers, the young Louis decided, when he was only sixteen, to travel to Paris on foot. In 1836 he found a job in the Paris as an apprentice to a layetier, a craftsman employed by wealthy people to pack their objects and clothes for travelling. The work relationship prospered and Louis stayed in the business for seventeen years.

In 1854 he opened his own shop as a trunk maker in Paris, at rue Neuve-des-Capucines, and in a couple of years he had already revolutionised the traditional trunk design. His trunks were in fact light and for the first time they had a flat top to facilitate stacking. Brackets, wedges, handles and sockets became essential parts of the Louis Vuitton functional design.

His products immediately became increasingly popular and often copied. That is why the firm kept changing its logo until, towards the end of the century, the well-known 'LV' monogram and the four lobed flower were created.

In 1858 Louis Vuitton became official trunks supplier for the Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III.

When Louis died in 1892, it was his son George to take over the company. He participated in several international fairs, expanding the brand's fame abroad. In 1896, as a tribute to his father, George designed a canvas alternating the firm's monogram, the four pointed stars and the flowers that became so familiar until now.

At the beginning of the 20th Century the company opened a new flagship store on Champs-Élysées in Paris: it was the biggest travel-goods and bags store worldwide. By 1920 shops opened in Buenos Aires, New York, Washington, London, Alexandria and Bombay. One of the most iconic bags produced by Louis Vuitton, the Keepall Bag, was introduced in 1930, together with its smaller version, the Speedy Bag.

After the Second World War Louis Vuitton was already a must-have accessory amongst celebrities and royalties. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the Rothschild family, Coco Chanel, Audrey Hepburn and Anna Magnani were photographed with their Vuitton bags and travel luggage.

The firm stayed within the Vuitton family until 1987 but its success hasn't faded, still being a synonym of luxury and elegance.



Louis Vuitton's original factory in Asnières.



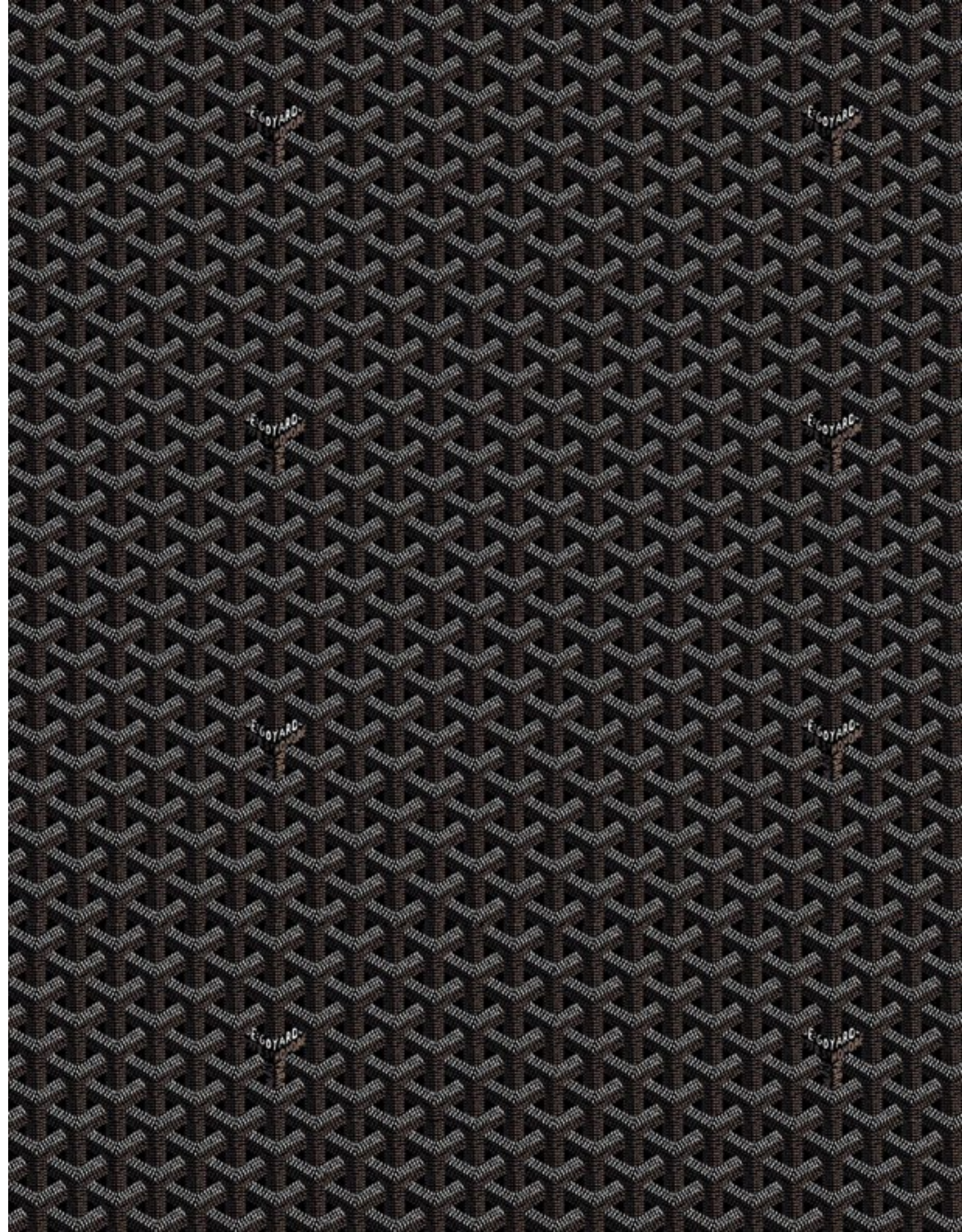
20thc Louis Vuitton Shoe Trunk, France c. 1910

# MAISON GOYARD

Without a doubt, Goyard is one of the most prestigious and elusive designer brands in the world.

Although the brand with its current name was founded in 1853, the firm was active since 1792 under the name of Maison Martin, from the name of the original establisher Pierre-François Martin. As one of the first advertisements specified "Maison Martin sells an assortment of boxes and cases; it provides quality packing services for fragile furniture and objects, as well as hats, gowns and flowers; it uses oiled canvas, plain canvas and straw for packing; manufacturer of horse carriage trunks and coat racks, it also supplies oilcloth and waterproof canvas, all at a fair price."

The firm soon became quite popular and was granted the title of official purveyor of the Duchess of Berry. In 1834 the company moved to its current address in rue Saint-Honoré, Paris.



Martin took one of his employees, Luis-Henri Morel, under his wing and, when he married his foster daughter, Morel received the control of the business as her dowry. In 1845 Morel and Martin employed François Goyard as an apprentice.

When Morel suddenly died, in 1852, Goyard took over the business and renamed the company to its current name, Goyard.

In 1885 François retired, leaving the company to his son, Edmond. Soon the brand's popularity grew internationally, new accessories started to be produced and the celebrated "Goyard chevron canvas" was created.

The Goyardine canvas was created by Edmond Goyard in 1892. His innovative approach led to the production of light, water-resistant and dense fabric made from a weave of linen and cotton threads. The manufacturing process of Goyardine is still highly classified. Originally it was hand-painted with the famous Goyard monogram, repeating chevron pattern formed from clusters of tiny dots.

Starting with the Exposition Universelle of Paris in 1900 where the firm earned a bronze medal, Goyard participated in several World Exhibitions winning a number of prizes. In 1908, at the Franco-British exhibition in London, the brand won a gold medal competing against Louis Vuitton.

20thC Goyard Large Wardrobe Trunk c.1920



The brand became iconic and a favourite with the main European royal families, aristocracy and the world elite of the time: Pablo Picasso, John D. Rockefeller, Coco Chanel, the Romanovs and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were just some of the firm's more famous clients. Goyard crafted exclusive trunks based on personal wishes of their clients. The inside of a trunk could contain a mini-bar, a tea table, a bicycle, gardening tools, equipment for polo or a picnic. One of such extravagant trunks was made upon the request of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to include a fully-equipped office set within a Goyard trunk.

After the Second World War, the production of Goyardine was stopped and only launched again when the company was bought from the Goyard family by Jean-Michel Signoles in 1998. The wide range of new colours was introduced in addition to the traditional black shade of the iconic canvas.

It is quite remarkable to see how the brand became once again an icon of style appreciated by high society and celebrities without investing at all in advertising, avoiding public interviews and maintaining a certain amount of discretion. The high degree of personalisation of every product is also due to the fact that the brand still maintains the same artisanal methods of production, preserving the same level of exclusivity that has always been one of the main characteristics of this brand.



Goyard flagship store at 233 St-Honoré in Paris c.1900





20thC French Cartier Silver-Gilt, Enamel & Agate Clock c.1920

# CARTIER

The King of Jewellers that has enchanted the world with its unique designs.

“Jeweller of Kings, King of Jewellers”- these famous words belong to King Edward VII, when he expressed his opinion of Cartier, the extraordinary French jewellery and watches manufacturer.

Established in 1847 by the 28-year old Louis-Francois Cartier, the firm produced all types of fine jewellery, including brooches, tiaras, earrings, rings, bracelets and objects of vertu in the Second French Empire style. Thanks to their products' superb craftsmanship and attention to detail, Cartier quickly gained an excellent reputation amongst the affluent clientele and royals, including Princess Mathilde Bonaparte and Empress Eugénie.

In the last third of the 19th century, Louis-Francois' only son Alfred succeeded the company. Alfred often used the magnificent combination of precious stones with strict simplicity of execution.

Under his management, Cartier produced exclusive jewellery, clocks, silver and gold tableware in a stylistic eclecticism, mixing Louis XVI style with Egyptian and Etruscan Revival styles. Most pre-eminent pieces were gloriously exhibited at International Expositions in Paris in 1878 and 1889.

Louis Cartier took over the business in Paris in 1899. He is credited for the most innovative and memorable decisions in the brand's history - the delicate use of platinum in fine jewellery, the first men's wristwatch "Santos" and the opening of Cartier's branches in Britain and the USA.

In 1902 Jacques Cartier began to represent the firm in London. Within two years he supplied precious items to King Edward VII and his Court and received the Royal Warrant. Pierre Cartier represented La Maison in New York since 1909. In 1917 he bought the building on 653 Fifth Street, which still remains the flagship store to this day.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Cartier pieces were characterized by the thoughtful refinement of Art Nouveau style and the traditional French ornaments, lace, Islamic and Asian arts. Tiaras, necklaces, brooches, jewels for corsages of that time were marked by the harmony of lines and sense of proportion. The Illustrious Garland style of this jewellery had become strongly associated with Belle Époque.

In the 1920-30s, together with the imaginative designer Charles Jacquau and the all-time creative director Jeanne Toussaint, Cartier left behind the original style and passionately adopted Art Deco elements in all of their designs. Bold vivid colours, geometric lines and unconventional materials mixing with the precious stones defined this new era of luxury. The new approach wasn't limited only by the jewellery, Cartier also produced numerous impeccable accessories from cigarette cases to travel boxes, that were truly functional pieces of art.

After the death of Pierre in 1964, Louis-Francois' last grandson, the Cartier family sold the business. Today it is under the management of Compagnie Financière Richemont SA group and still remains one of the most celebrated firms at the forefront of fine jewellery fashion. Cartier's impeccable design breakthrough, such as the Santos and Tank watches, Tutti Frutti and the Great Cats (the famous panther) designs continue influencing the modern collections and thrilling the minds of many collectors to this day.



20thC Cartier Art Deco 9k Gold, Sapphires & Diamonds Compact c. 1936

# MAISON ODIOT

Founded in 1690, Odiot won his notoriety during the reign of Louis XV with Jean Baptiste Gaspard Odiot, recognized as one of the best goldsmiths of his time.

La Maison Odiot, or House of Odiot was founded in 1690 by Jean-Baptiste Gaspard Odiot, one of the best silversmiths operating during the reign of Louis XV.

However it was under the directorship of his grandson, Jean-Baptiste Claude Odiot (b. 1763) that the firm reached the peak of its recognition, receiving exceptional commissions from Napoleon's court and other notable Royal families of the world.

In 1802 the firm participated at the International Exposition de l'Industrie in Paris winning the gold medal. Soon after, Odiot succeeded Henry Auguste as Napoleon's official silversmith and was commissioned to produce both the sceptre and the sword for his coronation in 1804, as well as three massive dinner services, one for Napoleon's mother, one for his sister and third for the Emperor's campaigns.

Jean Baptiste Claude is certainly the most iconic silversmith of the Empire style, influenced by the return of the classical Greek and Egyptian patterns. His pieces, often silver-gilt, were characterised by neoclassical forms and figural elements, often fixed with rivets and bolts, and not by the classic soldering methods.



Jean-Baptiste-Claude Odiot, 1822

Jean Baptiste Claude retired in 1823, and his son Charles Nicholas took over the business. By 1825 he was already the purveyor of silverware by appointment to His Majesty the King Louis-Philippe and to the Royal Family of Orleans. He started experimenting with electroplating, a technique he imported from England. Charles Nicolas excelled in the Rococo style, featuring shells and scroll motifs, flowers and richly ornate elements.

Charles Nicholas was succeeded by his son Gustave who worked for the firm from 1856 to 1906. He accepted the most majestic commission ever received by the company: 3000 pieces of solid gold flatware for the Viceroy of Egypt, Said Pacha.

The House of Odiot is still active nowadays, counting on an extraordinarily long story and heritage. Its pieces are displayed in the most important museums of the world such as the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum in New York.



Odiot Silver Figural Euer, Paris c. 1875

# MAISON JANSEN

During the first ten years of its existence, the interior design giant achieved worldwide fame amongst the royal families of Europe and world elites.



Jean-Henri Jansen (1854-1928), the founder of Maison Jansen, was a Dutch entrepreneur and decorator. He had excellent taste, was a true art and antiques expert, and more importantly, understood how to establish contacts with representatives of the highest social circles. He established the world-famous interior decoration office, serving wealthy and noble clients throughout Europe, Latin America, North America and the Middle East.

It was by catering to this type of clientele that Jansen was able to open the interior design studio number 9 on the Parisian rue de l'Annonciation in 1880.

Almost immediately, Jansen opened an antique salon in a neighbouring house, where one could buy furniture from the 18th century, restoring and re-upholstering it with modern fabrics.

20thC Palm Tree Floor Lamp By Maison Jansen, France c.1970

It was much more than just another antiques shop. Maison Jansen made luxurious interiors in the style of all Louis', from the Empire style to Directoire, a select clientele gathered there to share the latest news or discuss the merits of the restored items.

The five-story studio counted about 700 employees of all kinds. Cabinetmakers, mirror makers, glaziers, carvers, upholsterers, metalworkers and many more, and all of them were obliged to take an additional course in art history. In addition to a whole staff of its own artisans, from the very beginning of its existence Maison Jansen cooperated with the best furniture designers, such as Jean-Michel Frank and Terence Robsjohn-Gibblings.

Exotic woods were shipped from Latin America to Paris and then brought to the homes of the wealthy locals and aristocrats in the form of carved boiserie, exquisite dressers, armchairs and tables.

Historical styling was Maison Jansen's speciality, but the firm's designers were also keen on the spirit of the times. Jansen himself fancied adding exoticism to his interior work – he often experimented with the pieces he brought from the trips to Turkey and Japan.

After Jansen's death in 1928, the business was taken over by two of his most talented students, decorators Gaston Schwartz and Stéphane Boudin. Schwartz was a fan of the new chic and luxurious style, but at the same time theatrical and glamorous.

Stéphane Boudin on the contrary was a fan of the traditions of French classics. He knew them thoroughly and made the craftsmen who worked in the Maison Jansen atelier study them in detail.

While traveling around Europe, he made sketches of ornaments, details of furniture and decor, architectural elements, in order to use them later in his projects. Already in the 1930s, Boudin was proclaimed the greatest decorator in the world. Among the admirers of his talent was, for example, the millionaire and member of the British Parliament, Sir Henry Channon.

Boudin worked also for Coco Chanel, Elsie de Wolfe and the Rockefellers. Later he was introduced to the Kennedys and worked on the interiors of the White House between 1961 and 1963. That was to be his last project and reputedly the most famous and most beautiful.

After Boudin's retirement, Maison Jansen was taken over by Pierre Delbée (1900-1974), a talented decorator and restorer who joined the firm in the early 1930s. In 1989, the atelier at 23, rue de l'Annonciation closed its doors forever, leaving behind an unsurpassed legacy.



The Maison Jansen-designed private study of Edward VII at Buckingham Palace.



Russian Fabergé Lighter In The Form Of A Chimpanzee by Julius Rappoport c.1900

# HOUSE OF FABERGÉ

Best known for its jewel-encrusted Imperial Easter eggs, the famous House of Fabergé served as court jeweller to the Russian Tsars.



Fabergé's premises at 173 New Bond Street in 1911.

The history of Fabergé begins in France back in 1685 when, due to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes the family had to leave the country to escape the persecution against Huguenots and moved to Pernau, in the Baltic province of Livonia (now Estonia). Over the years the family name changed from Favri, to Fabrier and finally Fabergé.

Gustav Fabergé, born in 1814, moved to St. Petersburg where he was apprenticed to Andreas Spiegel, a goldsmith specialised in gold boxes. In the late 1820s he was working for Keibel, a goldsmith to the Imperial family. In 1842 Gustav opened his own shop in Bolshaya Morskaya, an elegant street of St. Petersburg.

His son Peter Carl was born in 1846. After his first studies, he left St. Petersburg to travel to Europe where he met the greatest goldsmiths and visited the most important museums and collections, learning techniques and styles. In 1870 he was back in St. Petersburg and took over the company after his father's retirement. In 1882 his younger brother Agathon joined the firm. The following year Peter Carl received a royal warrant from Alexander III.

In 1886 Michael Perkhin was appointed head workmaster. Under his direction the most popular Fabergé themes were introduced: eggs, animals, flowers, objects of vertu in hard stones and precious metals. It's the beginning of the richest and most creative period in the firm's oeuvre.

In 1885 the Czar Alexander III commissioned Fabergé an Easter Egg for his wife and gave birth to a legendary tradition that lasted until 1917. Of the 69 known Fabergé Imperial eggs made, 57 have survived to the present day.

The extension of Fabergé's reputation corresponded to the extension of the business and the opening of new branches in Moscow (1887), Odessa (1890) and Kiev (1905).

In 1900 Peter Carl Fabergé participated in the Exposition Universelle in Paris where he was acclaimed 'Master' and appointed Knight of the Legion of Honour.

Agathon died in 1895 and Perkhin in 1903, succeeded by Henrik Wigstrom as head workmaster.

In 1906 the firm opened a retail shop in London Mayfair, at 48 Dover Street.

The outbreak of Russian Revolution in 1917 forced Fabergé to escape from Russia with his family. His company was taken over by the revolutionary committee and nationalised. Peter Carl died in Switzerland in 1920.

Two of his four sons, Alexander and Eugéne, settled in Paris and in 1924 they founded Fabergé & Cie. The company retailed artworks in the Fabergé style with mark 'Fabergé, Paris' to distinguish them from the ones created in Russia before the Revolution.

Fabergé has always been a synonym of opulence and fine quality. The combination of precious materials and supreme craftsmanship applies both to non-utilitarian objects such as eggs, miniature animals and flowers but also practical utilitarian items such as cigarette cases, pill boxes and dinner services.

Nowadays some of the famous Easter Eggs and decorative objects made between 1885 and 1917 are displayed in the most important international museums, treasured by collectors and sought after at auctions.



Fabergé workshops c.1905



Imperial Russian Silver-Gilt & Enamel Photo Frame, Fabergé c.1910

# TIFFANY & CO

Tiffany has been a beloved fixture in American culture and society for nearly two centuries, producing some of the finest jewellery & silverware.



One of the most iconic jewellery brands, Tiffany & Co's history begins from a small store that was opened on Broadway, New York in 1837. Two school friends Charles Lewis Tiffany and John B. Young started to sell stationery, fancy souvenirs, china and haberdashery. In 1841 the company appointed a new partner, J.L. Ellis, who suggested selling silverware, jewellery and clocks. The firm changed its name to Tiffany, Young and Ellis.

Charles Tiffany decided to move away from the classic Victorian style that was popular at that time. The owners of the company set up designers to seek inspiration in nature and interpret it in clean and harmonious forms. This innovative approach became known as the "new American style".

20thC Art Deco Silver & Enamel Cup With Cover,  
Tiffany & Co c.1920

In 1853, Charles Tiffany bought the shares of his partners and renamed the company Tiffany & Co. Beyond jewellery, Tiffany met the growing demand for luxury items from affluent Americans. Solid silver snuff boxes, polished stationery, purses, bouquet holders, perfume bottles and French cosmetics could be found at Tiffany's.

In 1851, the company hired New York's prolific silversmith John C. Moore to design silverware. Moore's silver designs won numerous awards at world exhibitions in the late 19th century. In 1878 Tiffany was awarded the Grand Prix for its Japanese-influenced silverware at the Paris World Exposition. The company became the first American jeweller to win this prestigious award.

Following the California Gold Rush in the 1850s, Tiffany started to use gold and silver mined within the country. Alongside with the introduction of American gemstones to its jewellery, it appealed to its patriotic customers. Tiffany's exquisite designs with native tourmalines, lapis lazuli, amethysts, aquamarines, rose-quartz and zircons brought these gemstones to worldwide recognition.

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln purchased a pearl jewellery set for his wife. The company gradually became popular amongst the state officials, affluent families, popular actors, businessmen and celebrities. At the turn of the 20th century, the company opened several branches in London, Paris, Geneva and their clientele included almost all the Royal families of Europe, as well as well as of the Russian and Ottoman Empires. Tiffany & Co had become the most important American silversmith and supplier of fine jewellery, silverware and objects of vertu.



Charles Lewis Tiffany (left) in his store c.1887



Tiffany & Co. store in New York City c.1899

After Charles Lewis died in 1902, his son Louis Comfort Tiffany succeeded the firm and became Tiffany's first art director. By that time he had already been a celebrated designer after major redecoration of the White House in 1882. His first designs of jewellery were successfully displayed at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis.

Louis Tiffany organised the Tiffany Art Jewellery Department, which quickly became famous for its extraordinary jewellery designs, inspired by the Art Nouveau style and Arts and Crafts Movement. Tiffany & Co presented exquisite colourful brooches, necklaces, earrings and tiaras often generously enamelled and inlaid with precious stones, their forms based on American fauna and flora.

As the 20th century progressed, Tiffany was always at the forefront of fashion. From luxury in 20s to geometric Art Deco in 30s through to the aerodynamic age in 40s and 50s. Visionary designers, such as Jean Schlumberger, Elsa Peretti, Paloma Picasso cooperated with the company during the last century. Their iconic jewels adorned Elizabeth Taylor, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Diane Vreeland, Audrey Hepburn and many other VIPs.

The title "pioneer" could be applied to Tiffany in many aspects. The first 925 sterling silverware of American origins, the first mail-order Blue Book catalogue, the first American school of design, the first engagement ring as we know it today - these are only a few of innovations that cemented Tiffany & Co's name in the history books.



Tiffany & Co Silver Chrysanthemum Tea Set c. 1880





Asprey Silver-Gilt, Lapis Lazuli & Enamel Qatar Oryx Trophy Cup

# ASPREY

For over two centuries, Asprey has been regarded as a top British luxury lifestyle brand and considered a must see London destination.



The Asprey flagship store in New Bond Street, London c. 1890

The world-famous English luxury manufacturer and retailer Asprey started as a small silk printing business by William Asprey in Mitcham, Surrey. The company expanded its offering by purchasing other smaller firms and by 1847 Asprey moved to its iconic premises on New Bond Street in London where it established its flagship store.

At the International Exhibition in 1862, Asprey's high-quality dressing cases won a gold medal, which brought the company worldwide reputation for exquisite craftsmanship.

The Royal Warrant, which was awarded by her Majesty Queen Victoria the same year just perpetuated the company's reputation. Since then, Asprey has received a Royal Warrant from every British monarch.

Besides dressing cases, the company produced and retailed a wide range of exclusive goods, including silver, gold, jewellery, stationery, cutlery, tableware and objects of vertu.

In the 20th century, commissions poured from all over the world and by the 1920s Asprey created them not only for British Royalty but for foreign Royals and heads of states as well. The most sensational of all orders was the exquisite pearl necklace for Queen Mary as well as the teak and silver traveling trunks for the five beloved wives of the Maharaja of Patiala.

During the 20s and 30s Asprey adopted the Art Deco style of that era. Many of its luxury goods from that time became iconic, such as the Asprey cigarette cases, cocktail sets, travel clocks, safety razors.



Asprey vintage advertisement c. 1925



Asprey vintage advertisement c. 1925

In 1953 Asprey honoured Queen Elizabeth's coronation by the 'Coronation Year Gold Collection'. A dessert, coffee and liquor service was crafted in 18-carat gold, weighing almost 27 pounds. Being incredibly spectacular it was displayed at the New Bond Street shop and later toured the USA.

In 1995 the 200 years of Asprey family ownership came to an end as the company was purchased by Prince Jeffrey Bolkiah of Brunei. Soon after he merged Asprey with British jewellery legend Garrard, although this partnership lasted only four years.

Today, Asprey's Royal Warrant comes from HRH Prince of Wales for their jewellery and silver production.

It still operates from the New Bond Street premises and remains one of London's leading luxury merchants.



Asprey Silver "Tell Me How" Cocktail Shaker c. 2004



