

# Ultimate Access

## The Jewelry Collection

Here it is—  
what every  
woman wants.  
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# ASSEMBLING WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED THE ULTIMATE JEWELRY COLLECTION

is not so unlike collecting paintings, ceramics or wine. You seek out the best examples of a particular category, whether it's Deco-era Cartier or contemporary studio jewelry. But as opposed to other fine collectibles, you can wear your prized pieces, have them function as objects that enhance you. When chosen confidently, with an eye for timeless design, jewelry can become the most powerful accessory in your wardrobe, an indelible stamp of your personal taste.

"The key to creating the ultimate jewelry collection is to find designs that are unique but that can stand up to changing fashions," says Russell Zelenetz, co-owner of Stephen Russell in New York City. "You don't want jewelry to be so high-fashion that it's out of style next year. At the same time, you don't want it to be staid."

The Duchess of Windsor was famous for her jewels, most of which were commissioned by the Duke, a noted jewelry connoisseur. The Windsors could afford the most opulent jewelry in the world yet gravitated to decidedly tasteful, chic pieces by designers such as Suzanne Belperron, who often worked with semiprecious stones like agate or chalcedony. Seventy years later, Belperron's creations are among the most sought-after anywhere.

"If your jewelry is striking and well-coordinated, you don't have to wear the most beautiful clothing in the world," says Candy Udell, who co-owns the five-store London Jewelers chain, which has locations in Southampton and East Hampton, New York. "When you walk into a room, people notice the jewelry first."

Wearing unique estate jewelry is one way to ensure having that effect in a room. "A great piece of jewelry never goes out of style," says Ellen Israel, of Kentshire Galleries in New York. "Jewelry made in France and America in the 1930s and '40s had a level of design and craftsmanship that can't be touched now. The trick is to find pieces that express your individual taste and personality."

Whether you buy old or contemporary—and there's no



reason you can't have both—focus on what attracts you, advises the New York dealer and collector Lee Siegelson. "Take the time to find the best examples of it," he says. "Find experts to guide you, but just as important, learn to trust your own instincts."

**Above:** 1. Renee Lewis amethyst drop earrings (\$9,000). 2. Me&Ro sterling-silver hoop earrings (\$1,275). 3. Amrita Singh gold, diamond and tourmaline earrings (\$11,200). 4. Ted Muehling gold, diamond, opal and seed-pearl earrings (\$8,000). **Previous page:** 1. Chanel Fine Jewelry diamond and sapphire brooch (\$305,000). 2. David Yurman sterling-silver, diamond and blue-chalcedony bracelet (\$2,100). 3. Kwiat Vintage Collection diamond earrings (\$20,000). 4. Fred Leighton 19th-century diamond necklace (\$325,000). 5. Verdura aquamarine-bead necklace (\$26,500). 6. Van Cleef & Arpels chalcedony and mother-of-pearl necklace (\$17,000). 7. Stephen Russell aquamarine and diamond ring (\$28,000).



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1. Temple St. Claire rock-crystal-amulet chain necklace (\$5,800).
  2. Irene Neuwirth carnelian necklace (\$19,960).
  3. Kentshire gold link bracelet (\$14,000).
  4. Cartier gold Tank Française watch (\$16,900).
  5. Fred Leighton old-mine-cut-diamond earrings (\$140,000).
  6. Jean Schlumberger for Tiffany & Co. enamel bangles (\$22,000 each).
  7. Chopard South Sea-baroque-pearl and diamond necklace (price on request).
  8. Mikimoto akoya-pearl necklace (\$11,900).
  9. Faraone Mennella by R.F.M.A.S. gold and diamond link earrings (\$6,000).
  10. Ippolita turquoise and blue-topaz stackable bracelets (\$3,250-\$6,500).
  11. Siegelson diamond bracelet (\$1,100,000).
  12. Chopard diamond hoop earrings (\$91,000).
  13. Siegelson diamond, sapphire and blue-chalcedony necklace (\$990,000).
  14. De Beers diamond earrings (\$130,000).
  15. Martin Katz emerald-cut-diamond ring (\$485,000).
  16. De Beers diamond wedding band (\$3,900).
  17. Tony Duquette gold and multistone cocktail ring (price on request).
  18. Mish New York aquamarine and mint-tourmaline drop earrings (\$58,000).
  19. Verdura cocholong and multistone Maltese cuff (\$25,500).
  20. Buccellati gold and diamond cuff (\$49,600).
  21. Harry Winston sapphire and diamond ring (\$950,000).
  22. Tanagro diamonds-by-the-yard necklace (\$316,000).
  23. Graff yellow- and white-diamond earrings (price on request).
  24. James de Givenchy for Taffin multistone cocktail ring (\$70,000).
- Far left: Smythson Aqua Deluxe jewelry box (\$3,335).



## WHAT EVERY WOMAN NEEDS

A woman's jewelry box, or her at-home safe, should contain lots of personal favorites, at many values. But any great, thorough collection will likely include the following pieces. When a woman is in possession of these, she'll never want for the right items to wear.

### BRACELETS

- ◆ Verdura white enamel cuff, such as the one Coco Chanel famously wore, or diamond-set gold cuff by Buccellati.
- ◆ Art Deco-style diamond bracelet by either Cartier or Mauboussin.
- ◆ Enamel and gold bangle designed by Jean Schlumberger for Tiffany & Co. in the 1950s.
- ◆ Twenty-four-karat-gold link bracelet designed by Elizabeth Locke, or a similar vintage piece.

### BROOCHES

- ◆ Estate brooch from Kentshire or another vintage jeweler.
- ◆ Van Cleef & Arpels brooch-pendant with invisibly set gemstones.

### EARRINGS

- ◆ Exotic South Sea-pearl studs.
- ◆ Diamond studs.
- ◆ Diamond clusters.
- ◆ Hoop earrings (gold, silver and diamond).

### NECKLACES

- ◆ Classic string of cultured pearls from Mikimoto. Chokers measure fourteen to sixteen inches; princess-length necklaces measure seven-teen to nineteen inches.
- ◆ Everyday necklace, such as a simple gold chain or one with a crystal and gold pendant, by a designer like Temple St. Clair.

### RINGS

- ◆ Diamond engagement ring and wedding band (provided the wearer is married).
- ◆ Fancy cocktail ring (worn on the right hand).
- ◆ Fred Leighton vintage-style rose-cut-diamond ring.

### WATCHES

- ◆ For every day, a Cartier Tank watch, inspired by the shape of WWI tanks and popular since it debuted, in the 1920s.
- ◆ For evening, a Harry Winston diamond watch.

**“I THINK YOU’RE THE ONLY GIRL IN THE WORLD THAT CAN STAND ON A STAGE WITH A SPOTLIGHT IN HER EYE AND STILL SEE A DIAMOND INSIDE A MAN’S POCKET.”**

—Jane Russell to Marilyn Monroe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953)



## Ultimate Collection Checklist

Collect around a theme. “It doesn’t matter if the theme you choose is a period, a style or a designer,” says the noted jewelry historian and appraiser Christie Romero, who frequently appears on television’s *Antiques Roadshow*. “A good collection is worth more than the sum of its parts.”

Learn to evaluate authenticity and condition. Romero insists anyone can learn to use a magnifying loupe and tell the difference between good craftsmanship and shoddy work. Find a reputable dealer who specializes in the kind of jewelry that interests you, and develop a relationship.

Buy signed pieces whenever possible. Their scarcity increases value, and they are harder to knock off. Arm yourself with knowledge. “Attend museum exhibits and auction previews,” advises Romero. “Ask lots of questions, and handle as much jewelry as possible.”

Above: **1.** Stephen Webster turquoise and quartz ring (\$6,000). **2.** Laura Munder mandarin-garnet and diamond ring (\$45,000). **3.** Damiani diamond Sophia Loren ring (\$16,980). **4.** Valente multicolored-sapphire ring (\$9,000). **5.** Verdura black-opal and sapphire ring (\$48,500). **6.** David Yurman yellow-sapphire and coral ring (\$9,500). **7.** Sevan micromosaic ring (\$39,776).

Bulgari cabochon-cut-tourmaline necklace (approximately \$250,000).



“IT WAS A TOSS-UP WHETHER I’D GO IN FOR DIAMONDS OR SING IN THE CHOIR. THE CHOIR LOST.”

—Mae West in *She Done Him Wrong* (1933)

## Bidding for Jewels

Most auction houses host previews at which prospective buyers can try on the featured jewels. And many of the houses hold presale viewings in cities other than those in which the actual sales take place (check with each auction house).

**September 24:**

Important Estate Jewelry at Doyle New York ([doylenewyork.com](http://doylenewyork.com))

**October 14:**

Fine Jewelry at Bonhams, New York ([www.bonhams.com](http://www.bonhams.com))

**October 15:**

Jewels: the New York Sale at Christie’s New York

([christies.com](http://christies.com))

**December 8–9:**

Magnificent Jewels at Sotheby’s, New York ([sothebys.com](http://sothebys.com))

**December 9:**

Fine Jewelry at Skinner, Boston ([skinnerinc.com](http://skinnerinc.com))

**December 11:**

New York Jewels at Christie’s New York

## INSURED ADVICE

*When insuring a jewelry collection, verify that your pieces are what they’re represented to be. Too often, people assume that what the seller claims is true. Have each piece examined by a gemologist and an appraiser (reputable jewelers are often both).*

*Owners of rare pieces need cash policies, not replacement policies. These guarantee that if a lost piece is worth \$100,000, you will receive a check for that amount. Reputable firms include Jewelers Mutual ([jewelersmutual.com](http://jewelersmutual.com)), which offers policies that are independent of homeowner’s insurance, and Chubb ([chubb.com](http://chubb.com)).*

*When seeking values, don’t rely solely on auction-house specialists. They operate on the assumption that you will be selling a piece through them, so their estimates are based on their own comparable sales and reserve prices. If you go to an auction house to have jewelry valuated, bring an outside appraiser. Another source for evaluating estate jewelry is Circa ([circajewels.com](http://circajewels.com)), which owns and operates a worldwide chain of offices; a person can bring in jewels for an immediate assessment of worth and sell them on the spot.*

### KEEPING IT SAFE

Although many women like to have their jewels close by, arranged in a jewelry box, valuable pieces

are best stored in home safes. But even safes have their unsafe characteristics.

**Safes and safe-deposit boxes can be dry environments that may be especially damaging to pearls and opals. Either keep a damp cloth inside the box and check it frequently or buy a humidior-style safe.**

*Beware of in-ground safes in cold climates. Dramatically fluctuating temperatures can cause thermoshock to gems such as opals and emeralds.*

**Make sure your safe is drill-resistant, as well as heat- and fire-resistant. Safes rarely feature interior lights because any connection to an electrical outlet can create a fire hazard. Instead, install a battery-operated LED.**

*Have your safe bolted to the floor from the inside. If it can be unscrewed from the outside, thieves*

*can remove even a heavy safe.*

**Have your safe wired to your home security system. Some safes come with alarms.**

*GemSafe makes safes with built-in jewelry boxes (\$16,500–\$29,500; [gemsafes.com](http://gemsafes.com)); the Manhattan weighs 500 pounds, the Heritage 700 pounds, and the Estate 900 pounds. Traum Safe ([traumsafe.com](http://traumsafe.com)) makes similar models. CustomVault ([customvault.com](http://customvault.com)), Empire Safe ([empiresafe.com](http://empiresafe.com)) and Rolland Safe Company ([rslc.net](http://rslc.net)) sell basic home safes and can arrange for installation and service.*

For shopping information, see page xx