

CORAM JAMES

ART & ANTIQUE VALUERS

The Cartier Top 5

One of the truly great fashion and jewellery design houses, Cartier has remained at the forefront of the industry for over 170-years.

Founded by Louis-François Cartier in 1847, the Paris-based maison has been responsible for a litany of iconic pieces during their history, exemplified by a refined elegance and innovation, which earned them the title of the 'jeweller of kings and the king of jewellers' by Edward VII.

Like all the most celebrated luxury brands, many of their celebrated designs today can trace their roots back generations. Their jewellery has been shaped by everything from the styling of the Art Deco era through to the Egyptian revival collection influenced by the treasures discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb in the 1920s.

In addition, Cartier's list of celebrity fans reads like the great and the good of the world's most fashionable people. Hollywood royalty both contemporary and from the past, the likes of Angelina Jolie or Grace Kelly, through to bona fide royalty such as the Duchess of Cambridge, have all worn the marque. Perhaps best of all, Cartier is one of those rarities in the luxury industry in that, chosen wisely, many of their creations not only hold their value but can actually appreciate over time. The power of the name coupled with the highest of high quality materials and superb craftsmanship mean they are one of the few brands in the industry that qualify as a good investment.

If you are in the market to treat yourself to some of the finest jewellery available, it is a case of sooner rather than later. The global pandemic has effectively shutdown the entire industry, both the manufacturing and retail sectors. Some experts are predicting that there could be a broad range of price rises on the horizon once production starts up again in order to offset lost revenue during this period, and the soaring value of gold could also become a factor.

But what, out of the vast collection on offer, are the most popular pieces of contemporary Cartier jewellery? Below we have listed the top five, currently the label's most popular.

The Cartier Love Bracelet

£3,650 - £50,500



Probably the most famous piece out of all Cartier's designs, the Love Bracelet dates back to 1969. That original was created by Aldo Cipullo, the now-legendary jeweller formerly of Tiffany & Co. and David Webb, and still the only man allowed to include his signature on any of Cartier's offerings.

The simple but achingly stylish bracelet was Cipullo's first undertaking for the company, and it was made to represent love's everlasting quality. As he put it himself, it was to be a symbol that looked 'semi-permanent, or at least required a trick to remove'.

Taking his inspiration from the medieval chastity belt, the Love Bracelet doesn't just slip onto the wrist, but has to be fixed in place. The band is adorned with decorative screw heads, two of which can be physically removed with the special miniature screwdriver to split the bracelet in half. After fixing it in place on the wrist, it is the partner's duty to keep the screwdriver in order for them to be the only person who can remove it.

It is rumoured Cartier will only allow couples to purchase the Love Bracelet, and they have been given as gifts to some the most glamorous duos of them all, including Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, and Steve McQueen and Ali McGraw.

To this day, it remains one of the most desirable luxury items in the world, and is available in white, yellow or rose gold as well as adorned with gemstones of every description.

The Cartier Tank Watch

£2,240 - £245,000



Cartier were one of the 20th century's most important horology pioneers, inventing the Santos in 1904 for celebrated aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont, a generation before men typically wore wristwatches.

But undoubtedly their finest creation remains the Tank, stemming from 1919, with its distinctive rectangular shape inspired by the tracks of the Renault FT-17, a French tank used in the First World War. Since those early days, the watch has expanded into six different collections, adding up to a vast number of models to choose from. Perfect for either men or women, there are a wide selection of different sizes as well as a variety of metals used in their construction. But each was founded on the architecture of the original, a timeless design both perfectly elegant and surprisingly robust.

Thought of by many as the ultimate dress watch, the Cartier Tank is a landmark model in the business.

The Cartier Trinity de Cartier Ring

£830 - £37,600



A design almost as iconic as the Love Bracelet, the Trinity de Cartier ring was first conceived in 1924 by Louis Cartier, at the request of French filmmaker, Jean Cocteau.

Like the rest of the Trinity Collection, which also includes earrings, necklaces and bracelets, it features intertwining jewellery, used to represent the three stages of a romantic relationship.

The classic design has a trio of bands woven together, one in white gold to symbolise friendship, another in yellow gold for fidelity and a third in rose gold to stand for true love.

Now in production for nearly a century, the Trinity de Cartier ring can also be had as a traditional wedding band, a solitaire, studded with diamonds or with a mix of white gold and ceramic pieces, but all with the same underlying motif; a depiction of the three phases of a meaningful bond.

Like the Love Bracelet, the Trinity ring is an essential emblem of Cartier, with a timeless aesthetic, and is as sought after now as it has always been.

The Cartier Panthere de Cartier Ring

£2,780 - £199,000



The majestic panther has been a famous Cartier image for more than 100-years. It was first used in 1914, when Louis Cartier commissioned French artist George Barbier to paint a bejewelled lady posing with the big cat, in a work entitled 'Dame à la Panthère'. It went on to form the basis of one of Cartier's most famous advertising campaigns, and the brand and the animal have been linked ever since.

The first panther product to be released was a wristwatch, with a mottled design made to appear like the feline's fur.

Over the years, panther imagery has featured on a wide range of designs, with the creature shown in a variety of styles, but all with the one consistent element—green emerald eyes.

There are currently 40 rings in the Panthere de Cartier Collection, a series of bold and sometimes outlandish pieces forged from all flavours of gold, with many adorned with precious and semiprecious stones. Each one makes a striking statement, and displays the wonderfully intricate craftsmanship for which the maison has long been renowned.

The Cartier Juste Un Clou Bracelet

£2,730 - £78,000



Proof that Cartier can make just about anything look impossibly chic, the Juste Un Clou bracelet is another piece from the mind of Aldo Cipullo. It takes its name from the French for 'just a nail' and is, in fact, exactly that. A single golden nail that wraps elegantly around the wrist.

First conceived in 1971, it arrived at the height of New York's industrial jewellery design movement and quickly gained a cult following. Fans loved its minimalist, unisex style, and it became another signature addition to the portfolio.

In 2012, to celebrate their 165th anniversary, Cartier released an entire Juste Un Clou collection, comprising rings, necklaces, earrings and bracelets, all with the bent nail design. Available in either yellow, rose or white gold, some had the added luxury of diamond accents.

Like the Love Bracelet and Trinity Ring, the Juste Un Clou is symbolic of Cartier—as simple a piece of jewellery as you can get, and representing the brand at its most playful.

That is our list of Cartier's bestsellers. The maison is still recognised as one of the most vital designers of all time, with a catalogue of stunning items. With the on-going pandemic forcing all retail outlets to close their doors for the time being, you will need to check out their excellent website for any purchases. But what better way to get through a lockdown than treating yourself!

For more information please contact:

Robert James, MRICS, FRSA

Tel: 020 7305 7360 / 07951 756680 Email: info@coramjames.com Web: www.coramjames.com

