

Mad for Madison

Now known as the Jewel Coast, it's the place to be dazzled.

By Ruth J. Katz

“Madison Avenue has become the thoroughfare for every national and international designer,” observes Faith Hope Consolo, the Chairman of the Retail Leasing and Sales Division of Prudential Douglas Elliman Real Estate and a titan in her field. “Purveyors of true luxe—any brand that wants to distinguish itself—gravitate to Madison Avenue. Tiffany and Harry Winston, mainstays of Fifth Avenue, are looking to ‘colonize’ on Madison Avenue, much as Bulgari already has.” And jeweler Judith Ripka has two shops on Madison.

Consolo notes that the most burnished of that golden stretch—now dubbed the “Jewel Coast”—is between 61st and 70th Streets, but any sharp-eyed shopper knows that between midtown in the 50s and the 86th Street transverse, or even 90th Street, there are well in excess of fifty jewelers, all worthy of not merely a look-see, but perhaps of your first-born. And within the past year, several big names—like Chopard, Graff, and Stephen Russell—have expanded to more commodious quarters and new-to-Madison players, like Kentshire Galleries and real estate progeny and nascent jewelry designer Ivanka Trump have opened up shop there. Moreover, major international dazzle-makers, like fêted London jeweler David Morris, the illustrious French house of Mauboussin, and the world-renowned Kwiat, known for its diamonds—will be hanging shingles on Madison soon.

While rents are slightly lower on Madison than on Fifth, Consolo points out, the intimate, neighborhood feeling is precisely the jewel-box-like ambience this kind of retailer craves. Matthew Bauer, President of the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District concurs. “The physical scale of the street is conducive to the scale of jewelry, and ideal for such intimate purchases. It’s a neighborhood street, dotted with international, luxury brands that all want to be right near their core customers. The avenue is ideal for browsing and shopping.”

And that was a good enough reason for us to window shop...and fill our jewel case vicariously. Take a sneak peek at what this unique Avenue’s jewelers have to offer.



◀ **CHOPARD**

When Chopard opened its new flagship store last November, the company created a treasure trove of jewels—the 709 Madison Haute Joaillerie Collection—fit for a maharani. This stunning necklace (\$245,530), resplendent with 32 quartz lily flowers, 47 fancy-shape pink sapphires, 4 carats of marquis-cut pink spinels, and 1,275 brilliants, is but one of those head-turning pieces.

709 Madison Ave., btw. 62nd and 63rd Sts.; 212-223-230; www.chopard.com



◀ **CELLINI**

The family-owned Cellini is known for its exclusive jewelry designs, many of which are custom-crafted in Italy. Among the store’s entrancing jewels are these ravishing fancy pink- and white-diamond earrings, set in platinum and 18-kt. rose gold (price upon request).

509 Madison Ave., at 53rd St.; 212-888-0505; www.cellinijewelers.com

◀ **RAYMOND C. YARD**

Yard is known for its own vintage jewelry as well as its contemporary pieces. You can see both at the shop or slaver over them in a brand-new book, called simply *Yard* (by Natasha Kuzmanovic, Vendome Press). This clip (\$57,000) features a central yellow-orange diamond surrounded by smaller, natural-colored diamonds and colorless round baguette diamonds set in platinum.

At The Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave., at 76th St.; 212-247-6222; www.raymondcyard.com



▲ **ASPREY**

The “Maxi Chaos” ring features a riot of color—blue topaz, pink and green tourmaline, peridot, and amethyst (\$5,000). It is but one of the take-your-breath-away jewels (soaring easily to the hundreds of thousands and then some) from the 225-year-old company that enjoys a Royal Warrant.

853 Madison Ave., at 71st St.; 212-688-1811; www.asprey.com



BULGARI ▶

Cascades of fancy cabochon sapphires encircle the wrist, in 18-kt. yellow gold, in Bulgari’s “Tappetino” bracelet (approximately \$60,000). This is but one example of the extraordinary workmanship and design displayed in the company’s legendary jewels. With its flagship a stone’s throw away, this more intimate salon on Madison, is a welcome neighborhood jewel itself.

783 Madison Ave., btw. 66th and 67th Sts.; 212-717-2300; 1-800-BULGARI; www.bulgari.com

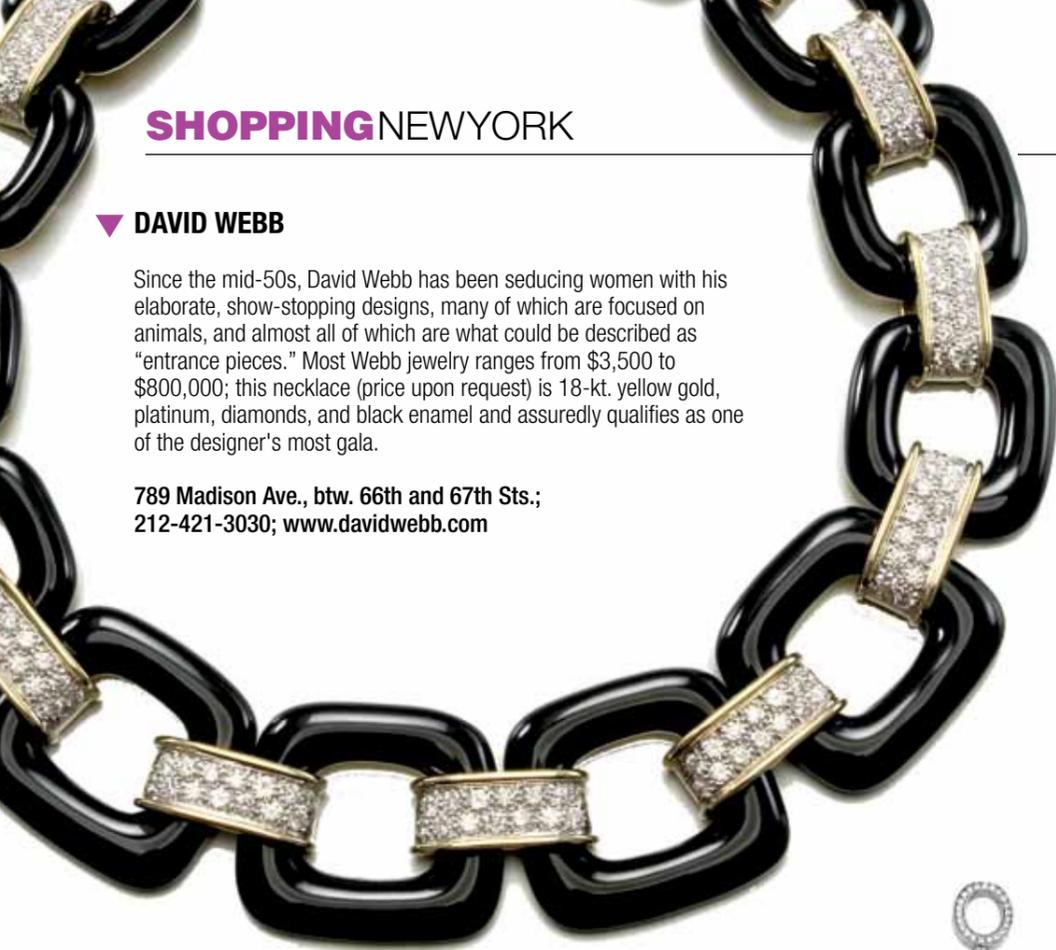


SHOPPING NEW YORK

▼ DAVID WEBB

Since the mid-50s, David Webb has been seducing women with his elaborate, show-stopping designs, many of which are focused on animals, and almost all of which are what could be described as “entrance pieces.” Most Webb jewelry ranges from \$3,500 to \$800,000; this necklace (price upon request) is 18-kt. yellow gold, platinum, diamonds, and black enamel and assuredly qualifies as one of the designer’s most gala.

789 Madison Ave., btw. 66th and 67th Sts.;
212-421-3030; www.davidwebb.com



▶ IVANKA TRUMP

Newcomer Trump has entered the jewelry business with a splashy, Hollywood-glam first collection. These alluring, frosted, rock-crystal drop earrings (\$12,000) are accented with black enamel and diamonds.

683A Madison Ave., btw. 61st and 62nd Sts.;
212-756-9912; www.ivankatrumpcollection.com



▶ JUDITH RIPKA

Design wizard Ripka is so comfy on Madison Avenue, she’s got two boutiques, selling her exquisite collections. Ask to see the “Truffle” necklaces, the “Monaco” rings, the “Romance” bangles, and of course these “Lola” rings, which amaze and delight (starting at \$3,200).

673 Madison Ave., at 61st St.; 212-355-8300;
777 Madison Ave., at 66th St.; 212-517-8200; www.judithripka.com



▶ STEPHEN RUSSELL

Russell is well known for the vintage pieces he carries—extraordinary, antique, one-of-a-kind jewels that any woman would treasure—as well as his own contemporary line of vintage-inspired and antique-looking treasures. Here, a Parisian Art Deco carved gem-set-and-diamond *sautoir*, ca. 1929. (price upon request).

970 Madison Ave., at 76th St.;
212-570-6900;
www.stephenrussell.com



MADISON AVENUE JEWELERS



▶ KWIAT

Just over 100 years old, this multi-generational company is known for diamonds, diamonds, and more diamonds. The “Waterfall” necklace (price upon request), is comprised of nearly 50 carats and is set in platinum. See this glamorous piece as well as Kwiat’s entire collection at the company’s boutique which will open in late spring.

725 Madison Ave., at 64th St.;
800-927-4367; www.kwiat.com

▶ KENTSHIRE GALLERIES

Long known for vending fine antique furniture, Kentshire is also a source for exceptional, antique jewelry. Recently the company opened a boutique on Madison Avenue specifically for that purpose. This highly important, Art Deco, emerald-and-diamond, shield-shaped brooch (\$585,000) is set with pear-shaped and square-cut emeralds, with a central, carved, pear-shaped cabochon emerald, all set in platinum. Signed by Marcus & Co, made by Oscar Heyman.

700 Madison Ave., btw. 62nd and 63rd Sts.;
212-421-1100; www.kentshire.com



LALAOUNIS ▶

Ilias Lalaounis is known for jewelry that is evocative of and reminiscent of the past. It is handmade in Athens of 18- or 22-kt., deeply intense-yellow gold. The "Troy Inspired" necklace (\$41,600) and bracelet (\$19,300) are both classic and chic.

739 Madison Ave.,
btw. 64th and 65th Sts.;
212-439-9400;
www.lalaounis.com



YAEL SONIA ▼

Designer Sonia creates modern, sleek pieces of jewelry (from about \$900 to \$65,000) often accented with bold, multi-hued stones.

These playful earrings (\$5,100), from the "Perpetual Motion" Collection are fabricated in 18-kt. yellow gold, set with pink tourmalines and diamonds.

922 Madison Ave., btw. 73rd and 74th Sts.;
212-472-6488; www.yaelsonia.com



▲ **KIESELSTEIN-CORD**

Known originally for his fantasy and phantasmal belt buckles, Kieselstein-Cord's line now includes magnificent handbags, striking jewelry, and of course, "staples" like these "Starfish" cufflinks (\$3,250). Check out the new "Vienna" and "Windows" collections at his signature shop (or at Bergdorf Goodman, also).

1058 Madison Ave., at 80th St.; 212-744-1041;
www.kieselstein-cord.com

▼ **REINSTEIN/ROSS**

Etruscan and Egyptian patterns are the inspiration behind the elaborate and romantic designs from Susan Reinstein and Brian Ross, who have been working together for over 23 years. Their sapphire and diamond rings (only a few are shown here) start at about \$1,500 but easily reach into the thousands and represent just a small portion of their overwhelmingly stunning collections.

29 East 73rd St., btw. Fifth
and Madison Aves.;
212-772-1901;
www.reinsteinross.com



tickled
Pink
A private visit and an exclusive
viewing of 65 rare stones

A rose is a rose is a rose, all right, but sometimes that rose is an extraordinary blush-colored diamond. A serendipitous freak of Mother Nature, the genesis of which, she, herself, cannot explain. Human labor is difficult enough, after nine months' gestation, but consider Gaea's efforts to produce pink diamonds, these beauties, which took 1.6 billion years to create: At Rio Tinto's Argyle Mines in Australia, 70 million tons of waste is removed annually and from that only 11 tons is processed. From that, 6 tons of rough diamonds is produced and from that, less than 50,000 carats of rough pink diamonds is extracted, and ultimately, from that entire cache, perhaps a scant 60 carats' worth of polished pink diamonds is deemed good enough for this tender.

These unique gems are easily the most luscious-looking jewels a collector might covet, a woman might swoon for, and a master jeweler might die for. And to say that they are "pink" is like saying Liberace had nice suits. Think exploding cherry, blood-red scarlet, subtle rose, gentle ruby, wine-deep burgundy, soft violet-pink, whispering garnet, deep claret—must we go on? There was even a stone of the palest violet-gray.

So, there we were at a pre-sale private viewing of the 23rd Rio Tinto Argyle Pink Diamond Tender—one of a mere two dozen invited media (each lucky one of us with a private viewing hour!), at a location so secret, we didn't even know where we

were being whisked off to by car service—set free in a room afire with a visual rhapsody of resplendent, brilliant crimson gems. Armed with a jeweler's loupe and a special viewing light, we were allowed to scrutinize these jewels to our heart's content.

Chances were pretty good that when these majestic stones came up for sale, later last fall, at a by-invitation-only auction, these rarities would easily command in excess of \$400,000 per carat, over 20 times more than comparable-weight white diamonds. Scarcely 100 fortunate souls—dealers, collectors, and international jewelers—were invited to view them, in the three cities (Hong Kong, Perth, and New York) where they were unveiled.

If you visit London, go out of your way to drop by the Royal Arcade, as Australian jeweler John Calleija, who will shortly open a stunning salon there, managed to snag four of the tender's most enthralling stones and has transformed them into what will assuredly be the centerpieces of his shop's collections. It may be your only chance to ever "catch" a Rio Tinto pink diamond; it's predicted that the mine will run out of these blush-colored stones by 2018. Or ask your favorite Madison Avenue jeweler—such as Cellini, whose pink diamond earrings appear on page 23—if there is something in stock that just might tickle you pink. —*Ruth J. Katz*

