

# LUCKY LUK

**NIGEL LUK IS A LUCKY MAN. NOT EVERYONE'S DAY JOB INVOLVES TRAILING AFTER ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST EXQUISITE JEWELRY COLLECTIONS.**



A necklace of white gold resplendent with pink diamonds in the enchanting shape of an ancient Indian mandala. Imagine owning an exquisite beauty like this, which is what many were wishing when Cartier's new collection of high jewelry Inde Mysterieuse was launched at the world premiere in England last December, before it went on a tour of Asia, via Japan, Taiwan, China and Hong Kong to Bangkok. Inde Mysterieuse consists of 41 exquisitely crafted pieces of jewelry inspired by India, and is the largest collection of high jewelry the French luxury brand has ever brought to the kingdom.

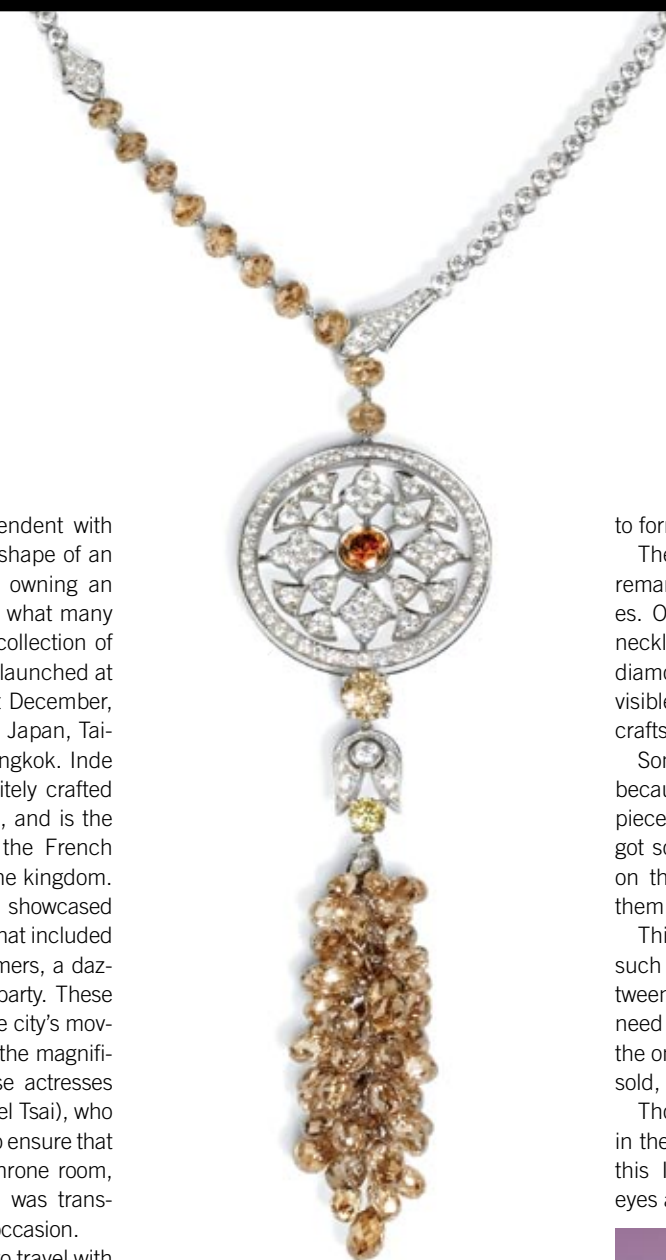
In Bangkok, the collection was showcased during a series of exclusive events that included a gala dinner for VIP Cartier customers, a dazzling fashion show and a cocktail party. These events attracted a large crowd of the city's movers and shakers who came to ogle the magnificent pieces and the top Taiwanese actresses and models (Shatina Chen and Janel Tsai), who flew into Bangkok to model them. To ensure that the jewels had their own special throne room, a century-old mansion in Sathorn was transformed into 'Cartier Mahal' for the occasion.

Picture being the man who gets to travel with the collection, imparting his gems of wisdom to the glitterati and hobnobbing with those gorgeous models. That's the role Nigel Luk plays as managing director of Cartier Far East. He accompanied the collection of objets d'art in their travels and was on hand to explain some of their facets.

Cartier enjoys a strong reputation and a loyal following in Thailand. In return, the brand has bestowed the kingdom with some top-drawer products. "We would like to share the best of what Cartier has to offer to its customers in Thailand," Luk said. "That's the commitment we've made to this country."

The brand has been here for a quarter of a century – almost as long as Nigel Luk's career with the luxury brand. A graduate of the Sheffield School of Business in England and a native of Hong Kong, he joined the prestigious watch and jewelry company in 1990. Since then, the 46-year-old has worked his way up the regional ranks, culminating in an appointment as head honcho of Cartier Far East.

The kingdom has long been an important market for Cartier. According to Luk, the political turmoil and unfavorable economic conditions have not caused the jewelry business to lose its luster for consumers. "We've been registering good growth for the last couple of years, even last year," said Luk, adding that their high



Necklace inspired by Indian Mandala

jewelry collection has registered double-digit growth. "We're seeing that the economy is starting to pick up, and our continual presence in Thailand for the last 25 years has made it a strong and stable market for us."

Because Thailand is inundated with tides of tourists – many of them commodores of industry in search of glittery souvenirs – Cartier has taken a shine to the kingdom and "why we are building strongly in Thailand with our legendary collection of high jewelry," Luk noted. It's a habit that when people travel they like to go back with some souvenirs. They love hunting for unique keepsakes. It happens in Paris, it happens in Milan, London and Hong Kong, so why not here?"

In Thailand, as everywhere, the typical Cartier customer is a connoisseur who appreciates the finer things in life and "has an eye for art. And they all have a desire for a nice piece of merchandise. Even more so for Thai people because they are born to love diamonds," Luk laughs. "And they adore jewelry."

The Inde Mysterieuse collection took more than two years to develop. First there was the design stage which took a couple of months. "What takes the most time is finding the right stones with different colors and matching them

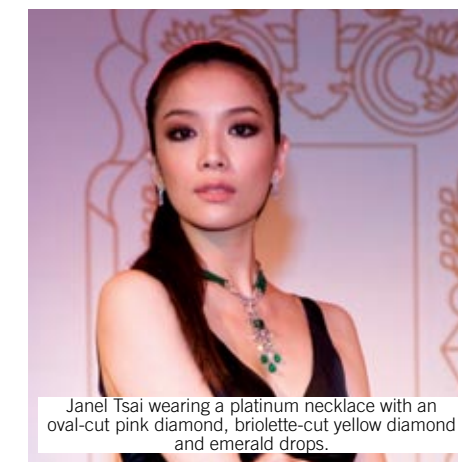
to form a nice combination."

The high jewelry collection consists of 17 remarkable sets, including some unique pieces. One of these showstoppers is a platinum necklace. The combination of yellow and pink diamonds along with emerald drops in an invisible setting reveals the art of outstanding craftsmanship.

Some potential buyers were disappointed, because one of the collection's most stunning pieces was snapped up on the first day. "We got some really affluent customers who came on the following days and we had to inform them that they were too late," Luk said.

This is one reason why Cartier pieces have such an allure. "When there's a chemistry between the piece of art and the yourself, you need to make a decision instantaneously. That's the only unfortunate part – once the pieces are sold, they are out of the show."

Those who have missed out can take heart in the fact that many of the stellar pieces from this India-inspired collection are still setting eyes aglitter around the world.



Janel Tsai wearing a platinum necklace with an oval-cut pink diamond, briolette-cut yellow diamond and emerald drops.



Shatina Chen wearing a white gold, diamond, sapphires and onyx necklace and ring.