



SUMMER 2007

OSCAR HEYMAN®

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Featured in the Wynn Magazine Summer 2007

On The Cover

Platinum & Diamond Earrings
by Oscar Heyman

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A History of Daring Design

OSCAR HEYMAN: A HISTORY OF DARING DESIGN

A natural green diamond spills into your palm from a tiny envelope. Awaiting display in a dragonfly brooch, glistening opals emerge from a cocoon of folded tissue paper. The *clank, clank* of someone hammering a gold ingot fills the air, while enormous sapphire rings shine from cluttered desks, and watercolor renderings, nearly as beautiful as the baubles they will become, scatter the work stations. Where are you? Roaming Oscar Heyman's Madison Avenue workshop, a Willy Wonka-like laboratory that displays clearly the venerable Manhattan jeweler's passion for colored gems.

With 65 craftsmen on the floor, "something new comes out of the workshop every day," says Tom Heyman, the firm's third-generation front man. "So we constantly assess our new designs, asking, 'Is this exciting? Creative?' Our newest

Marvin remembers handing off the necklace to a Cartier rep in a car on the corner of 52nd Street so that it could be transported to JFK International Airport and flown to Europe for the occasion.

As important as reverence for the past is to Oscar Heyman, so is its focus on the here and now. Today, colored gems are not only the firm's passion, but its *raison d'être*. "Each stone has a story to tell—the stones lead and the design follows," Heyman says. All of the gems displayed in their jewelry are carefully selected for their aesthetic merit and potential, whether they are tiny rubies used to accent a Santa Claus-shaped brooch, a 17-carat emerald-cut diamond destined for a convertible ring/pendant suite or 100 carats worth of magenta-hued sapphires for a necklace.

To keep things fresh and modern, Oscar Heyman has pursued collaborations



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pieces always need to make a strong statement." Even so, the firm's identity and artistry stems from its history. For example, the jeweler's offices contain an archive comprised of 55,000 renderings; many of them are amazingly prescient, as au-courant-looking now as they were then. Occasionally, Oscar Heyman's creative team will revisit certain designs—currently in production, a flat, Art-Deco-style bracelet depicting a series of Japanese vignettes harks back to an original from the 1920s. And the firm still makes a wildly popular enamel-and-diamond gardenia brooch that originally debuted at the 1939 World's Fair.

Oscar Heyman was founded by a trio of brothers—Oscar, Nathan and Harry—who immigrated to New York City from Latvia in the early 1900s. Oscar and Nathan had trained in the Fabergé workshops as teenagers, so they came with the expertise necessary to succeed in the American jewelry business. With the help of their brother Harry, Oscar Heyman & Bros. was established in 1912. Soon, the firm's access to exceptional rubies, emeralds and sapphires and knack for setting them in impeccably manufactured designs earned them a reputation as one of the jewelry trade's most sought-after resources. Van Cleef & Arpels was a client in the early days, and Oscar Heyman & Bros. executed many of the celebrated French jeweler's famous "invisibly set" designs. It is a style that continues to flourish at Oscar Heyman; today, its designs bear their own name and are sold in exclusive jewelry establishments all over the world.

Cartier was another big-name client—Oscar himself was hired as the elite house's first non-French craftsman. An Oscar Heyman client for 70 years, their most famous collaboration was the "Taylor-Burton diamond" necklace. In 1969, the sales team at the Fifth Avenue store called upon Oscar Heyman's designers to create a necklace for Richard Burton's latest purchase for Elizabeth Taylor—a 69.42-carat pear-shaped diamond. Several ideas were submitted, and in the end, the chosen design was a V-shaped necklace comprised of 53 graduated pear-shaped diamonds. It was the perfect showcase—the stones were striking enough to offset a pendant of considerable size and grandeur, but the presentation was clean and tapered, allowing the Taylor-Burton ample room to "breathe" and be the star.

According to Oscar Heyman lore, "the partially completed necklace was brought to Cartier several times to be fitted on an employee with a neckline similar to Ms. Taylor's," Tom says, "so that it would lie correctly and be just the right length." The actress debuted the necklace at Princess Grace's 40th birthday party in Monte Carlo (with gun-toting security guards in tow). Heyman's Uncle



with fashion designers such as Carmen Marc Valvo (a runway show) and Stuart Weitzman (a publicity-stunt pair of "ruby slippers") and has expanded its colored-gem focus to include in-demand semiprecious stones such as aquamarine, tourmaline, tanzanite, alexandrite and cat's-eye. "We only buy semiprecious stones if they're really extraordinary," says Heyman, who has an opinion about every gem on the market. He can wax poetic about the chatoyancy—the characteristic of having a changeable luster—of a star sapphire ("It's a great stone to wear at an outdoor party because the sunlight makes the streak glow") or the inherently glamorous nature of rubies ("I think an Oscar Heyman necklace of oval rubies and diamonds would look especially gorgeous on Scarlett Johansson"). All musing aside, he is particularly excited about his firm's debut of a certain 16-carat ruby ring this summer—and countless other confections that promise to leave you slack-jawed and starry-eyed. Any takers?



THIS PAGE: by Oscar Heyman, a ruby and diamond necklace totalling 94 carats, set in 18K gold and platinum, surrounds two platinum and diamond wedding bands and a platinum ring featuring a 12.56-carat cushion-cut sapphire and 3.13 carats of diamonds. **PRIOR PAGE TOP:** More than 700 stones comprise the 18K gold and platinum "Birds in Flight II" bracelet, which features faceted diamonds and faceted and cabochon rubies, emeralds and sapphires totalling 43 carats. **PRIOR PAGE BOTTOM:** Oscar Heyman's gardenia brooch, which originally debuted at the 1939 World's Fair, is crafted of platinum, French-enamel leaves and 203 white diamonds totalling 4.5 carats.