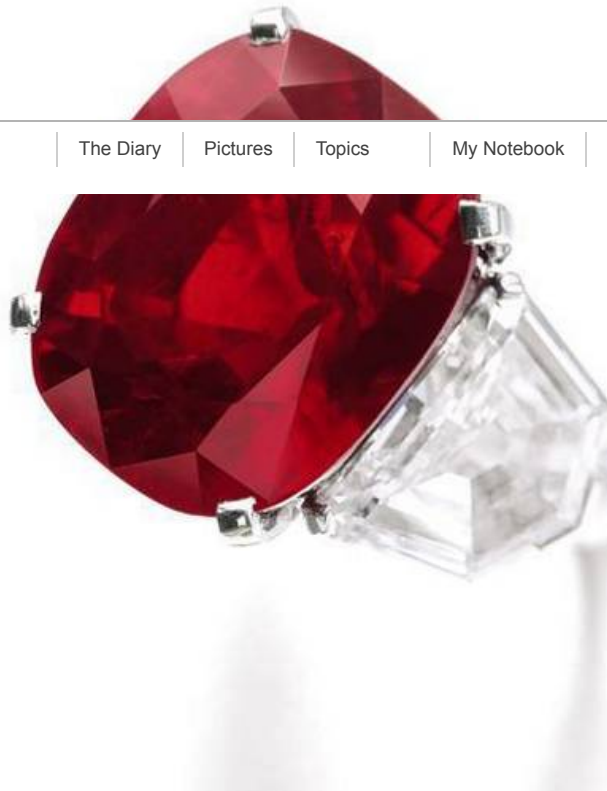


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The Sunrise Ruby set three new world records when it sold for £19.6 million at Sotheby's Geneva in May

## JEWELLERY

# 2015: the year in jewellery

*The launches, the events, the most spectacular designs: we take a look back at the biggest stories of the year in jewellery*

BY SARAH ROYCE-GREENSILL

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### A record-breaking year

2015 saw multiple world records broken and broken again at the world's jewellery auctions. In May, the 25.59-carat Burmese "[Sunrise Ruby](#)" set three new world records when it sold for £19.6 million at Sotheby's Geneva: becoming the most expensive ruby ever sold, the most expensive Cartier gem ever sold and setting a new record for the price-per-carat of any ruby (a record which was broken in November by the 15.04-carat Crimson Flame which sold for £798,000 per carat at Christie's Hong Kong). The Sunrise Ruby helped Sotheby's achieve the highest ever total for a jewellery sale at £103.9 million.

There was much hype surrounding September's Fine Jewellery Sale at Bonhams thanks to the appearance of the [Hope Spinel](#): a 50.14-carat octagonal stone

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The Blue Moon diamond became the world's most expensive gemstone when it sold for £32 million in November

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with a fascinating provenance, which hadn't been seen on the market for 98 years. It duly went on to achieve a new world record for the price of a spinel at auction, selling for £962,500.

Most notably, November saw the 12.03-carat [Blue Moon diamond](#) sell for £32 million to Hong Kong property tycoon Joseph Lau, who bought it for his seven-year-old daughter Josephine. Lau promptly renamed the stone, which now holds three world records (most valuable gemstone, highest price for a diamond of any colour, highest ever price per carat), the Blue Moon of Josephine. It joins the 16.08-carat pink diamond he bought her for £19.3 million the day before.

### High jewellery highlights

High summer is the time for high jewellery as maisons launch their newest creations during Paris's Haute Couture Fashion week in July. Victoire de Castellane's [Soie Dior](#), an exceptionally crafted jumble of exquisite gemstones inspired by silk, ribbons and all the trimmings of couture, mesmerised clients, editors and buyers alike. At Boucheron, Claire Choisne enlisted the current Maharaja of Jodhpur to act as consultant on an [ode to India](#) featuring materials such as marble mined from the same quarry as that used in the Taj Mahal, and sand from the Thar desert.

Cartier rehomed an old friend in the form of the 197.70-carat Sri Lankan sapphire which was once owned by the Empress Maria Feodorovna, appearing in its exceptional Romanov cuff which more than lived up to the high jewellery collection's name: [Etourdissant](#), meaning "dazzling". Meanwhile Louis Vuitton called on its travelling heritage by unveiling [Acte V: The Escape](#) in decadent style on the island of Capri.



Boucheron Plume de Paon necklace featuring Makrana marble

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Aside from the grandes dames, Lebanese jewellery designer Noor Fares made her first foray into high jewellery with [Atelier Mystique](#), a collection of one-off pieces which explore her fascination with light and mysticism, casting aside "traditional" fine gemstones for the more mysterious draw of quartz, catseye emerald cabochon and crystal. Expect more sorcery in 2016.

### Sparkling exhibitions

Chaumet celebrated 230 years in September by opening an exhibition at its Place Vendôme home. [Promenade Bucolique](#) showcases the house's impressive archive – its founder was official jeweller to Napoleon I – along with its latest high jewellery launch, the colourful Abeille line of bejewelled bees. There's still time to catch the show; it's on until January 23, 2016.

In London, the V&A displayed a jaw-dropping Indian hoard with [Bejewelled Treasures: the Al Thani collection](#). From turban ornaments of the 16th century to the Shah Jahan's dagger to 20th-century Cartier jewels, it's a tour de force of India's jewellery traditions and we're bound to see it influence



### Paris's high jewellery haul



### Blow-the-budget jewels



### Celestial-inspired jewellery

contemporary jewellers' designs in 2016 and beyond. *Bejewelled Treasures* is at the V&A until March 28, 2016.



Turban ornament (1675-1725)

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### An ethical focus

Beautiful, rare and responsibly sourced: these are the three pillars of [the Forevermark promise](#). Already an established diamond brand overseas, July saw the launch of the De Beers Group's distributor in the UK. The one per cent of the world's diamonds mined globally that pass Forevermark's stringent quality tests are rewarded with a microscopic unique serial number, and go on to star in jewels made by the likes of Theo Fennell.

Chopard also demonstrated its commitment to ethical jewels in October as it launched its Palme Verte collection, crafted entirely in Fairmined Gold, while Gemfields – long renowned for its responsibly-sourced emeralds – launched its Mozambican rubies. [Modelled by global ambassador Mila Kunis](#), Gemfields rubies are mined according to the company's same strict

standards and have been set this year into new pieces by Fabergé, Georg Jensen, Miiori and Spinelli Kilcollin.

### Surprising collaborations

In April, Chanel partnered with Net-a-Porter on a digital pop-up store dedicated to the brand's chunky, quilted [Coco Crush collection](#) – the first time Chanel fine jewellery has been available to buy online. Another brand to embrace a contemporary retail partner was Tiffany & Co, which made the unexpected move of teaming up with hip department store Dover Street Market to launch its [Out of Retirement collection](#), resurrecting iconic jewels and “party pieces” from its archive and turning the signature white Tiffany ribbon black in the process.

In late 2015, [a new wave of artists' jewels](#) sparked renewed interest in the field. Elisabetta Cipriani finally succeeded in persuading Ai WeiWei to turn his hand to jewellery, launching his 24-carat Rebar in Gold to coincide with his seminal exhibition at the Royal Academy. Meanwhile December's Art Basel Miami Beach saw Stylebop launch its “Cada goes art” range, in which German goldsmith Cada collaborated with three contemporary artists on sparkling wearable art works.



Ai Weiwei created a 24-carat Rebar in Gold, showcased by Elisabetta Cipriani

[Enlarge](#)

### Jewellery goes stellar

There was an unmistakable [cosmic theme](#) to jewellery in 2015. From Venyx's night-sky

inspired Theiya collection and the sweet diamond-studded constellations by Sophie Bille Brahe (who is a descendant of the astronomer Tycho Brahe) to Carolina Bucci's star-spangled [Superstellar](#) range, we bedecked ourselves, as Gabrielle Chanel famously declared was her aim, in “stars of all shapes and sizes”. Her wish was granted also at the Saatchi gallery's [Mademoiselle Privé](#) exhibition which saw Bijoux de Diamants, her one and only 1932 high jewellery collection, recreated in its cosmic entirety.

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