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JEWELRY

Boucheron reinterprets royal treasures in new campaign

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The collection, built around the original baby blue baguette brooch, comes in a variety of colors, including Hypnotic Blue shown above. Image credit: Boucheron

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

French jeweler Boucheron has released "Like a Queen," a collection of high jewelry inspired by Queen Elizabeth II.

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Among the monarch's most beloved and famous adornments was an aquamarine and diamond Boucheron brooch. With this 18-piece collection, creative director Claire Choisne offers a contemporary reimagining of the piece.

"Three years ago, when I delved into the Boucheron archives, I just couldn't get my mind off this Art Deco double clip brooch," said Ms. Choisne in a statement.

"The precision and geometry of the Art Deco design tempered by the softness and light blue hue of the aquamarines have always fascinated me. I was touched by the sentimental value of this two-piece clip worn by Queen Elizabeth during important moments of her reign."

Young treasure

In 1944, Princess Elizabeth received a pair of brooches as a gift from her uncle, Prince George, the Duke of Kent. She would go on to wear them as a single piece, joined by a hinge-like double clip at the front. This element is represented several times throughout the "Queen" collection, both aesthetically and practically, in the form of clasps, rings, and folding cuffs.

During the next 78 years, as Princess became Queen, this piece of personal jewelry became something of a cultural touchstone. Elizabeth wore the brooch during some of the most memorable moments of her well-documented life, from receiving foreign heads of state at Buckingham Palace to cutting ribbons at the local garden party.

Of all the pieces in Ms. Choisne's collection, the Hypnotic Blue cuff–white gold paved with the same aquamarines and diamonds–is the most loyal interpretation of the brooch.

From there, the interpretations–and the possibilities–broaden.

Rolling Red is a ruby and diamond necklace with a central detachable ornament which can be worn separately as a

brooch. Lemon Slice is comprised of canary yellow leather ribbons, anchored by two clasps made of white diamonds and white gold. This can be worn as anything from a barrette to a brooch, a bracelet or a choker.

Mega Pink, so called for the intense hue of its many tourmalines, is another pair of brooches which, like the original, can be pinned together or worn separately. Moon White is a three-strand necklace made of akoya pearls and diamonds, with clasps that detach.

Those interested in learning more about the original 1937 brooches can visit Boucheron's website where they will be directed to an eight-episode podcast hosted by French journalist and historian Vincent Meylan. Versions are available both in English and in French.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Boucheron (@boucheron)

Enduring icons

Kering-owned Boucheron, founded in Paris in 1858, has enjoyed close associations with many royal houses.

In 1878, Prince Felix Yousopoff of Russia purchased a diamond corsage from the jeweler. In 1921, British society hostess Lady Greyville commissioned a tiara which would be passed along to various females within the British royal house. It once belonged to the Queen Mother, and more recently to Queen Consort, Camilla.

The maison's founder Frdric Boucheron designed nearly 150 creations made from rubies, emeralds and diamonds for the Maharajah of Patiala, erstwhile ruler of India, in 1928. Such commissions elevated the house's stature immensely.

It returned the recognition in early 2022 with its 14-piece collection titled "Histoire de Style, New Maharajahs."

Included were elements inspired by lotus flowers, turban ornaments and engraved stones. One memorable highlight was a necklace containing 40 carats worth of Columbian emeralds (see story).

Last fall, Ms. Choisne directed the release of Boucheron's "Icons," a series of oversized, reimagined pieces from its 2004 "Quatre" collection (see story).

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