

Intricate Enamel Pieces From a Storied Indian Jewelry Family

Plus: new ranges of medjool dates, floral-print bags for men and more from T's cultural compendium.



Clockwise from left: the Gem Palace's vintage men on camel chess pieces in 22-karat gold and enamel (sold as a pair); Munnu the Gem Palace's pendant earrings in 18-karat gold with diamonds and emeralds (sold as a pair); spinel ring in 22-karat gold with enamel; parrot ring in 22-karat gold with diamonds, emerald drop and enamel; parrot ring in 22-karat gold with diamonds and enamel; trinket box with diamonds; parrot ring in 22-karat gold with rubies and enamel; and green tourmaline ring in 22-karat gold with enamel, price on request, (212) 861-0606. Photograph by David Chow. Set design by Lellin Lopez-Toledo

Since its founding in 1852, the Jaipur, India, jewelry emporium the [Gem Palace](#) has been known for its dazzling diamonds, rubies and sapphires. But [Siddharth Kasliwal](#), a partner at the Gem Palace and the creative director of Munnū the Gem Palace — the New York City atelier started by his late father, [Munnū](#) — has a secret. “Buying and setting stones is very easy,” he says. “It’s enameling that’s difficult. Enamel work made our family what it is, and it’s where true craftsmanship lies.” Now, nearly seven years after designing his last collection, he is unveiling a new group of enamel pieces that celebrate this overlooked and, he says, underappreciated art.

One of the most ancient forms of surface decoration, enameling was brought to India by the Persians in the 17th century. At Kasliwal’s Jaipur workshop, artisans begin the process by etching gold with ultrafine tools before applying paste-like pigment made from powdered glass and firing it all in a kiln. “The etching and painting take an extremely steady hand,” Kasliwal says, adding that “the enamel can shatter if it’s fired incorrectly.” Kasliwal employs about eight enamellers but, he says, “perhaps only three are master enamellers. Because the work is so tedious, enamellers tend to retire early, even before they turn 50.”

Kasliwal's forefathers were expert enamel craftsmen based in Agra when Jaipur was founded in the early 1700s. "The maharajah was so impressed by their work that he invited them to move to the city in the 1780s," says Kasliwal. Infamous devotees of opulence, the maharajahs enameled "everything," he says, including "dagger handles, sword cases, chess sets, snuff boxes and, of course, jewelry." A gem-encrusted necklace would typically feature an elaborately enameled back, which not only prevents snags on clothing but also embodies the concept of the wearer's pleasure — the idea of unseen private beauty. "In India, a connoisseur can evaluate the value of a diamond necklace by looking at the quality of the enameling on the reverse," Kasliwal says.

Among the pieces in his new collection are emerald-accented earrings featuring an ingenious double-sided design, as well as whimsical parrot rings with microthin ribbons of color around the birds' throats. One parrot's beak is such a deep, glossy red that it resembles the ruby dangling from its tip. Not all enamel, Kasliwal says, is produced so painstakingly, with such high-quality materials. "Enamel can be this red only because we do it on 22.5-karat gold," he says. "You can do enamel the way the French do — they use 18 karat — but the result isn't the same."

For Kasliwal, a ninth-generation jeweler, these latest creations are more than just gems: They're part of his mission to keep a dying craft alive. "I made these pieces to keep our artisans working," he says, noting that he's already seen too many of them turn to other sectors — "they find jobs in I.T.!" — as traditional art forms fade from favor. "The gold will always be here, and the stones will be here," he says, "but the technique may not." — *Catherine Hong*

Photo assistant: Ben Berkes. Set assistant: Steven Ruggiero

A New Paris Hotel Full of Daring Design Choices



A bedroom at the new Le Grand Mazarin hotel in the Marais district of Paris. Vincent Leroux

Parisian hotels can still skew toward the conservative — but not Le Grand Mazarin, opening this spring in the Marais. A combination of three buildings, parts of which date back to the 14th century, the 61-room property is the first hotel project in the French capital designed by [Martin Brudnizki](#), the Swedish interiors star best known for his rococo transformation of the London nightclub Annabel's. The bedrooms are painted in bright shades of green and coral, hung with tapestries and furnished with marble-topped minibars and ruffle-trimmed, leopard-print slipper chairs. An all-day restaurant, Boubalé, serves modern takes on Jewish favorites like gefilte fish, challah and kreplach, and there are two bars, one of them a speakeasy-style lounge with marbled wallpaper and Murano glass ceiling lights. "It's immersive," says Brudnizki. "I wanted to create the atmosphere of arriving in someone's home and having the most whimsical time." Rates from about \$742, breakfast included, legrandmazarin.com. — Ellie Pithers
