

Delectable Style

By Diana Jarrett (Republished Courtesy; Jewelers Suite Magazine)

Here's a question for your consideration. What exactly is tutti frutti, besides a fun word to say? If your answer is ice cream—you are right. You're also on point if you claim it's classic Little Richard, circa 1955. But serious jewelry historians will explain it's also a spectacular jewelry style born of the let-loose imagination of one Pierre Cartier at the dawn of the 20th century.

Tastemaker-luxe magazine *Town & Country* once said that you can't call yourself a Cartier fan unless you own a piece from this collection. The distinctive jewelry style is characterized by employing sapphire, emerald, and ruby usually in platinum, often with diamond accents. As the style evolved, the colored stones added fancifully carved cabochons to boot.

At the time he didn't foresee it becoming a trending pattern that kept growing for decades. In fact, Cartier created his initial tutti frutti piece for a special aristocrat. Important jewelry was always one-off back in the day, simply because the uber-riche were the only people who could afford real jewelry.

Cartier's Vision

First off, Cartier was commissioned by Britain's Queen Alexandra (consort to King Edward VII) to create an original bib-necklace to be worn with Indian gowns she was given by the Viceroy of India. Cartier took his cues and paired vibrant hues typical of Indian textiles along with his expert craftsmanship. The celebratory high jewelry style that Cartier first envisioned was a lively union of texture, form and color. His vision was then interpreted in wide cuffs, cascading ear pendants, collar and hair clips, and more.

Cartier's creations became wildly popular—like so many Royal trends eventually do. That set the trajectory for the house of Cartier. Fast forward to a decade later, and Pierre's brother Jacque embarked on his own adventure to India. Upon returning, he breathed fresh air into this lively style, having been influenced by the carved cabochons used profusely there.

Floral motifs rendered in carved sapphire, ruby and emerald dominated Jacques Cartier's pieces into the roaring 20s. Cartier embraced the use of platinum for his iteration of tutti frutti designs, which had become the favored metal for couture jewelry at the time.

Society Loves Tutti Frutti

In the 1930s, Parisian heiress and socialite Daisy Fellowes commissioned an enormous and extravagant tutti frutti necklace from her longtime jeweler Cartier. Fellowes was celebrated globally in high society for her elegant style. The necklace performed exactly as she hoped—and turned heads whenever she wore it. This advanced tutti frutti's power even more.

With its long and fanciful provenance, you'd think the name, tutti frutti would have stuck early on. But not until 1970 did this jewelry style enjoy its evocative name "Tutti Frutti". While the term "tutti frutti" may be erroneously applied to various kinds of bold and colorful jewelry, Cartier, inventor of the genre, only intended for it to describe the combination of these three precious gemstones: ruby, sapphire, and emerald.

The Value of Style

You'd think this iconic design style would tip off collectors and sellers due to the sheer longevity of its fame. But pieces occasionally fall through the cracks of recognition. In 2014, a sharp-eyed bargain hunter swooped up a colorful tutti frutti pin for \$60 at a UK flea market and flipped it at auction a few months later for \$17,550.

Countess Edwina Mountbatten, (1900-1960) the last Vicereine of India, owned a tutti frutti bandeau-style tiara made by Cartier in 1928 which was sold privately after her death. But in 2004, the British government placed an order banning its export as it was due to leave the country. The art deco piece, valued then at \$550,000, had recently changed hands and the new owner had applied for an export license. It was considered such an important part of British jewelry history, that it has since gone on permanent loan and display at London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

Queen Elizabeth got in on this style frenzy too, owning a tutti frutti brooch which she wears on special occasions. When American socialite Evelyn Lauder's tutti frutti bracelet sold at Christies auction in 2013, it earned over 4 times its pre-auction estimate, coming in at a whopping \$2,045,000. Today, Cartier continues to turn out spectacular tutti frutti pieces, all requiring thousands of hours to create. Their recent Collier Rajasthan high jewelry convertible bib-necklace can be worn 3 ways, and features a detachable 136.97-ct emerald that becomes a brooch.

American Eccentric Daisy Fellowes...
Lady portrait by Cecile Beaton 1937
Outfit Schiapparelli and "Tutti Frutti" Cartier
Neclace, Diamonds, Emerald, Sapphire and Ru









