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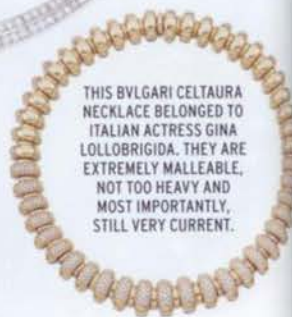




BRENDA KANG



THIS ART DECO NECKLACE HAS ENGRAVING ON THE SIDE AND A SAFETY CATCH, AND CLOSED WITH AN EMERALD CLASP. IN THE PAST, MAJORITY OF THE JEWELLERS LOVED TO INCLUDE A LOT OF LITTLE DETAILS LIKE THESE.



THIS BVLGARI CELTAURA NECKLACE BELONGED TO ITALIAN ACTRESS GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA. THEY ARE EXTREMELY MALLEABLE, NOT TOO HEAVY AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, STILL VERY CURRENT.



THE MOST EXPENSIVE AND COLLECTIBLE PIECE IN OUR COLLECTION IS THIS 1980S MYSTERY CLOCK FROM CARTIER. IT'S WORTH AS MUCH AS AN APARTMENT AND IS EXTREMELY RARE, AS NOT MANY WERE MADE. FIRST MADE IN 1913, THIS PIECE IS UNMISTAKABLY CARTIER, A FUNCTIONAL ART THAT'S A PART OF HISTORY.

realJEWEL

Old is gold, just like these vintage jewels whose tales and charms become more valuable over time. Brenda Kang, owner of vintage jewel retailer Revival, shares a few things you need to know before buying your first piece.

BY Caroline SUGANDA

Back in the 1990s, when what most Singaporeans knew about jewellery did not go beyond the handful of mainstream jewellers, Brenda Kang was already immersing herself in the world of vintage jewellery collected from antique shops around the world – thanks to her then-job as a flight attendant. “It was a real eye-opener. I was truly fascinated, particularly seeing them from an artistic point of view,” says Kang, on her first impression of vintage jewellery.

Overwhelmed by her fascination with these bright, antique stones, Kang’s deep interest led her to many experiences, from a gemmology course at

the Gemological Institute of America to working as a gemologist at Je Taïme Jewellers. These ventures, however, did not appease her passion until 1997, where she joined Christie’s (the world’s largest auction house) in New York, Paris, Italy, Shanghai and Geneva and realised her penchant for vintage rather than modern pieces.

Late last year, Kang left Christie’s to start Revival, her personal curation of auction-worthy vintage pieces sourced from jewellery fairs and dealers, auctions, collectors and clients from all over the world.

If you want to start buying vintage, go out and see as much as you can. Learn about it through

books, travel to see stores and museums or even Revival’s pop-up store here at Malmaison by The Hourglass. When you have a better understanding of every period, you will find some pieces that appeal to you personally. It’s a little bit like buying art – the more you know, the better you are at collecting and understanding its value.

You will realise there are certain qualities in vintage jewellery that you can’t get today. Back in those days, craftsmen were trained from a very young age; the finesse in their creation is almost unmatched. Modern day jewellery is of course very well-made but in general, the tactility is different – at least for me. The thought that went



ART NOUVEAU IS ONE OF MY PERSONAL FAVOURITES. THE SCULPTURAL WORK ON THIS LALIQUE PIECE IS REALLY A WORK OF ART YOU CAN WEAR. THE FINE SCALES AT THE SIDE IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE CAN ACHIEVE TODAY.

Brenda Kang's tips on buying vintage:

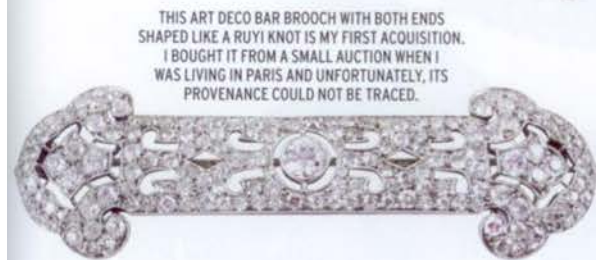
1. Know what looks and feels good on you.
2. Make sure it's something you'll like or wear for a long time.
3. Look into these characteristics that will affect its value:
 - Condition
 - Provenance
 - Quality of stones
 - Craftsmanship and the little details
 - Sentimental and investment value
 - Signature
 - Wearability



A 1925 ART DECO BRACELET THAT EPITOMISES THE ERA. THE VALUE HAS INCREASED A LOT NOT JUST BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORIC WORTH BUT THE ESCALATING PRICE OF EMERALD.



FROM THE COLLECTION OF ELIZABETH TAYLOR, THIS 1957 DAVID WEBB PIECE HAS EMERALDS AND DIAMONDS ON THEM, WITH TWO DRAGON HEADS HINGED TO THE BODY. IT IS SURPRISINGLY LIGHT AND STILL SUPER CHIC.



THIS ART DECO BAR BROOCH WITH BOTH ENDS SHAPED LIKE A RUYI KNOT IS MY FIRST ACQUISITION. I BOUGHT IT FROM A SMALL AUCTION WHEN I WAS LIVING IN PARIS AND UNFORTUNATELY, ITS PROVENANCE COULD NOT BE TRACED.

into making links and hinges invisible, how soft and flexible they felt on the skin or the time taken to saw remarkably fine filigree is something very rare today.

Of course, every piece of vintage jewellery has a provenance but unfortunately, you can't trace all of them. Back at Christie's, there were about 30 to 50 pieces coming in everyday to be appraised. They could belong to anyone, like inheritance from relatives. Then there are also pieces from the estates of celebrities and royalties like Elizabeth Taylor, Wallis Simpson and Ellen Barkin. Those with provenance like the latter definitely reap higher value.

I curate things that are contemporary, up to the minute and fashion forward. From my experience, the most popular style for the first-time vintage buyer is the Art Deco. Those diamonds and stones set in a classic, symmetrical and geometric way makes them easy to identify and they go well with jeans and a t-shirt. This is where Asian consumers are going towards too. I do not want my clients to wear them and feel old or end up leaving them lying in the safe.

Do not over-clean. I buy pieces that are well maintained so they only require a little bit of wiping down. Over-cleaning will wipe

away that certain patina you want on your vintage jewellery.

Revival is a one-stop place for vintage jewellery. They're not limited to what I have here, I'm always open to different requests. I can help you search for a certain style, from a certain era. Customers can also consign or sell pieces they've outgrown. It is more discreet than, say, going to Cash Converters. I hope my experience and understanding will help them make a more confident transaction.

The Revival pop-up store is located at Malmaison by the Hourglass from now till November 10.