

SECRETS & LIGHTS

*A Mythical
Journey by Piaget*



The Secrets of Venice Collection

Venice is an exceptional city that burns indelibly into your memory, leaving you with a yearning to return time and again. Once the capital of the Venetian Republic, and named for the ancient Veneti people who lived in the region as early as the 10th century BC, it is a city steeped in history, architectural beauty and a rich culture of artistic expression. The region has long been a centre of power, wealth and beauty. Known for its several important artistic movements, her beauty and resplendent light often inspired artists of the Renaissance period such as Canaletto, Tintoretto, Giovanni Bellini, Tiepolo, Titian, and Veronese. The architecture of Venice has been influenced by many cultures over the centuries. Venetian Gothic architecture, which originated in the 14th century, is the most famous, and combines the Gothic lancet arch with Byzantine, Ottoman and Phoenician architectural styles. There are also several fine examples of Renaissance and Baroque buildings throughout the city.

The annual Carnival of Venice adds to the romance and mystery of Venice, and is renowned for its elaborate masks, which have always played an important role. Venetian masks were initially simple in design and decoration and served both a symbolic and practical purpose. They were made from leather, porcelain or glass. Today, most Italian masks are made with the application of gesso and gold leaf and are hand-painted using natural feathers and gems for decoration. There are a number of different styles of masks. The bauta, was originally a stark white, but today is often heavily gilded. It covers the entire face, and is often characterised by an emphasised nose, thick supraorbital ridge, protruding jaw (which allows the wearer to eat and drink without removing the mask) and the absence of a mouth. It is generally worn by men. The Colobina is a half mask, covering the wearer's eyes, nose and upper cheeks and is often elaborately decorated with gold, silver, crystals and feathers – it is a modern creation rather than a mask steeped in history like the bauta.

priceless cultural gem which shimmers magically upon the Adriatic. Magnified by virtuous exponents of feather art, enamelling and engraving, the timepieces in the collection evoke the architectural splendours of the Clock Tower, restored by Piaget in 1997, the Bridge of Sighs, St. Mary's Basilica and the city's emblematic lion.

With the exclusive use of artistic crafts, the artisans at the Piaget Manufacture have exercised the rarest skills in creating an exquisite collection. Imbued with the mysterious magic of the city, the new creations present themselves like timeless works of art, bringing to life the magnificence of Venetian festivities and reflect the subtle plays on light.

The festive elegance of the city is captured in a dazzling embroidery on the Palazzo ring. Its interlacing red spinel and diamond motifs evoke the flashing camera bulbs on the red carpet of the Venice Film Festival, or the royal box at the Teatro La Fenice. Their lines are inspired



HAUTE JOAILLERIE AND HORLOGERIE

Piaget's Secrets of Venice collection is inspired by this serene and



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by the Byzantine windows of the palazzos lining the Grand Canal, and the long earrings with geometrically arranged rubies are entirely in tune with Piaget's trademark creative boldness.

Reinvented to the tune of a masked ball, the signature cuff bracelet is adorned with a bird-flower by feather artist and Master Artisan Nelly Saunier, who is a laureate of the Prix de l'Intelligence de la Main which is awarded by the Fondation Bettencourt Schueller. Its flurry of feathers is perched on an airy white gold base forming a precious bouquet. Turquoise feathers delicately set among feathers shimmering with velvety shades of midnight blue in turn, create subtle glazed effects, while an emerald is placed at the very heart of this spectacular feather marquetry and sparkles amid a constellation of sapphires and diamonds. Like an invitation to engage in seductive games, a different cuff bracelet adorns the wrist with pink gold embroidery. Its ballet of marquise-cut diamonds showcasing the inimitable Piaget expertise, forms rays of light akin to those filtering through the stone bars on the windows of the Bridge of Sighs. The equally innovative "secret" ring echoes the enigmatic figures of Venetian celebrations. Its sliding cover revealing a magnetic, night-blue sky crafted in Grand Feu champlevé enamel. Masterfully tamed by an engraver, the matter exudes a luminous sensuality on which the constellation of Leo has been traced. Endowed with the allure of a Venetian mask and the luminous beauty of the shimmering reflections dancing across the lagoon, Piaget's new jewellery creations set the crowning touch in the field of Haute Joaillerie. With its new horology

collection, Piaget brings a whole new dimension to its close ties with Venice and their pioneering contemporary patronage which saw the restoration of Venice's Clock Tower. As fascinating as a masked figure at a Venetian ball, the Altiplano's pure lines are topped by a feather marquetry motif composing a hypnotic wheel of time. Individually cut out into tiny scales by feather artist Emilie Moutard-Martin, each feather is enriched with silver leaf before being placed on the dial one by one to create the motif. Playing with the silky, satiny or velvety appearance of each one, the artist creates a captivating visual poem. Entirely in line with the creative daring characterising the Maison, the Protocole XXL model is decorated from dial to bezel using the micro-mosaic technique, once again illustrating the creative sparkle cherished by Piaget. To achieve this effect, Italian micro-mosaic specialist artist, Cesare Bella, creates a masterpiece of precision by juxtaposing nearly five thousand miniscule glass tesserae, which combine to reveal a remarkable view of the Santa Maria Della Salute basilica overlooking the mouth of the Grand Canal. Directly inspired by the dial of the Clock Tower, restored thanks to the patronage provided by Piaget, a magnificent zodiacal arc adorns the 40 mm Altiplano.

Combining the techniques of paillonné (spangled) enamel and relief engraving, the timepiece is graced with 12 appliques that are engraved and then applied to the dial amid a hail of sparkling stars. The latter are crafted from gold or silver paillons (spangles) and then are inserted between two layers of grand feu enamel to illuminate the centre of the dial.

Photos: © Piaget



Lights of Samarkand Creations



In a large oasis in the valley of the Zerafshan River, in the north-eastern region of Uzbekistan, lies the historic city of Samarkand, considered the crossroads of world cultures with a history of over two and a half millennia. It was here that the Silk Road intersected forming trade routes to Persia in the west, China in the east, and India to the south. Lauded by poets and historians as “the pearl of the Muslim World”, and as “the Rome of the East”, Samarkand is a majestic and beautiful city that has drawn visitors to her for centuries. The architecture and townscape are masterpieces of Islamic cultural creativity, and played seminal roles in the development of Islamic architecture over the entire region, from the Mediterranean to the Indian subcontinent. Major monuments include the Registan mosque and madrasahs, originally built in mud brick and covered with decorated ceramic tiles, the Bibi-Khanum Mosque and Mausoleum, the Shakhi-Zinda compound, which contain a series of mosques, madrasahs and mausoleum, and the ensembles of Gur-Emir and Rukhabad, as well as the remains of Ulugh-Bek’s Observatory. Through its art, architecture and urban structure, Samarkand illustrates the most important stages of Central Asian cultural and political history from the 13th century to the present day.

The blues and golds used to decorate buildings throughout the city are representative of the area’s wealth – the blue speaking to its abundant natural springs (a scarcity in desert geographies) and the gold to the Mongols’ love in Chinese and Persian-styled golden silk

Photos: © Piaget



textiles and the nasij woven in Iran and Transoxiana which inspired them to build their own textile workshops to produce the fabrics themselves.

Piaget’s Lights of Samarkand creations magnificently reveal the city’s vibrant colours and energy through the collection’s radiant blues, emerald greens with shimmering diamonds, reminiscent of Samarkand’s abundant springs, verdant landscape and star-filled desert skies. Cascading feather-light turquoise beads sculpt the infinite beauty of the sky on a woman’s skin, while radiant turquoise blue hard stones strike a fine contrast with emerald-heart flowers. A splendid Colombian emerald is magnified by a play on cuts and settings within a four-leaved flower-ring, while sapphires from Sri Lanka, rubies from Mozambique and exceptional diamonds conjure up the splendour of the mosaic motifs adorning the medersas of the Registan, while a flowing bracelet echoes their enchanting arabesques, punctuated by turquoises. Featured for more than half a century in creations by the Maison, prong-set marquise-cut stones light up an airy necklace. The marquise cut, that has become a Piaget signature, is skilfully tapered here to make the light vibrate at the heart of each diamond, forming a scintillating lacework extended by a magnificent pear-cut diamond. Specially designed by the Maison, the scrolling, cascading diamond motifs punctuated by sapphires form hypnotic ear pendants which

dance in step with every move of the woman they adorn. Piaget’s horological creations capture the majesty of the architecture and the desert animals, exalted by the most unexpected artistic crafts, such as eggshell-inlaid lacquer, bulino engraving or micro-mosaic. The falcon, king of the desert, brings its magnetic strength to the wrist, dominating time with its piercing gaze. Maître d’Art (Master of Art), Isabelle Emmerique, chose eggshell-inlaid lacquer to infuse the raptor’s plumage with a breathtaking depth and realism. A one-of-a-kind model captures the falcon flying over the Registan on its dial, showcasing the world’s most prestigious enamelling technique - miniature painting on enamel. Exceptional independent artist, Anita Porchet, has laid her enamel colours layer by layer, on a gold plaque, previously covered in white enamel, creating an exquisite portrayal of the majestic bird in subtly graded brick-toned colours. The timepiece is powered by the world’s thinnest mechanical shaped tourbillon, with its flying carriage visible at 12 o’clock, like a cosmic star. Accentuated by the pink gold of the dial, a guilloché model reveals an exclusive motif whose shimmering reflections create a splendid graphic mosaic, while the Palace décor adorns a secret watch. Fitted directly to the case, so as to form a single entity, the bracelet, transformed into an iridescent ribbon, extends into a mother-of-pearl and engraved gold star marquetry picking up the iconic décor. ■