

## Clear cut

Baccarat crystal, the embodiment of French art de vivre, is marking its 250th anniversary in shimmering style. text: **catherine belbin**

With the opening of a Skidmore Owing and Merrill-designed hotel and flagship store in New York, a standalone boutique in Dubai, a series of stunning chandeliers and a new jewellery line, Baccarat is determined to continue living up to its lofty reputation.

Baccarat is marking its 250th anniversary in monumental style with the opening of a signature hotel designed by Skidmore Owing and Merrill, just a stone's throw from the MoMa in New York. It selected the Chicago-based architects of Burj Khalifa to design the 184-metre, 46-storey high sleek black tower.

Located just off Fifth Avenue, the Baccarat Hotel and Residences will feature approximately 150 hotel rooms and 60 luxury condominiums. The stunning tower, which is due to open next year coinciding with the milestone anniversary, will rub shoulders with the Jean Nouvel-designed Hines Tower Verre, under construction across the road.

Interior designers Patrick Gilles and Dorothee Boissier have been commissioned to create the luxurious interiors. The Paris pair has a reputation for creating uber luxurious interiors for both the hospitality industry and private clients, including the Grand Hotel Haussmann, Paris, the Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech, and the W Pudong, Shanghai.

Other Baccarat branded hotels/residences are also being planned, including one in the Dubai Pearl project, as well as in Rabat and Foshan.

Then there is the new flagship store in New York. Designed by acclaimed architect/designer Rafael de Cardenas, the 260-square-metre boutique on Madison Avenue is expected to open next month.

Architecture at Large has created a distinctive design concept for the two-storey premises, which is poised to celebrate the company's past, present and future, immersing the shopper in the Baccarat experience.

Cardenas, who has also created memorable interiors for Nike, Barney's New York and Ford Models, was recently appointed to Baccarat's inaugural board of advisers, whose mandate is to direct the luxury company's vision and future.

In 2005, Baccarat was acquired by Starwood Capital Group, which aims to capitalise on its world-famous brand and reputation for excellence to diversify and adapt the brand's portfolio.

"We are going to marry Louis XV with the modern era," said Barry Sternlicht, the CEO of Starwood Capital and chairman of Baccarat.

Meanwhile, on Dubai's prestigious Burj Boulevard, overlooked by Burj Khalifa, the fit-out of Baccarat's first independent boutique in the UAE is



From left clockwise: *Lady Crinoline* chandelier by Jean-Marc Gady; jewellery from *B-Mania* collection 2013; Interior renderings from Baccarat Hotel & Residences New York, a partnership between Starwood Capital and real estate developers Tribeca Associates and *Harcourt* flat-cut crystal glass, first created in 1841.



Baccarat Hotel & Residences  
New York designed by  
Skidmore Owings & Merrill



Ninurta vase designed by Ettore Sottsass Jr, 2002



Océanie vase designed by Thomas Bastide



Ivresse des bois decanter designed by Marcel Wanders



Spirale crystal vase designed by Thomas Bastide



Georges Chevalier crystal vase, 1930



Jean Lartière

One of France's "Meilleurs Ouvriers de France" (Best French Craftsmen)



Candy Light Baby designed by Jaime Hayon to be launched at the Salone Internazionale del Mobile, 2013



*Zenith* Midnight Chandelier  
designed by Philippe Starck

under way. While the company's products have been available in the country for decades through local dealers, the new boutique will specialise in lighting and is targeted at the professional architect and design segment rather than the everyday shopper.

Innovation and beautiful design have always been at the heart of the firm established in 1764, which over the past two-and-a-half centuries has produced countless items for emperors, tsars, maharajas, sheikhs and presidents.

Since Gabriel Aime d'Antigues installed France's first crystal kiln in the town of Baccarat in 1816, the company has aligned itself with the best French artisans, engravers, polisher and designers, and has pioneered new technologies to ensure it remains at the cutting edge.

One of the strengths of the Saint Anne crystalworks is its pursuit of perfection, which results in about 60 per cent of everything it produces being rejected. All the products undergo the most stringent examinations throughout the manufacturing process to ensure the quality the brand is reputed for is maintained.

In 1827, Baccarat was the first French crystal manufacturers to offer spare parts for its chandeliers and it also led the way in the production of coloured crystal in 1840. Red and black crystal items are now synonymous with the company.

In the late 19th century it made history by creating the first electrified 79-light chandelier. The 3.85-metre high chandelier, the *Tsar's Candelabrum*, was created for Tsar Nicholas of Russia.

Today Baccarat is again back in the spotlight thanks to its innovative use of LED in both classic and contemporary chandeliers. Inspired and influenced by some of the greatest creative minds, the master blowers at the kilns have interpreted the design of the world's most demanding architects and designers to create unique flawless masterpieces.


Looking forward to the forthcoming bi-annual EuroLuce at the Salone Internazionale del Mobile, Baccarat has joined forces with a number of leading designers to present a special anniversary collection.

Among the new designs will be Philippe Starck's *Project 1* – a reinterpretation of *Zenith* featuring a reflective Lumisheet. Arik Levi is to present his *Torch* chandelier, while customised ceiling lamps by Philippe Nigro and *Candy* light lamps by Spanish design star Jaime Hayon will also be unveiled.

For the first time Baccarat has worked with Fernando and Humberto Campana, who are known for their love of eco-friendly products. The result is a fixture that features sustainable bamboo and rattan mixed with Baccarat crystal. Another new addition to the design stable is Louise Campbell, who has created another reinterpretation of a *Zenith* chandelier called *Nervous Zenith* using asymmetric crystal pieces and a single candle.

There is also the *Lady Crinoline* by Jean-Marc Gady, which features LED lighting or classic halogen and has already been unveiled at the Maison et Object show in Paris.

Although Baccarat has been producing jewellery since George Chevalier's early pieces in the Thirties, the company has identified the development of jewellery as a vital part of its future. As a result, Dominique Delale has been appointed to direct the development of jewellery and accessories and the new spring/summer collection, *B-Mania* will be launched at Basel World later this month. A new men's range, *Kaleidoscopic*, will follow later this year.

The future of Baccarat seems as bright as its chandeliers as the company, armed with a bevy of top designers and visionaries, fully intends the future to be just as sparkling as the past 250 years. 



*Harcourt Our Fire* by  
Philippe Starck