



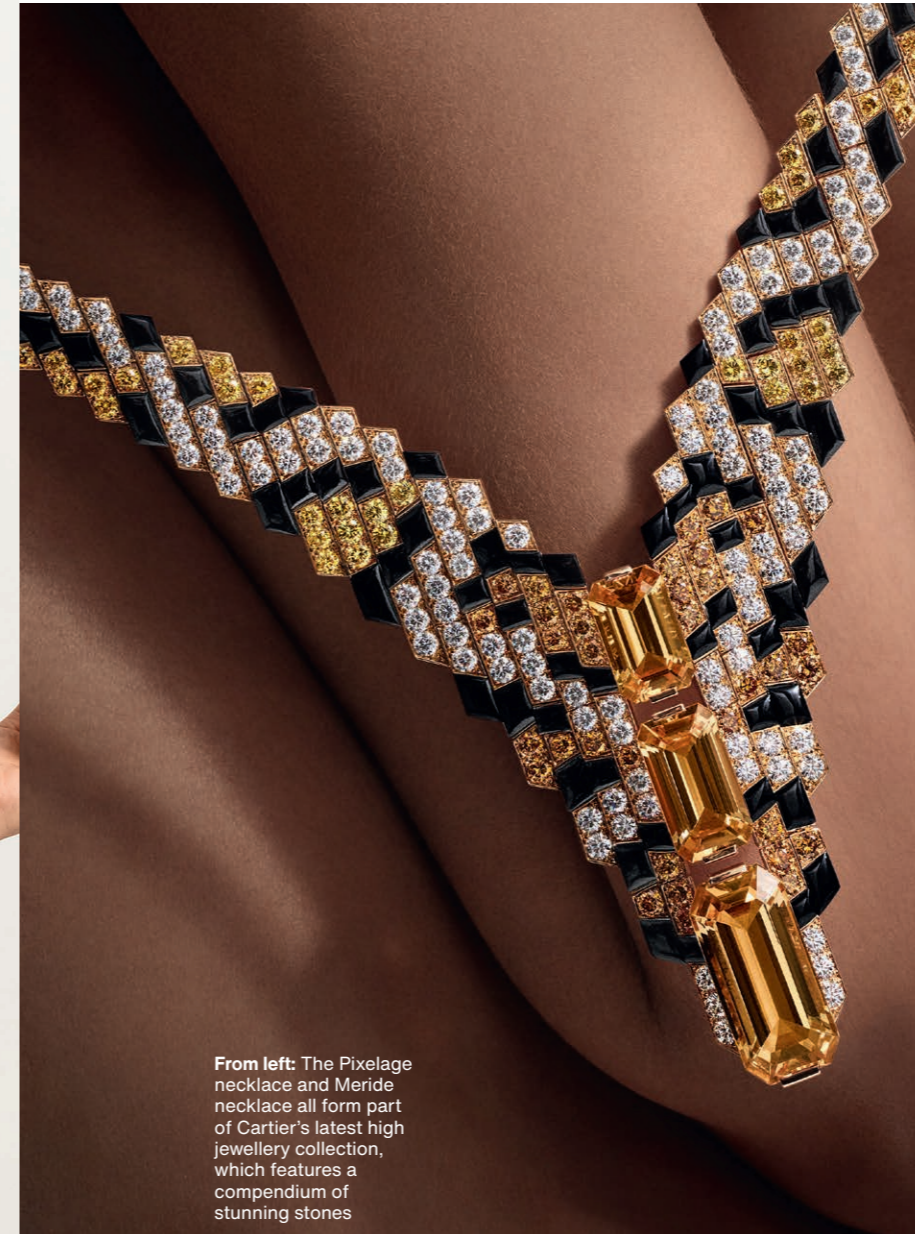
Killer Instincts

The Sixième Sens par Cartier collection appeals to the wearer's sixth sense. Pierre Rainero, the maison's director of image, style and heritage, takes us through its conception *By Ho Yun Kuan*

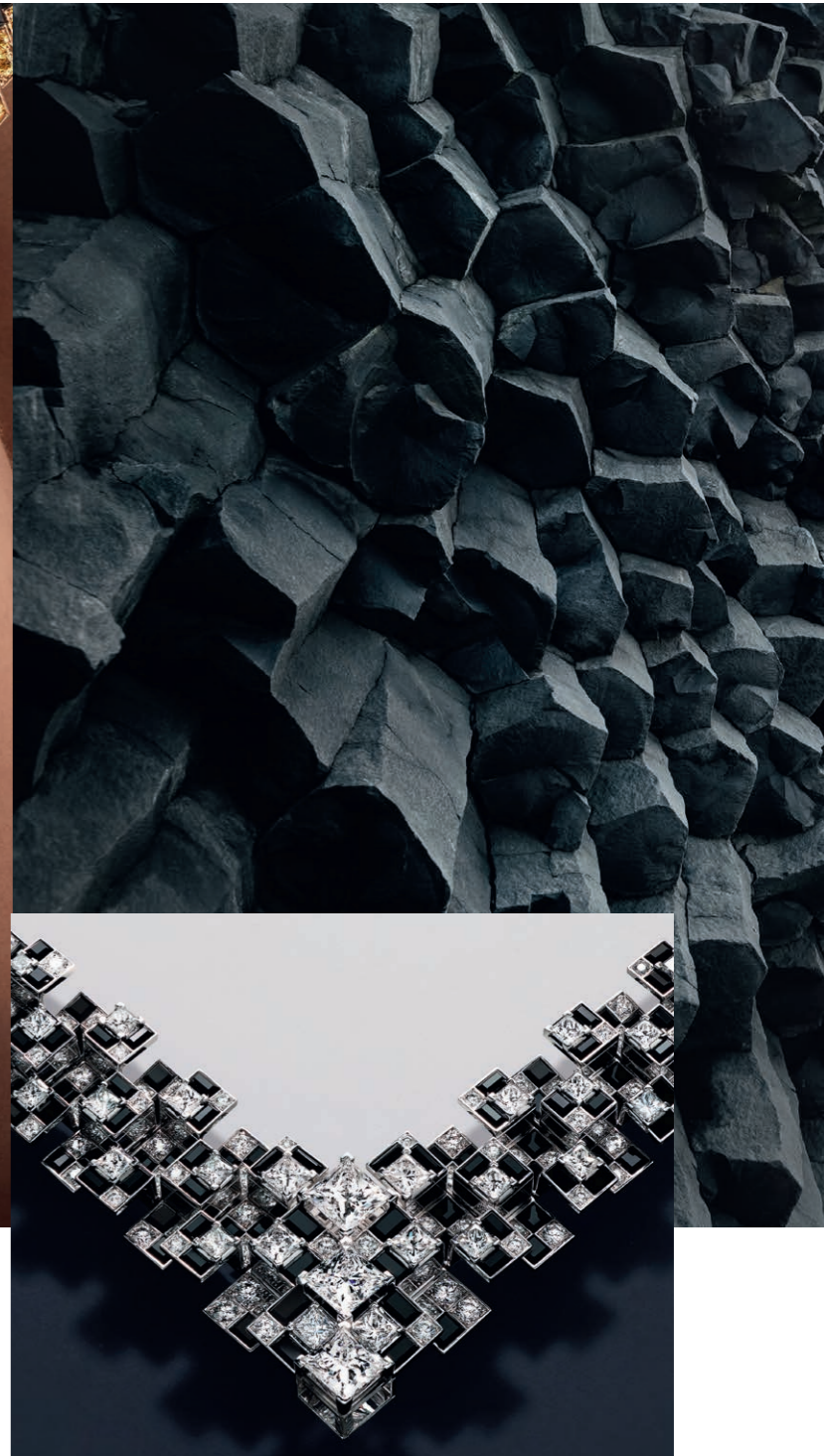


From top: The Coruscant necklace from the Sixième Sens par Cartier collection; Pierre Rainero on how the maison's past constantly informs its future

There is something oddly familiar about the pieces in Cartier's latest high jewellery collection: a certain *je ne sais quoi* that attracts the eye and gives all who know the maison's work a sense of comfort and understanding. That's remarkable, considering that every masterpiece in the collection is new, and certainly not a careless repetition of past designs. The answer lies in the name of the collection: Sixième Sens par Cartier (Sixth Sense by Cartier). Pierre Rainero, Cartier's director of image, style and heritage, explains, "Among all the different artistic expressions, jewellery is the only one that is connected to the body. This creates an intimate relationship



From left: The Pixelage necklace and Meride necklace all form part of Cartier's latest high jewellery collection, which features a compendium of stunning stones



between the wearer and the creation, not only physically, but also on a symbolic level. The jewellery becomes you, and you become the jewellery. That's why the collection is built on exploring different ways of engaging the senses." The senses of sight and touch are involved, unsurprisingly. But there is also an appeal to the human subconscious, and even a stirring of some basal instincts. "We may be human, with our culture and intelligence, but we are also animals and a part of nature," Rainero points out. "We feel instincts, especially when confronted with ferocious creatures such as crocodiles, snakes, tigers or panthers."

The last, being an iconic Cartier symbol, makes its appearance, of course. But just as its live counterpart may prowl through forest undergrowth soundlessly, undetected save for the telltale swish of a tail, so too, is the panther in the Sixième Sens collection a master of disguise. In the Pixelage necklace, its tangible form isn't seen. Instead, its presence can only be detected through its distinctive pelt. Black onyxes represent its spots while white, yellow and orange diamonds, along with three golden topazes totalling 27.34 carats, imitate the rest of its coat. As indicated by its name, the piece has replicated the pattern on the panther's

hide through "pixels" of small gemstones. "It's a new way of exploring the representation of a panther," Rainero shares. "But even when these animals are only alluded to in jewellery, something special happens in your mind and your instincts are awakened." Bigger than its appeal to the sixth sense that exists within every subconscious, the collection, as with all its predecessors, is simply "very Cartier". It may be new, but through the deliberate orchestration of Rainero

and his team, it retains a little of the old Cartier. "I see my role as continuity building, the building of a Cartier style," he explains. "What we do today will become the heritage of tomorrow. Cartier is considered a part of the art world and our pieces are examined by museum curators, specialists and critics. The evolution of Cartier's style is a subject of study. "We are conscious of this, which is why we feel a responsibility towards the



Cartier of the future. We are continuously exploring new ways of conveying beauty, new forms and new aesthetics, but we always keep in mind that every piece has to be recognisable as Cartier and show the same language. This is our work.”

He refers again to the Pixelage necklace. “Everyone knows now that digital images are little dots put together. Our designers and craftsmen are a part of the contemporary world. Naturally, we integrate society’s evolution into the way

we create, while pushing the boundaries of themes that are very Cartier—for instance, the panther.”

The Cartier signature isn’t as overt in the Sharkara necklace but would nevertheless be identifiable to the keen observer or avid collector. “The necklace shows a cascade of colours, from the very white of pure diamonds to the deep pink at the end.”

The French has a term for this usage of colour: *camaïeu*. “It means to play with different nuances of the same colour,” Rainero clarifies. “Cartier has



explored the technique with citrine and topaz before but has recently expanded it to different colours.”

“The shape, the construction, the conception, using stones as a point of departure, the play of colour and the modernity of the final design (in the Sharkara necklace), it’s all very Cartier,” he emphasises.

What one sees when studying Cartier’s collections, then, is the maison’s past seamlessly woven into its future, and an expression of the tenor of the culture in which the jewellery was born. “A collection is like a photograph taken of a moment, not an interruption to a global

process,” Rainero says. “Our evolutions are little evolutions—a new collection does not aim at being a total clash with the previous one. In fact, we don’t like it when an idea is used once and then forgotten. We like ideas that open doors to other ideas.”

“The best way to describe the Cartier style is to say that it’s like a living language. It evolves in a constant search for new forms of beauty and to remain relevant to the people of today. We are motivated to create pieces that people want to wear and want to wear now. My contribution is to ensure that Cartier encapsulates the period that we are living in.”

The diamonds, tourmalines, sapphires and garnets in the Sharkara necklace exhibit a cascade of colours



Clockwise, from top left: The Parhelia ring, Phaen ring and Alaxoa necklace represent an evolution of the jewellery style that is still recognisably Cartier