

JCK

THE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY SINCE 1869

[Part 1 of 2]

Published by
Reed Business
Information.

APRIL 2005

»EXCLUSIVE«

When an Appraisal
Comes Back to

Haunt You

The 'C' That Will Change Your
Diamond Business

Platinum

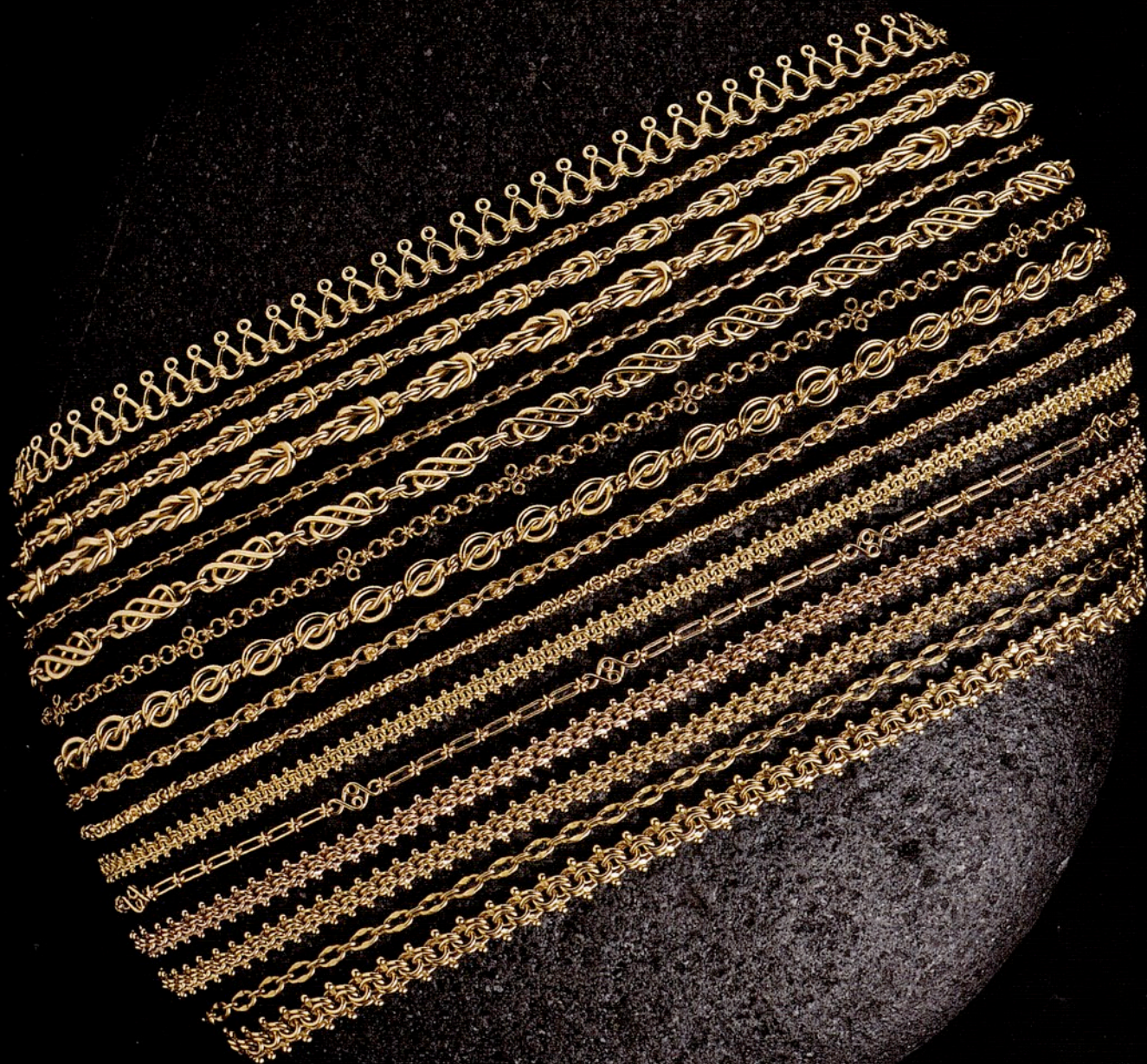
Fashion and Market Report

RETAIL REAL ESTATE:

3

ALTERNATIVES
TO THE MALL

»Hot Jewels From
Oscar Night



What Once Was Old

Some contemporary jewelry designers have put an exceptional modern slant on three ancient techniques.

With fashion's recent emphasis on all things ladylike, many women have been seeing their grandmother's hand-me-down jewelry in a new light as they hunt for long-discarded brooches or flashy right-hand rings. Some jewelry designers also are looking at old jewelry, but with an eye toward education and improvement. Intricate, ancient jewelry techniques such as granulation, creating micro-

ZAFFIRO

In the past 10 years, Elizabeth and Jack Gualtieri of Zaffiro in Portland, Ore., have reinvented an ancient technique. Granulation is a decorative jewelry technique that

BY MONICA CLARE McLAUGHLIN,
HERITAGE EDITOR

Is New Again

[opposite] Handmade chains in 20k gold from **Lucie Heskett-Brem** (www.TheGoldWeaver.com) retail for \$630 to \$2,200 (bracelets), \$1,300 to \$4,800 (necklaces). Photo by Louis Brem

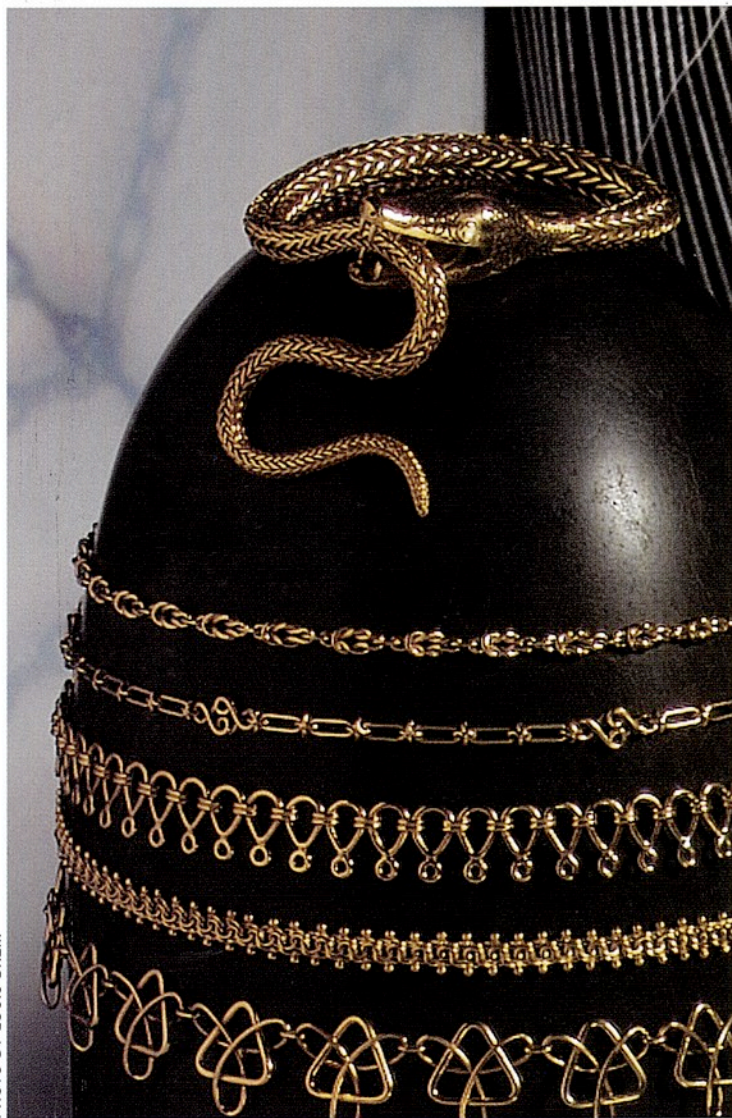


PHOTO BY LOUIS BREM

[above] Handmade snake chain in 20k gold from **Lucie Heskett-Brem** retails for \$7,200. Other chains range from \$630 to \$1,750. [below, left] **Diamond Shawl** has 540 diamonds. [below, right] **Golden Serpent** necklace retails for \$27,000, **Baby Serpent** for \$3,000. Dresses by Silvia Lottenbach Arnold.



PHOTO BY LOUIS BREM



PHOTO BY LOUIS BREM

never been done on this scale before," says Hiserote—a claim that can be made for all of her work.

LUCIE HESKETT-BREM

Like Hiserote and the Gualtieris, Swiss goldsmith Lucie Heskett-Brem is fascinated by antiquity. She's especially interested in the chain-making techniques used by centuries of jewelry designers. Known as "The Gold Weaver," Heskett-Brem painstakingly crafts intricate gold chains by hand, using primarily 20k gold.

Heskett-Brem was introduced to chain-making during a four-year apprenticeship to a goldsmith in Lucerne, Switzerland. "Chain-making was one of the first things we learned," she says, and when the wife of her master brought in a chain for repair, Heskett-Brem had an opportunity to study its intricacies. That's when she fell in love with the process.

"I like the meditative aspect of it," she says, "although most normal people don't like that!" She finds the repetition of forming link after link seductive and almost trancelike, and is happiest when she can find a rhythm in which she can "watch [her] hands work."

Heskett-Brem draws inspiration from chains she finds at antique fairs or flea markets, but her results usually vary from the original, as seen in her Daisy chain. "I saw a Victorian chain I really liked at the Burlington Market in London, and after I went back and tried to create one like it, it wound up extremely different. I went back [to the market] and showed it to the dealer there, and we saw that there was no commonality to the two at all."

When creating a chain, Heskett-Brem is primarily concerned with proportion. She experiments extensively, testing different thicknesses and lengths of gold wire until she hits on the right combination. "It has to move right and sit right in the hand—that is very important, so I make lots of trials. I have to make it my own."

There have been times when she thought she had developed her own design and invented a new chain, but "two years later I saw it in a book! It's very hard to say you invented something, but I'm not worried about something being new, I'm worried about something being right—the optimum density and movement is what I want."

Heskett-Brem's snakes are popular among her buyers and can take months to make. "With the snakes, I want as close to an animal look as I can get—I like to take it a step further and truly make it an animal. Some people are actually afraid when they see them for the first time, and that means I achieved what I wanted."

In November, Heskett-Brem's London dealer, Bentley & Skinner, held a fashion show that paired her talents with those of a Swiss dress designer, Silvia Lottenbach-Arnold. The two created a collection of dresses that emphasized another of Heskett-Brem's popular designs—delicate golden spider webs. Starting with extremely fine machine-made chain, Heskett-Brem alters each link individually. "The links are so minute," she says. "I have to open them and resolder them so that every soldering joint is perfect—they have to be, otherwise the piece is not as delicate and will lose movement." Some of her spider-web designs lay across the hand of the wearer and are secured at finger and wrist, while those used in the fashion show were attached to the gowns—stretching across the model's back or draping down her shoulders. (See "Jewels for Any Body," *JCK*, March 2005, p. 91.)

Based in Lucerne, Heskett-Brem has numerous dealers in the United States. ■