

RARE GEMS

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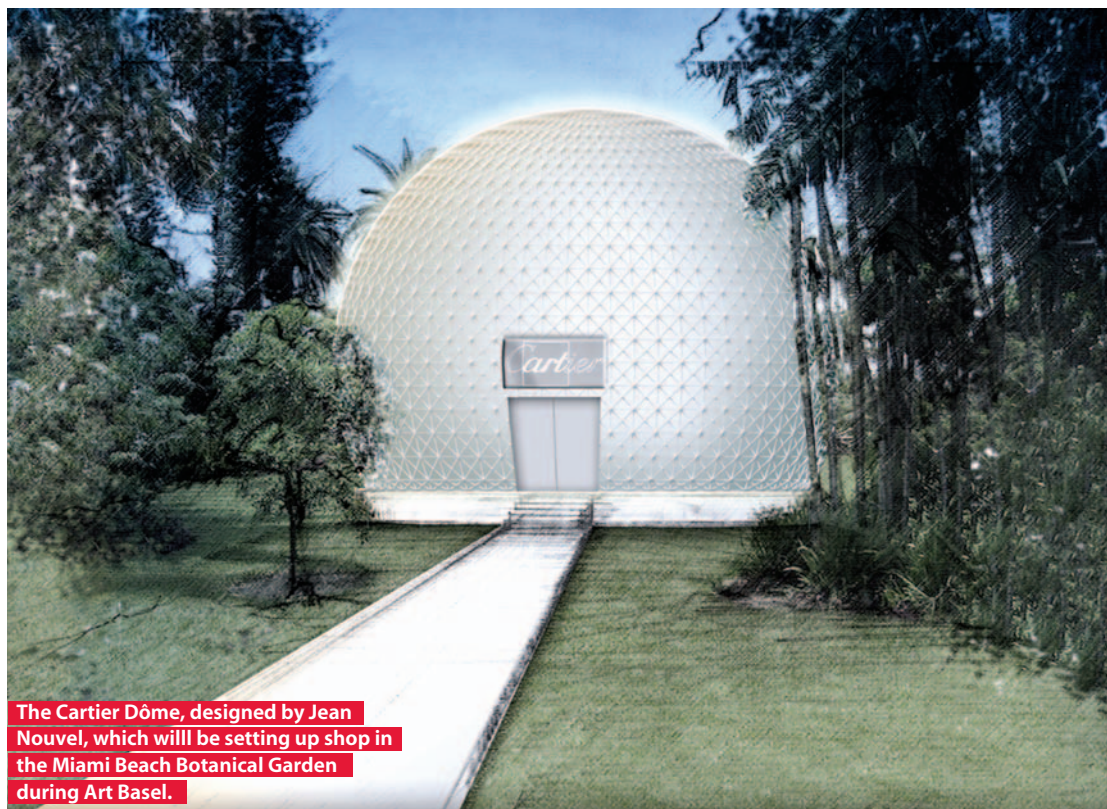
ROCK OF AGES

Cartier Brings Its Stunning Star of the South to Art Basel Miami Beach

Known throughout the haute monde as one of the world's most dazzling gems, the Star of the South is as celebrated for its features as a diamond—carat weight, color, clarity, cut and radiance (in this case, 128.48 carats of VS-2 cushion-cut, fancy light-pinkish-brown, fiery brilliance)—as for its royal provenance.

Originally unearthed in Brazil in 1853 by a slave who, per the local custom, gave it to her owner in exchange for her freedom and a lifetime income, the stone (originally 261.24 carats before being purchased by the renowned diamond cutter Coster Diamonds of Amsterdam in 1856) ranked for many years as one of the world's 10 largest polished diamonds (a century and a half later, it still holds a spot on the list of the top 50), and was acquired by Halphen & Associates of Paris, who bestowed upon it the name Estrella do Sud (Star of the South).

The gem caused a real buzz when it was displayed at the London Exhibition in 1862, and again in 1867 in Paris. In 1870, word of this magnificent stone traveled all the way to India, where it reached the ears of the Maharaja of Baroda, Khanderao Gaekwad, a man referred to by Christie's as "the most prominent jewelry collector of the 19th century." The Maharaja



The Cartier Dôme, designed by Jean Nouvel, which will be setting up shop in the Miami Beach Botanical Garden during Art Basel.

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commissioned an enormous three-tiered diamond necklace (made in part from diamonds he had recently acquired from the collection of Her Imperial Majesty Eugénie, Empress of the French, shortly after the death of her husband, Napoléon III) to set off the 128-carat Star of the South, as well as the pear-shaped 78-carat English Dresden diamond.

Jump forward to 1946 when, in the wake of World War II, the reigning Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda, Sir Pratapsingh (who was known to be the eighth-richest man in the world at that time), caused a great scandal by simultaneously taking as his second wife Sita Devi (a.k.a. "the Indian Wallis Simpson" in the Western media) and relocating the royal family's base of operations, along with many of its treasures, to an enormous Monte Carlo estate. Devi, by many accounts history's most ostentatiously outré maharani, received notoriety for looting the jewels of the Baroda treasury, many dating back to Mughal days. Included among these treasures was that incredible diamond necklace.

Unseen for decades, the Star of the South blipped on the radar once again in 2002, when it was purchased by Cartier from Rustomjee Jamsetjee of

Mumbai. The legendary jewelry house mounted the historic gem on a cuff of platinum set with brilliant and baguette diamonds.

Now you can view this amazing piece of geological history, as well as other jewelry creations that have never been displayed in the U.S., at The Cartier Dôme in the Miami Beach Botanical Garden at this month's Art Basel Miami Beach, where it will be shown among pieces from Cartier's new *Inde Mystérieuse* collection.

"The dynamic setting of the art show, coupled with the vibrant atmosphere of Miami, is the perfect setting for Cartier to present the exceptional artistry and creativity of our jewelry and timepieces," says Cartier North America president and CEO Frédéric de Narp. "It is also an ideal environment to showcase our long-standing and continued commitment to the contemporary arts with the lounge dedicated specifically to the Fondation Cartier."

While the Cartier Dôme will be open to the public every day from 2 to 4 p.m. during Art Basel, it will also be open for VIP guests by appointment and host a series of private events in honor of art-world personalities, including the opening-night dinner co-



The historic 128-carat Star of the South diamond will be on selective view at the Cartier Dôme during Art Basel.

hosted by MoCA on December 4th. Why on view? Well, the Star of the South is for sale and is valued at roughly \$94 million—and that's without the pretty bracelet it's mounted on. So at this year's Art Basel, just remember the letter D—for December (when), Dôme (where), diamonds (what) and dollars (how). ■