

LOVE STORY

Van Cleef & Arpels unveils its
Fifth Avenue makeover.

By Eric Feigenbaum, New York Editor



Above The mezzanine is evocative of a townhouse, complete with a library offering a comfortable yet elegant shopping experience. It also features museum-quality showcases and tabletop vitrines appropriate for the quality of the merchandise.

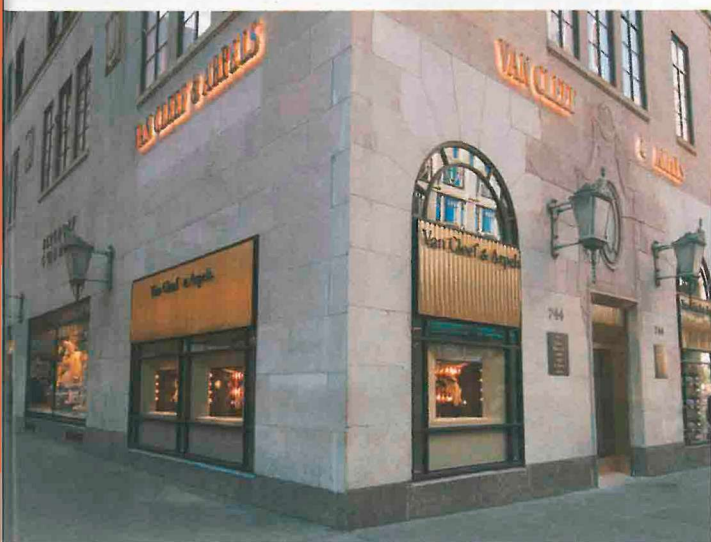
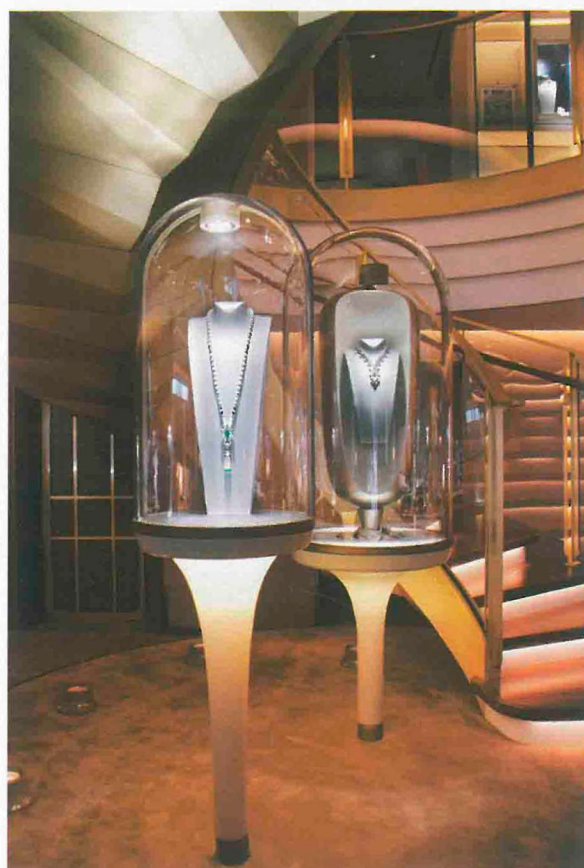
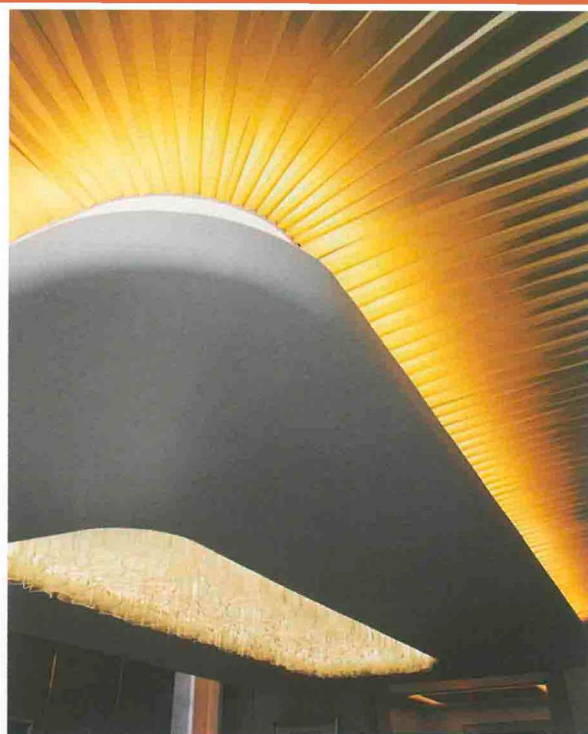
In 1939, Van Cleef & Arpels opened its first New York boutique in Rockefeller Center. Three years later, the company moved to its current location, 744 Fifth Avenue, where the retailer forged a long-term relationship with New York. This past December, the venerable jeweler unveiled the new look of its fully renovated Fifth Avenue boutique. The redesign pays homage to Van Cleef & Arpels' relationship with New York, as it captures the pulse of the city from its aesthetic sensibilities to its art deco architecture.

Every stone in the *maison's* collection evokes an emotion; they all have character and soul. The store is also a gem, clearly eliciting an emotional response. Working with the Jouin Manku Studio (Paris), Van

Cleef & Arpels integrated subtle images of nature and art, while projecting an elegance that is the embodiment of the luxurious brand.

With a nod to art deco, and clever manipulation of existing conditions, they created an intimate environment while doubling the selling space to 3509 square feet. The most significant re-allocation of space included a mezzanine level made accessible to clients. With a dramatic open-to-below, the mezzanine offers a sense of grandeur in a relatively small space.

A new lit sign adds a contemporary stroke to the façade of the 1928 beaux-arts-style building. Additionally, folded brass panels above the windows reference the art deco inspired geometries and vertical lines that define the interior space. Upon entering



Left Positioned on the southwest corner of the 1928 beaux-arts-style Bergdorf Goodman building, folded brass panels above the façade's windows complement New York's affinity for art deco architecture.

Top Folded brass ceiling panels and a cut-glass chandelier add to the elegance of the second level multipurpose room.

Above Merchandise is presented as art under highly stylized dome-shaped vitrines.



The maison's luxurious collection is presented in an architectural jewel-box with a 21st Century twist on art deco design.



the boutique, visitors are greeted by a magnificent sculptural staircase. Visible from both entries, the staircase repeats the folded brass ornamentation of the façade. Meticulously engineered, no two glass panels of the staircase handrail are alike. The concept was so precise that it had to be constructed perfectly offsite, and then rebuilt on location.

The staircase is mounted on a stage-like platform housing a grouping of dome-shaped vitrines that highlight the exquisite gems in the *maison's* collection. Above, a spun brass chandelier, evocative of the sun's rays, finishes this magnificent setting. Nature is also celebrated throughout the boutique with the application of a fine gold fabric wallcovering embroidered with a subtle fern pattern that seems to fade as the eye travels upward. The wall treatment is underscored by an elegant solid cast bronze baseboard, made locally in Brooklyn.

The staircase ushers guests to the redesigned mezzanine, where a residential townhouse setting includes a curated library and the "Alfred & Estelle Bridal Salon," named after the couple who founded the company. The library provides a place to relax while retracing the history and heritage of the Fifth Avenue jeweler through company archives dating back to 1939. The bridal salon, complete with images of Alfred Van Cleef and Estelle Arpels, is a tribute to their love and to the marriage of future couples entering the salon.

A third level houses a private room, offering

clients a more intimate and exclusive shopping experience. A folded brass ceiling with multiple planes or levels adds a three dimensional experience while echoing the façade of the building. Expansive windows flood the room in natural light and provide a connection to the city streets below. An overhead chandelier features 744 pieces of curved glass – a subtle reference to the elegant address, 744 Fifth Avenue. To complete the look of the room, a custom plaster artist from France used a well-guarded technique for the surface treatment of the walls, complementing the striking satin-finish walnut floor.

Founded on the love story between Alfred and Estelle, Van Cleef and Arpels is a beautiful marriage of French culture and New York sensibilities. It's a celebration of nature, culture and couture. This Franco-American *maison* was born in France, but it grew up in New York. ▀

PROJECT SUPPLIERS

RETAILER
Van Cleef & Arpels, New York

DESIGN
Jouin Manku Studio, Paris
Van Cleef & Arpels, New York

ARCHITECTURE
Callison, New York

FLOORING
Tai Ping, Paris
Haywood-Berk Flooring,
New York
ABC Stone, New York

FURNITURE
Pedrali, Bergamo,
Italy via Modalita, New York
Busnelli, Misinto, Italy
Daniel DeMarco & Associates,
Amityville, N.Y.

PROPS/DECORATIVES
Viridis, Norwalk, Conn.

SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS
680 Design, Elk Grove Village, Ill.

WALLCOVERINGS/MATERIALS
Pierre Frey, Paris
Atelier Martin Berger,
Grenoble, France

Above left An elevator with an etched brass paneled door brings clients to an all-purpose room on the second level, appropriate for dinners, meetings or private shopping experiences.

Above right A precisely engineered staircase leading customers to the newly designed mezzanine level is positioned as a dynamic, sculptural focal point.