

precious moment

When jeweler Garrard reestablished itself in London, Tom Bartlett of Waldo Works designed the setting

text: susan welsh photography: ken hayden



Engagement rings may have been Asprey & Garrard's stock in trade, but the marriage of the two English jewelers lasted only four years. And, as with any divorce, the split left both parties in need of a new identity. Architect Tom Bartlett of Waldo Works was hired to design a London flagship that would reestablish the venerable Garrard as a luxury brand under the supervision of creative director Jade Jagger. The two-story 3,850-square-foot interior had to be suitable for Garrard's traditional aristocratic clientele and a flashier, 21st-century breed of royalty. "Duchesses and divas," as Bartlett puts it.

Before Garrard, the architect's projects had been almost exclusively residential—including a collaboration on Jagger's vacation house in Ibiza, Spain. For his first major retail commission, he inclined toward modernism, simultaneously incorporating a dose of gravitas appropriate to a company founded in 1735 and appointed Crown Jeweller by Queen Victoria herself. "It's all about trying to focus on



the jewelry but doing it in a way that's quite simple, instead of putting gilt frames around it," he says.

Bartlett was fortunate in being able to take part of his lead from the site, a Mayfair building that Garrard had occupied from 1911 to 1952. (More recently, it was a bank.) Inspired by the neo-Georgian facade, with its pilastered porch, he extended the idea of measured proportions throughout the main jewelry hall. As he explains it, "There's a rigorous symmetry to the place that a purely modernist solution wouldn't necessarily have." On the other hand, mirrored surfaces and uneven stripes, notably in the main hall's Carrara marble floor, serve to lighten the strict classicism.

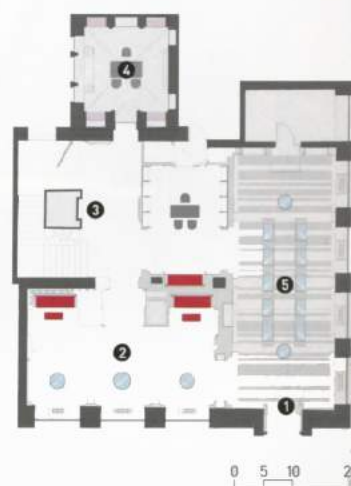
Materials express the notion of Edwardian luxury suggested by the building's history. Facing the entrance is Bartlett's pièce de résistance, a wall veneered with a polished sheet of sterling silver and embellished with Garrard's three royal warrants. Display fixtures complete the opulent mood. Some are rectangular cases plated in highly reflective →

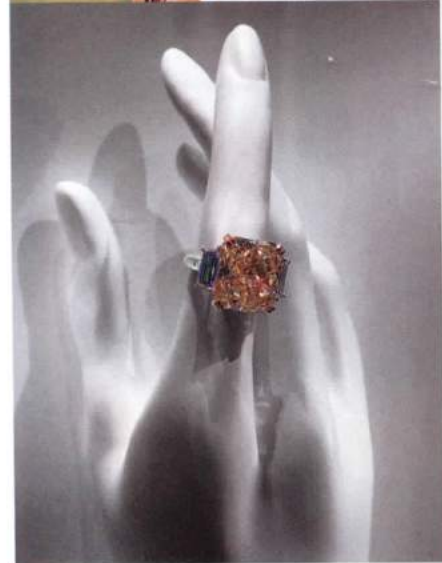
Previous spread: At Garrard in London, Waldo Works principal architect Tom Bartlett preserves neoclassical details in the second-floor couture room, where the jewelry house has branched out to sell richly decorated clothing and accessories. Bartlett's modernizing moves include displaying shoes on acrylic shelves affixed to a mirrored wall.

Top left: Jeans embroidered with semiprecious stones—and priced at more than \$6,000. **Bottom left:** In a private selling area, a desk that graced Garrard store in the 1920s now boasts nickel-plated detailing. The vending machine dispenses charms for bracelets. **Top right:** The second floor's stucco mantelpiece. **Bottom right:** Bartlett's pendants, made of silver necklace chains.

Opposite: In the room set aside for engaged couples, a hydraulic mechanism raises the glass lids of the shagreen-covered display "bowls," a collaboration between Bartlett and leather-goods designer Bi Amberg. Garrard fabricated the custom chandelier made of nickel-plated brass and lead crystal. Bartlett loosely patterned the fixture on an orrery, a model of the solar system.

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 ENGAGEMENT ROOM
- 3 STAIR LOBBY
- 4 CROWN JEWELLER'S
- 5 MAIN HALL





nickel and lined in celadon-colored silk. Others take the form of enormous shagreen-covered bowls set atop satinwood columns.

Working with Jagger, Bartlett came up with a novel statement for a jewelry store: large windows that leave the interior clearly visible from the street. "A lot of jewelers are intimidating—you feel like you've got to make an actual commitment to go in," explains marketing director Brad Harvey. "At Garrard, you're not entering someplace where you're not quite sure what's going on." Natural light streaming through the windows did, however, pose a design challenge. To ensure that the jewels can outsparkle a sunny day, Bartlett employed a combination of cold-cathode and fiber-optic lighting.

Rooms off the main hall cater to specific categories of clients. For the "engagement" room, Bartlett and leather-goods designer Bill Amberg collaborated on two intimate seating niches lined in leather-covered panels in Garrard's signature red. The leather is embossed

with the Garrard hallmark—adopted as the company's logo, at Bartlett's suggestion. The engagement rings themselves can be found in three of the shagreen-covered bowls, also Bartlett-Amberg designs, as well as in conventional cases. There's no sign of a cash register anywhere. (It's hidden behind an arch.) "So that when the card doesn't go through..." he says, smiling conspiratorially. "That's one of the first things that I was told, not to have any visible paying places."

The second floor houses silver, men's accessories, and couture, a new department that offers jewel-encrusted women's fashions expressing the diva side of Garrard's personality. Finding more of the building's original features upstairs, Bartlett extensively restored the molded paneling and mahogany doors and treated them as a frame for modern additions such as white-lacquered cabinets with sides that exhibit a pattern of cutout stripes.

The effect, both here and downstairs, is of history—a very refined, very English history—



adapted to a vibrant present. "It's an Englishness without that awful faux-English pomp," says Bartlett, who hopes the design doesn't appear to take itself too seriously. "There are supposed to be witty bits in it." He points out, for example, that the shagreen-covered bowls are meant to be "funny." When the hydraulically powered glass lids whirl open the way a flyir saucer's might, they do tend to prompt delighted smiles. As Bartlett admits with typical modesty or classic British understatement, "Salad bowls full of jewelry, covered in fish skin. One realizes they are vaguely absurd."

PROJECT TEAM: ARITA PATEL; SASHA VON MEISTER.

CHAIR FABRIC (PRIVATE SELLING AREA): LELIEVRE. CHAIR RESTORATION, UPHOLSTERING (PRIVATE SELLING AREA, CROWN JEWELLER'S ROOM): NEO STEFANO. CUSTOM COCKTAIL TABLE (ENGAGEMENT ROOM): MURPHY STANWIX PARTNERSHIP. SILVER WALL (MAIN HALL), CABINETRY: BENBOW INTERIORS. WAX TREATMENT (CROWN JEWELLER'S ROOM): KNOWLES & CHARTOU (SILK). ALBERT E. CHAPMAN (INSTALLATION). LIGHTING CONSULTANT: ISOMETRIX LIGHTING + DESIGN. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: ALAN BAXTER & ASSOCIATES. MEP: T. DUNWOODY PARTNERS. ARCHITECT OF RECORD: KAREN THATCHER ASSOCIATES. PROJECT MANAGER: GVA GRIMLEY.

Top left: In the main hall, Bartlett veneered a wall with a sheet of sterling silver; Garrard's three royal warrants are bonded onto it. **Bottom left:** A 19-carat yellow diamond ring. **Top right:** In the Crown Jeweller's room, Queen Anne-style chairs face a regulator clock by the Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company, which merged with Garrard in 1952. **Bottom right:** An 18-karat yellow gold necklace.

Opposite: Engaged couples can view rings in a niche lined in leather-covered panels, another Amberg collaboration; the ottoman is also by Bartlett and Amberg. Bartlett designed the cocktail table.

