



Cartier Reopens Historic Rue de la Paix Flagship

By Lily Templeton



The Fauna and Flora salon on the second floor overlooking the newly created courtyard. Fabrice Fouillet/Courtesy of Cartier

PARIS — To the casual eye there’s nothing amiss on Rue de la Paix, from the view on the Vendôme column and the elegant sandstone buildings to [Cartier’s](#) black marble facade.

But this much talked about feature is perhaps the only unchanged element in the jeweler’s historic Parisian home, which opened in 1899 at 13 Rue de la Paix. And even the facade has been offered a fresh livery, with the addition of a vertical plant design by [Cartier](#) perfumes designer Mathilde Laurent in collaboration with botanical design specialist Studio Mary Lennox.

“Those who knew the boutique from 2005 until [its closure in 2020] would not recognize it at all,” Cartier chief executive officer Cyrille Vigneron told WWD, expecting a “very big surprise” as the store has entirely been rethought in this major overhaul, which started in June 2020.

Indeed, gone are the columns, Eiffel-style iron features and central staircase of the 2005 renovation, which had sought to take the store to its early 20th-century roots. In their stead are airy spaces flooded with natural light, full of blended references that can't quite be pinpointed.

The building, totaling 32,300 square feet spread over six levels, includes 10 salons and myriad comfortable nooks and plush crannies for customers to discover the jeweler's offering more than the 15,000 square feet dedicated to retail.

Also here are the high jewelry workshop and the house archives as well as the Residence, a private space imagined as Cartier's take on a Parisian apartment, complete with a dining room, large kitchen and winter garden.

The latter is one of many hidden spaces Vigneron expects will draw questions on whether they're original or new features of the store.

And more than other stores, the three "temples" of Paris' Rue de la Paix, London's New Bond Street and New York's Mansion have "a specific role to connect the past, the present and the future," added Arnaud Carrez, Cartier's senior vice president and chief marketing officer, as they are at once the starting point of Cartier's multigenerational history and "tangible addresses, tangible elements of who we are today."



The bedrock of this major overhaul, which continues the work initiated with the 2018 revamp of London's New Bond Street store and pursued in New York's recently unveiled Mansion, is the parallel Vigneron draws between Cartier as a brand of "living heritage" and the long, layered histories of the cities around these key stores.

The CEO explained that each city "has more layers than we usually recognize" and that, as such, limiting the renovation to a particular period would be leaving parts of the house heritage out of the frame.

"In some ways, [the renovated flagship] is a global trip in time and space. It respects all the periods without being anchored in any," continued Vigneron, for whom "timelessness, or eternity, isn't what ages well, it's what goes out of time."

Further cementing this idea of layers is the choice of three Paris-based architect teams, rather than a single signature, for the project.

The journey into the new "13 Paix," as it is dubbed, starts outside the store, with a kiosk for initial orientation before visitors are handed over to a team of concierges that direct them across the ground floor, home to watches, leather goods and other accessories. It is the first of three floors designed by architectural practice Moinard Bétaille.

Drawing the eyes toward the back is an entirely new atrium topped with a skylight. It mimics the courtyard of a Parisian building. Its proportions and perspectives have been tweaked so the result would look "typically Parisian but in a way which is a bit theatrical" so visitors understand it has been recreated, said Vigneron.

Mirrored windows overlook this courtyard, imagined by **Claire Bétaille and Bruno Moinard**, as the axis to the store's six floors. These are as ornamental as they are functional, participating in the store's Parisian atmosphere while giving staff in the back office the ability to observe the store's floors.

On a wood panel in one of the ground floor salons, the words of French artist and writer Jean Cocteau, describing the jeweler as "the subtle magician, who dangles slivers of the moon on a thread of sun," are inscribed on a lacquered wooden panel. In another, it's the rare books and archives of Louis Cartier that nod to the man who built the house's reputed style.

The new main staircase leads to the first floor and the former office of Jeanne Toussaint, the house's head of design between 1933 and 1970, now turned into an eponymous salon overlooking the Rue de la Paix. It is the central feature of the first floor, otherwise turned over to engagement and wedding jewelry.

High jewelry takes pride of place on the second floor, with salons named and decorated according to influences underpinning the Cartier style, from India to flora. There is also the "Inspiration" salon, dedicated to special orders, which are then made in the in-store ateliers.

The third and fourth floors and a segment of the fifth dedicated to the archives have been designed by Larène Barbier Tardrew and Romain Jourdan, of the Studioparisien agency. Customer service takes place on the third floor in a succession of small salons, while a customization bar offers options like engraving. There's even a space offering creative activities for children.

One floor higher are the high jewelry atelier and its 18 work benches, bathed in natural light both from the interior skylight and the street outside.

Topping the house are the archives and, in another part, the Residence designed by architectural whiz kid Laura Gonzales, an intimate space where garlands of glass branches eventually connect with the vegetal decor outside, closing the loop.

Throughout the six stories are works by local artisans and masters of arts, like a stone marquetry panel by Hervé Obligi, with its interlaced wave lifted from a 2014



The stone marquetry panel designed by Hervé Obligi in the Art Déco salon. Fabrice Fouillet/Courtesy of Cartier

Elsewhere, references become more abstract, like the ground floor's straw marquetry panel inlaid with glass, a work by Lison de Caune and Jean-Daniel Gary, nodding to Cartier's spotted panther.

Calling upon the expertise of local talents for his historic flagship is not just a canny choice, it's part and parcel of Vigneron's vision of "creativity as a collective endeavor" and a store as an intrinsic part of the urbanism of the city.

Like the many high-visibility projects from luxury houses that have come to completion on Place Vendôme, Avenue Montaigne or the Champs-Élysées, 13 Paix "contributes to making Paris interesting and to keep the interest of customers from around the world [who] come to see it and to shop [in the city]," he noted.

Beyond the renovation of a single store, historic birthplace as it may be, "13 Paix is a part of a big, significant retail transformation that is projecting Cartier in a new dimension," said Carrez, with stores seen as "a living space — with transactions," becoming "a place where different communities want to engage" or celebrate personal milestones.

Expect experiences galore at 13 Paix but in Vigneron's opinion, experiential retail is "not transforming a store into a nightclub."

Instead, it should be about immersing visitors into the culture of Cartier, offering conversation starters like the many intriguing artisanal works, since "exclusiveness does not go against the spirit of sharing," Carrez said.

That said, exclusives there will be. In honor of its reopening, 13 Paix will offer two Panther watches, a "Necessaire à Parfum" set as well as three exceptional limited editions of its Tonneau, Tank Asymétrique and Cloche models, reworked to feature the number 13 at 12 o'clock and the word "Paix" (or peace, after the street name) at 1 o'clock.