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The *Faithful* Shopper:

Madison Avenue, Boulevard of Brilliant Baubles



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Madison Avenue's status as a luxury jewelry destination was a long time coming, but it's certainly here to stay. Despite last year's blip, the glitter literally remains, and has even grown, on the Miracle Mile as new jewelers have joined longstanding tenants.

Ironically, this most famous of New York thoroughfares wasn't even part of the original street grid plan of 1811. It was created twenty five years later by Samuel B. Ruggles, the lawyer and real estate developer who created Gramercy Park and helped encourage the development of Union Square.

Clothiers moved onto the avenue in the late 1890s, and the Avenue, eventually became home to neighborhood-oriented retail catering to the area's wealthy residents - jewelers, hobby stores, etc., all small private boutiques, abounded along the thoroughfare. International luxury was founded on Fifth Avenue to the West and Park Avenue, one block east.

Through much of the 20th Century, Madison Avenue was the literal and symbolic home of the advertising industry (*Mad Men*, indeed), locals who lived uptown, and the stores that served them.

Then came **Ralph**.



Ralph Lauren's purchase of the Rhinelander mansion in the late 1980s as a showcase store for his brand brought other national and internationally known retailers, including jewelers. Further retail development was encouraged with the 1996 formation of the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District, a partnership of property owners, merchants, residents and elected officials who work to enhance the quality of life for the community and its visitors.

Of course, there are high-end apparel merchants on the avenue also - **Searle, Prada**. But Madison really has become home to jewelers, who favor the small boutiques that line the avenue to give personalized service. As with other retail there, the past two decades have brought internationally known names to join traditional locals.

Last year saw a shuffling of the players, with some moving to new locations on the Avenue, others leaving for other pastures. Today's line-up: *Aaron Basha, Alex's Jewelry, Asprey, Brequet, Blancpain, Camilla Dietz Bergero, Canturi Jewels, Cecile et Jeanne, Chanel, Chopard, Damiani, David Webb Precious Jewels, David Yurman, de Grisogono, Di Modolo, Dominique Cohen, DuMont Estate Jewelry, Edith Weber Antique Jewelry, Elizabeth Locke at Piepers & Kojen, Erwin Pearl, Eve Jewelry, F.P. Journe, Fabrizio Giannone, Fanelli Antique Timepieces, Fred Leighton, Graff, Ilias LaLaounis, Ivanka Trump Collection, J.J. Marco, Jack Vartanian, Jaded, Jewelbox on Madison, JMS & Eva Ltd., Judith Ripka, Julius Cohen, Kaufmann de Suisse, Kentshire, Kieselstein-Cord, Kwiat, Lanciani, L'Etoile Royale, Leviev, Mauboussin, Michael Ashton, Michael Dawkins, Pomellato, R.S. Durant, Reinstein/Ross, Solange Azagury-Partridge, Stephen P. Kahan, Stephen Russell, VBH, Yael Sonia, and Zigzag.* Not all of these sell multi-million dollar baubles - some also offer fine fashion pieces, as well.



Soon to come: **Hublot Watches** and **Girard Perregaux** shortly will join the timepiece wars on the Avenue.

Many of the above will be actively involved in an upcoming event and benefit to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Central Park Conservancy. Sponsored by Platinum Guild International U.S.A. and W Magazine, Madison Avenue Platinum Jewels in Bloom will be held from April 8 to 17, with store windows from 57th to 86th Streets celebrating spring with Central Park flowers and their own glittering merchandise. The floral arrangements, curated by the Central Park Conservancy's curators, will be accessorized by strategically placed jewelry, mostly platinum. A portion of the sales will be donated to the Conservancy to keep New York City's backyard as beautiful as the storefronts on Madison!



Whether you're looking for a serious piece of bling as a gift (or for yourself) or merely window-shopping, Madison Avenue's jewelers off

quality, innovation and more than a little entertainment. And in spring, these merchants will be doing their part to keep New York beautiful. Happy Shopping!

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