



mayfair times

ARNAUD BAMBERGER
Cartier boss on
cultivating cool

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Life through a lens

JEWELLERY SPECIAL
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February 14



Fashion with flare

MEN'S ACCESSORIES IS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING AREAS OF FASHION, BUT CARTIER'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MAN ABOUT TOWN ARNAUD BAMBERGER THINKS MEN SHOULD BE EVEN MORE DECORATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL IN THE WAY THEY DRESS. TOM CHAMBERLIN TAKES NOTE

"It is the centre of London, the most concentrated street in the world for luxury, a great area for shopping – the best," says Arnaud Bamberger, executive director of Cartier UK, of Mayfair. "Within a few hundred yards between Old Bond Street and New Bond Street, there are a huge number of brands. I have been all over the world and I don't know of any other place, whether Milan or Paris or Geneva, where you can find [that]."

As a journalist on a magazine for and about Mayfair, you can imagine my delight at Arnaud's opening words in our interview. "Hurrah – an enthusiast," I think, and a good thing that the enthusiast in question is one of the great characters in luxury.

Arnaud – a French national and a tri-lingual Anglophile – is strictly a businessman by trade. But the colossal success of Cartier in London, and its involvement with the arts, events and new product launches have perched him on the top of the luxury ladder. Sitting in his office on Bond Street, we meet to discuss Mayfair and the way in which men are now joining the luxury fold – and he has plenty to say.

Proselytising for British style and explaining how it has influenced him, he says: "There is a kind of natural elegance of the Brits in the way they dress in the countryside or in the street, which makes it interesting. All of this is linked to the tradition of Savile Row. It has spread out, but even though it is not in Savile Row, it is still the spirit of Savile Row. Tailors around London generally have trained there or refer to it, even if they are not physically there – but usually they are not very far away. I have been going to the same tailor for 20 years and he has either been on Savile Row or near it."

The tailor he speaks of is John Kent, one third of the

tailoring triumvirate Kent, Haste & Lachter, tailor to the Duke of Edinburgh and all manner of illustrious clients. It did not take long for Bamberger, on his arrival in the UK in 1992, to add himself to Mr Kent's roster.

He recalls: "When I arrived here 21 years ago, I asked an Italian Count friend of mine, as he was quite well dressed, 'Where do you go?' And he said, 'Oh, I have a tailor that I have been going to forever called John Kent.' He introduced me to him, and we got on so well straight away that John is almost like a friend. I don't have to order anything when I go there, but I go the old-fashioned way you 'go' to your tailor."

During the course of their knowing each other, Kent partnered up with his protégé and fellow master tailor Terry Haste and shirt-making supremo Stephen Lachter, of whose services Bamberger has availed himself as a result.

Sartorially, he seems to have it sorted. "It's very simple – I either go to Ralph Lauren for day-to-day clothes, which is easy as it fits me perfectly, so I am a very good customer of Ralph Lauren," he says. "Or I like to personalise the things I have, and through a tailor you can make whatever you like – whether a monogram on the flap, lining, fun extras or anything. With John, I am very happy and I am very faithful to him, and I do not intend to change – this is it."

As he points out the extras he has on his outfit, I spot next to his buttonhole a curious crimson threading, much like a mother might put on her child's school uniform to identify it from other children's. He catches me staring, and explains that it is his Légion d'honneur. Clearly they haven't forgotten about him back home.

Moving to discussing men's style, Arnaud does not pull

any punches and is quite clear about his style approach. He sees style and dressing almost like a puzzle in which you have to try different stratagems before you succeed. Even if you hitherto had all the sartorial aplomb of a fairground attendant, a little extra can make all the difference.

He explains: "I always wear a hankie – if I don't wear one I feel naked. There is always a bit of eccentricity needed in the way you look, whether it be through the socks, belt, tie, anything. It is the way you portray yourself, the way you are, that matters, and you are either elegant or you are not elegant. If you use your handkerchief as a pochette, but not correctly, it doesn't work. If you put it in too much, even in your overcoat it looks silly. You have to understand what works for you and how you dress. It is that simple."

Is this really something a lot of men are doing? "More and more," he insists, "but it needs confidence, and the problem is that there are too many men with no confidence. That is what one needs – I have this confidence. So build on confidence, and have one extra thing that people will not expect."

The two Cartier "nail" bracelets on his wrist, which are part of the current Bamberger look, are the next curios we discuss. "I found the first nail bracelet in an antique shop and I bought it, I wore it and I loved it," he says. "It is very unisex, and it was a piece that was made for Cartier New York in the beginning, so it is very rare. Then I thought that one was dull, so I found another and put two together."

Men's accessorising is on the rise, partly as a progression from electronic accessories, iPad and iPhone cases, and wallets, pocket squares and so on are where a large amount of revenue now comes from. Burberry's men's accessories



CARTIER TANK NORMALE WRISTWATCH



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sales rose 30 per cent last year, while Tom Ford's accessories sales were up 20 per cent and are forecast for a further 25 per cent growth next year with the release of the Tom Ford sneaker.

Since the more fashion-curious and experimental tend to outgun the regular buyer, tie pins and extravagant cufflinks are becoming more of a fixture. Although for now at least, Arnaud agrees, the market is limited, "there is always a market for bespoke – things that make you different, special. It may be a bit limited, but those who are looking are doing so in London. But we are into big jewellery, women's jewellery, which drives our business more than men's jewellery. We are a jeweller for ladies."

It is jewellery that Cartier has its mind on at present, as this month it wraps up the largest ever exhibition it has held at the Grand Palais in Paris. Part of the job of a heritage brand like La Maison Cartier is the curating of its history to dictate what comes next. The exhibition is as ambitious and large as any jewellery exhibition in history.

Cartier keeps itself ahead of the game in enterprising ways, and Arnaud is the personification of that. With a touch of the Duke of Windsor, he allows people to see his personality through his style. He lets what he wears be dictated by who he is, not the other way around, and thinks, probably correctly, that's the right way round.

CARTIER JUSTE UN CLOU (JUST A NAIL) BRACELET