

JEWELRY

Showcase

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Under the Crown
UNDERTHECROWN.COM



UNDER THE Crown Re-Loved Treasures

Today's jewelry consumers are looking for unique and individual pieces that complement their wardrobes and personality. In meeting this demand, one of the fastest growing sectors is estate jewelry. And, one of the leading estate jewelry dealers is *Under the Crown*®. To learn more about this multi-generational company, founded by Bernard Nacht in 1906, we spoke with Alan Nacht and Ross Nacht, who represent the third and fourth generations of the New York-based company.

Interview conducted by Cynthia Unnimayar

Q: Please give us a bit of background on *Under the Crown*®.

Alan Nacht: The company was started when my grandfather, Bernard Nacht, began selling diamonds and jewelry to the jewelry trade. Back then, the only way to purchase estate jewelry was through pawnbroker auctions, which had very different connotations than a pawnbroker today. He began selling this jewelry, first out of his car and then moved to a space in Lower Manhattan, where he started working with retail stores and wholesalers. There were no dealer showplaces or diamond district. The big auction houses either didn't exist yet or didn't sell jewelry in New York. Bernard was able to obtain some remarkable pieces from different time periods. Over the years, the company has grown to include different divisions under our trademark brand, *Under the Crown*®, which focuses on antique and estate jewelry.

Q: Why the focus on estate jewelry?

Alan Nacht: The most exciting aspect of dealing with estate jewelry is that each piece has a story behind it and is rich with history and culture. The craftsmanship, individuality and various origins or provenances of the different time periods imbue our collection with a timeless appeal. Estate jewelry includes everything from antique, period, retro and pre-owned signed to special modern styles, and women enjoy wearing it.

Q: Have you seen the popularity of estate jewelry increasing?

Ross Nacht: Yes, definitely. Although certain customers have always looked for vintage pieces, there has been growing popularity over the past ten to fifteen years, and many retailers are devoting cases to estate jewelry. The contemporary woman wants pieces that are individual and different than what her friends and peers are wearing. Auction houses recognized the uniqueness of period jewelry and started promoting more to the consumer rather than their once primary audience of trade dealers.

Another very important reason for this rising popularity is that Millennials are increasingly looking for authentic vintage engagements rings. They see these not only as unique and elegant, but that they don't impact the environment since the carbon footprint was made long ago. In a word, antique pieces can be considered *re-loved*, providing *eco-friendly* timeless beauty.

Q: What is the advantage to retailers to carry estate/antique jewelry?

Alan Nacht: Aside from the obvious fact that it is in demand by their customers, this type of jewelry also brings strong margins for retailers. Most pieces are unique and prices are largely determined by its history and relevance. With *Under the Crown*®, we have developed an innovative jewelry program for retailers, which will generate sales in a fast and simple manner. Based on jewelers' experience of estate jewelry patterns in their area, we can create a unique showcase of antique and estate exclusively for them. Whether five or five hundred items of jewelry, we can put together a collection based on the size, budget and needs of their store. Also, estate jewelry comes in a variety of styles and price points, making it attractive to a wide range of customers.

Q: How do you educate sales teams about selling estate jewelry?

Ross Nacht: We work with our partner retailers in many ways. Our *DocuJewel*® is a registered and trademarked point-of-sales tool. This document contains a detailed description, history and photograph of each item in their estate jewelry inventory. It not only provides sales associates with all vital information that a store will need for selling to their clients, but it also assures the integrity of each piece of jewelry to the final customer, thus increasing sales. Each piece of jewelry at the time of sale comes with a laminated *DocuJewel*®. Also, once we start working with our partner retailers, we understand the types of antique and vintage jewelry that they and their clients prefer, which allows us to look and treasure hunt those pieces to meet their needs.

Q: What are the other divisions that make up *Under the Crown*®?

Alan Nacht: The popularity and recession-proof resilience of the bridal market led us to develop a collection of pre-owned and period engagement rings called *Simply Engaging*®. Styles include rings from the Victorian, Edwardian, Art Deco, Retro and Modern eras. We are finding that Millennials, in particular, are drawn to the *Simply Engaging*® collections when they look for *re-loved* engagement rings.

Another brand is *Crown Jubilee*®. Re-fashioned from old mine-cut and European-cut diamonds, *Crown Jubilee*® is a table-less diamond with faceting coming to a subtle peak at the top of the stone, which aligns in perfect harmony with the bottom of the stone. The unique faceting reflects and refracts the light, which gives it more brilliance.

Concluding comments.

As a family-run enterprise with more than 110 years of experience, providing excellent customer service, we look forward to bringing more heirlooms to customers around the globe so they can cherish these *Re-Loved Treasures*.

Under the Crown
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Art Deco ruby, diamond and rock crystal clips. (Lang Antiques)



Art Deco old-mine-cut diamond and onyx brooch in platinum ca 1925. (Under the Crown)

Art Deco diamond bracelet. (Gemolithos)



Art Deco diamond clip. (Gemolithos)



Art Deco emerald and diamond necklace in platinum, ca 1915-25. (Lang Antiques)

In terms of metals, the very strong platinum was perfect to hold the gemstones, without using much metal. This made the jewelry very light and placed the importance on gemstones rather than the metal. A less expensive substitute for platinum was platinum.

In gemstones, new cuts were introduced to suit the geometric motifs. Baguettes, calibrated stones, trapezes, half-moons, barrettes, triangles and prisms all gave a totally new dimension to the design, even in simple and repeatedly used forms and motifs from other decades.

In the 1930s, in addition to the gemstones mentioned above, other favorite gems were malachite, turquoise, dyed chalcedony, amber, chrysoprase and the new cultured pearls, which appeared in the market around 1921. Mother-of-pearl, plastic and other synthetic materials, mostly bakelite, were also popular. Lacquer in jewelry and accessories, such as cigarette cases, replaced the enameling of the Art Nouveau period.

The most famous jewelers, apart from the artist-jewelers mentioned above, were Chaumet, Cartier, Boucheron, Mellerio, Lacloue, Mauboussin, Van Cleef & Arpels (around 1934, the company created the famous *Ludo Hexagone* bracelet and the revolutionary *Invisible Setting*), René Boivin, Louis Aucoc, Suzanne Belperron, Walfers, Ostertag, Janesich, Wolfers, Jensen, Tiffany & Co, Black Star & Frost, Shreve & Co, Oscar Heyman & Bros, Maison Birks, Charlton & Co, William Scheer Inc. and Udall & Ballou.

Prized and often imitated today, Art Deco jewelry is indeed a wonderful addition to any woman's jewelry wardrobe. ♦

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