

# Jewellery

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# A PRECIOUS DECLARATION OF LOVE, FROM BEYER TO ZURICH

BY ISABELLE CERBONESCHI

The Ornamenta high jewellery collection by Beyer, the oldest watch retailer in the world, can be seen as a declaration of love for Zurich. Every piece in the collection – rings, necklaces, earrings and cufflinks – is modelled after an architectural feature of the city's historic buildings. This first chapter draws inspiration from the Fraumünster.



Cufflinks set with two green tourmalines (2.75 cts), brilliants and sapphires. ©Beyer

**C**ertain addresses are sure to capture the attention of watch and jewellery connoisseurs. Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich is one, home to Beyer Chronometrie – the oldest watch retailer in the world. Established in 1760, which makes it a contemporary of Abraham-Louis Breguet, the company opened its first store in Zurich in 1860 and has been passed down through eight generations of the same family.

Two decades ago, it expanded into jewellery. "Beyer is famed for its watches, if only for its name, Beyer Chronometrie, but people are less familiar with its jewellery. It was important that we find a way to demonstrate our expertise," says head of marketing Philippe Meyer.

Why follow the crowd? Why not do different? Rather than commission others to make its jewellery, as many brands do, Beyer began a new chapter and in 2003 opened its own Goldsmith's Department, appointing Željko Gregurek at its head on January 1, 2023. The Ornamenta collection blossomed under his stewardship. "Last year we began work on a special project," he explains. "The Beyer store is one of Zurich's oldest emblems. Why not create a collection that tells our story and takes inspiration from the city's landmarks?"

## The Fraumünster, a former abbey for women

"We visited countless historic buildings across the city," Gregurek continues. "A specially created team went around photographing architectural features which could be transcribed into jewellery. We eventually decided that our inspiration would be the Fraumünster, a short walk from the Beyer store."

The symbolic link to the Ornamenta collection is all the more evocative in the light of the building's history. Before it became a reformed church, the Fraumünster was built by Louis the German for his daughter, Hildegard, and was administered by an abbess until its dissolution during the Reformation, led by Ulrich Zwingli. Thus it makes complete sense that a place occupied for centuries by women, and whose name translates as "women's minster", should inspire a collection of jewellery intended mainly for a female clientele.

With the building now identified, the department could move on to the next stage, namely "start sketching and decide which architectural details would become the inspiration for the Ornamenta collection. After consulting the original plans for the Fraumünster we chose three motifs and, working from them, designed the magnificent jewellery in the collection."



Ring with an unheated cushion-cut Sri Lankan sapphire (5.006 cts) and brilliants. ©Beyer



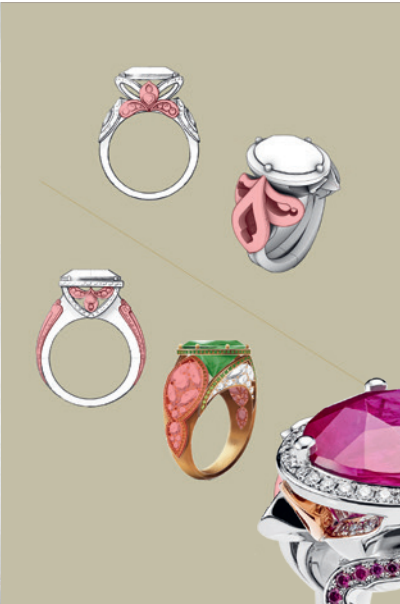
Ring with a green tourmaline (18.76 cts) and 118 brilliant-cut champagne diamonds. ©Beyer



Ring with a green tourmaline (5.12 cts) and 144 brilliant-cut champagne diamonds. ©Beyer



Ring with a Muzo emerald (4.418 cts), tsavorites and brilliants. ©Beyer



Ring inspired by an architectural detail from the Fraumünster, set with a rare unheated oval Vietnamese ruby (8.11 cts). ©Beyer





Necklace with a Muzo emerald (4.08 cts), tsavorites and brilliants. ©Beyer

### A ruby of more than eight carats

The first motif, modelled on the tympanum above one of the entrances, turned upside-down, has been set with an aquamarine, an emerald and "a Vietnamese ruby weighing more than eight carats, red with a hint of fuchsia; a rare stone that we had in our treasure," notes Željko Gregurek. The ring is as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside. Indeed, closer examination of the inside reveals diamonds set discreetly under the ruby, visible only to the wearer.

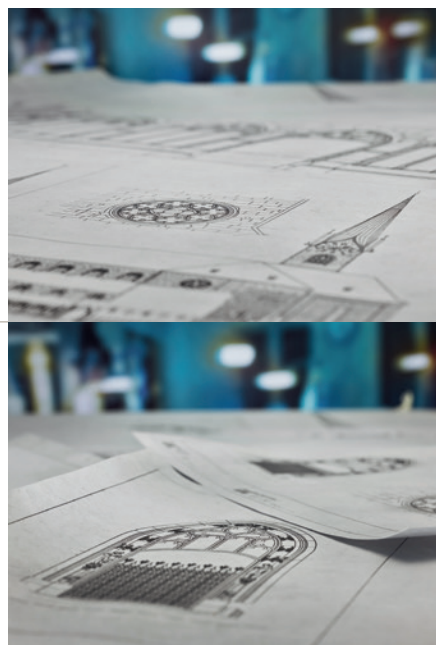
Another ring is inspired by a *ronde-bosse* sculpture. "We decided we would work with the 'big three,' hence a ruby, a magnificent 5.006-carat Sri Lankan sapphire and an emerald. We also used tourmalines, a stone we particularly appreciate, including one of almost 20 carats," Željko Gregurek continues. "We decided against diamond centrestones as we wanted this to be a colourful collection."

"Working here is a dream come true," he adds. "We have complete freedom. We have everything in-house, whether it's marketing, the creative studio, the jewellery studio or the retail side. Everyone in the team has the chance to put forward their ideas. Each project is pure creativity and, because we are a family firm, decisions are taken very quickly."

### Beyer's secret signature in each piece

Every piece in the collection conceals Beyer's secret signature of a sapphire and a diamond, side by side. Željko Gregurek admits that "we like to play around. Sometimes it's one of each stone, sometimes two. We enjoy leaving these little surprises for customers to find." Each ring is unique. For a bespoke service, customers can select their favourite motif and ask for it to be set with a particular stone, in the metal of their choice.

The collection also includes cufflinks and, in honour of Zurich's heraldic animal, Beyer has imagined a series of brooches, each a limited edition, in the shape of a lion. A new interpretation will be added each year.



"We presented the collection to 60 of our most important customers in September and they all loved it," Philippe Meyer reveals. "Surprisingly, the first piece we sold was to a man: a ring set with a tourmaline as well as three shades of champagne and brown diamonds, which he wears on his little finger. It's quite a conversation piece."

"Our next collection will again be inspired by Zurich's buildings, but we intend it to be more urban, more contemporary," Meyer says. "It will be launched with a different name but the same *modus operandi*, exploring architectural forms and details."

Ornamenta is more than a collection of high jewellery. It is a novel written in precious gems whose protagonists are Zurich and Beyer. Having turned the pages of this first chapter, we're eager to find out what happens next... ♦



The Tribute to Zurich brooch, in white gold with a sapphire and a brilliant-cut diamond, is inspired by the lion on the city's coat of arms. Limited edition of five. ©Beyer