

[Home](#)

[In This Issue](#)

[From The Publisher](#)

[From The Editor](#)

[Masthead](#)

[Cover Article](#)

[Tips & Trends](#)

[Fashion](#)

[Wining & Dining](#)

[WAGtime](#)

[Seema Says](#)

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Carats & Couture All-Out Glamour...

By Catherine Censor
Photography by: Tommy Agriodimas

The recent in-store fashion show was a tribute to our region's cachet and sophisticated taste. "Not every Neiman Marcus store carries Cartier," says Stacey Karesh, public relations manager for Neiman Marcus, White Plains. "We're one of the few that carry Cartier and also have a Cartier boutique." And, as if proving the point, an enthusiastic crowd of fashionable ladies perched on gilded ballroom chairs to watch models parade down the leopard-print catwalk.

Why combine Cartier and couture? "We feel that the customer that buys precious jewelry really wears fine apparel," Karesh explains. "And because we're close to the holidays, this was the perfect time to showcase precious jewelry in a way our customer would wear it to formal holiday affairs." Each Cartier piece was paired with appropriate evening attire. "Clothing and jewelry complement each other," Karesh says. "When you see a piece of jewelry in the case, it's beautiful, but when you see it on and see it paired with fine apparel, particularly evening, it takes on a whole new meaning and personality."

The models did two turns on the runway. On their first walk, they showed short cocktail-length dresses; on their second, long gowns. According to Karesh, "Both lengths are in style this season. There are spectacular designs to fit all kinds of tastes." As in sportswear this season, berry was a prominent color, showing up in many spectacular hues. Brilliant orange, sophisticated nude, and classic navy also made appearances. (Black was well represented, of course, but the clear message was rich, clear color. If you want to stand out at those holiday parties, steer clear of the shadows.) Satin, lace, and other luxurious, ladylike touches struck a glamorous tone.

The jewelry, of course, was the accessory du jour. The trunk show collection featured some of Cartier's newest creations. Among the highlights: a necklace from one of Cartier's most iconic collections, Panthère. The pendant, in the form of the sleek big cat, had onyx spots and piercing, emerald eyes. In contrast, a necklace from the Delicés de Cartier collection had a delicate, feminine charm, shimmering softly in watercolor shades of multicolored gemstones. Cartier's Agrafe earrings had a clear art deco flavor with bold, black onyx spheres set off by sparkling white diamonds in circles and spirals. And if you're a fan of roses, Cartier has a rival floral symbol of passion, femininity, and seductive power, the orchid. The Caresse d'orchidées par Cartier collection presented the bloom as a "flower of many faces," sometimes romantic and innocent, like the pavé diamond pendant in white gold, and sometimes dark and mysterious, like an oversized black ring encircled with a row of diamonds.

Whether sweet and light, bold and bright, or dark and seductive, the couture and Cartier show at Neiman Marcus had the look. Perhaps this season, you'll make it yours.

Captions: Top to bottom: Dolce & Gabbana poison-green satin dress with an extravagant, long, art deco diamond pendant; Satin Monique Lhuillier two-piece evening gown with necklace featuring a singer perfect pearl

