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7 Most Famous Brooches Through History: Symbols of Power, Style, and Prestige

Our Friends · Friday, January 17th, 2025

Among all imaginable kinds of jewelry, brooches have had perhaps the most versatile purposes: they served as practical fasteners for clothes, badges of allegiance, and simply ornaments. From sparkling heirlooms passed down in royal families to glamorous jewels worn by celebrities, such pieces have never ceased to astound us with their opulence. Let's take a look at some of the best-known historical **custom brooches**.

1. Queen Victoria's Sapphire & Diamond Brooch

An iconic royal brooch was designed as an oval or cushion-cut deep-blue sapphire encircled by 12 diamond stones, set in gold. This famous piece was presented to the Queen by Prince Albert the day before their wedding, in February 1840 (this is why



it's sometimes called the "Prince Albert Brooch"). Over the years, the brooch became very

recognizable as the Queen wore it on quite a few official occasions.

2. The Cullinan V Brooch

The history of this personalized brooch begins with a lucky find in 1905 in South Africa's Premier Mine. A massive 3,106-carat diamond was eventually cut into several stones. One of these is the Cullinan V, a heart-shaped gem weighing about 19 carats. Set in a platinum frame for Queen Mary in 1910 by Garrard, it graciously entered her regal collection. Apart from a heart-shaped centerstone, there were several smaller diamonds used as accents and set in a filigree. It was later given to Queen Elizabeth II, who wore it when meeting foreign diplomats.

3. The Williamson Pink Diamond Brooch



Few colored gems inspire as much admiration as pink diamonds, and the Williamson stone is one of the best-known examples. It was mined in Tanganyika, Africa in 1947 and was approximately 54 carats. After being cut down to 24 carats, it was presented to Princess Elizabeth as a wedding gift from the rock scientist Dr Williamson. And it was Cartier who designed the brooch, setting the famous pink stone among a flower arrangement of white ones.

4. Empress Eugénie's Pearl and Diamond Bow Brooch

During the Second Empire period in France, Empress Eugénie became famous for her exquisite taste in custom brooches, commissioning them from various jewelry makers. Among them was a dazzling diamond-and-pearl bow-shaped **designer brooch** that embodied the era's obsession with bow- and ribbon-shaped designs. Each bow's "loop" was studded in diamonds, and two European-cut diamond tassels and five graduated old mine-cut diamond cascades were mounted in silver-topped gold. It might blow your mind, but the piece is estimated to be worth 5,000,000 US dollars!

5. The Duchess of Windsor's Panther & Flamingo Brooches



The Duchess of Windsor, Wallis Simpson, possessed an enviable collection of jewelry, some by Cartier, while others by Van Cleef and Arpels. The famous Cartier Flamingo Brooch was commissioned by the Duke of Windsor in 1940 and has become one of the most celebrated items. The design has a bird with caboché-cut emeralds, rubies, and sapphires for feathers and the body set with diamonds. The shape of the flamingo was well-suited for the Duchess' bright personality — she commonly wore flamboyant and colorful designs that were far from traditional royal austerity.

The Panther Brooch was also designed by Cartier. It was finished in the 1940s and depicted a feline shape atop a cabochon emerald or sapphire (there were several versions), its body clad in diamonds and black onyx spots. Some critics still debate the symbolism of the panther motif. Personally, we believe it represents independence and loyalty to values. If you would like to order something no less eccentric, we recommend checking out some forward-thinking jewelry makers like [Olertis](#).

6. Queen Elizabeth II's Cullinan III & IV Brooch

While the Cullinan V may be recognized as the most well-known piece of jewelry, Cullinan III and IV combined (94 and 64 carats respectively) create another beautiful brooch in the British Crown Jewel collection. The combination of these two large stones forms a striking double-diamond design: one was pear-shaped, while the other was cushion-cut. Interestingly, Queen Elizabeth II dubbed them "Granny Chips" and wore these pieces at Diamond Jubilee celebrations along with her almost invisible pins for clothing.

7. Elizabeth Taylor's Iconic Brooches

Although the actress is best known for diamonds such as the Taylor-Burton or pearls like La

Peregrina, she also owned brooches. She made them a part of her Hollywood looks, complementing them with couture dresses. Some of her custom brooches and pins had floral designs encrusted with emeralds or rubies, and others had platinum settings with sizable centerstones. The actress had a particular passion for emeralds, believing in their mystical properties.

Thus, brooches will always hold a special place not only in our wardrobes but also in our hearts. After all, who wouldn't want to wear an over-the-top royal piece or show-stopping Cartier design just like a movie star? Or perhaps, you feel completely differently and are looking for a simple unassuming piece like a custom enamel pin? The truth is, everything is possible if you know exactly what you want and have a reliable jewelry maker such as Olertis.

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