



**HLM**  
LUXURY • LIFESTYLE

**VANCOUVER**

A Girl's Best Friend  
**TIFFANY & CO.**

The All-New Vantage  
**ASTON MARTIN**

Red Carpet Celebration  
**CHOPARD**

Architecture, Design and Creativity  
**DUBAI DESIGN WEEK**

7 14624 57028 1  
JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2015  
12  
\$7.95 CA

A portrait of Charles Lewis Tiffany, an elderly man with a full white beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark cravat. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# A Girl's Best Friend

More than a century before diamonds were to be forever immortalized by Marilyn Monroe as a girl's best friend, two enterprising young men would open a stationery and fancy goods emporium on Broadway in New York City. 25-year-old Charles Lewis Tiffany and John B. Young had been school friends; a \$1,000 loan to seed the start-up venture was provided by Charles' father. The year was 1837.

To begin, the company, then called Tiffany & Young, sold a variety of premium ornamental novelties: glassware, cutlery, clocks, porcelain and jewellery. It's said that the take for their first three days in business was a mere \$4.38.

But Tiffany soon recognized a niche in the market for jewellery, one that was certainly more successful and lucrative than the stationery business. By the early 1840's, the original merchandise offering had been pared back to capitalize on a growing demand for finely crafted items of simple and elegant design. In a departure from the retail environment at the time, Tiffany, Young, and newly-minted third partner, J.L. Ellis, elected not to engage in the practice of allowing haggling or negotiation on price. Instead, prices were clearly displayed on all items, and customers were given only one payment option—cash.

by Julie Mann

TIFFANY & Co.



In 1845, Tiffany, Young & Ellis would first introduce the iconic shade of blue that was to become their signature on the cover of their Catalogue of Useful and Fancy Articles. The book, today published as the Blue Book, was to be America's first mail-order offering. Tiffany Blue, as it is officially known, is a custom colour by Pantone that is not publicly available. The shade is appropriately numbered 1837, after the year the company was founded. Blue had become symbolic of wealth during the Renaissance, for it was the hardest and most expensive colour for painters to mix. Then, the colour was typically reserved for depictions of royalty and religious figures. The hue Charles Tiffany selected is thought to be owing to a portrait of the wife of Napoleon III, Empress Eugenie de Montijo, whose gown featured a similar shade. Given the colour's underlying symbolism, the retailer had consciously chosen to align itself with aristocracy and affluence. When the box later followed, it replicated the colour used on the first catalogue cover.

Widely regarded as the most recognizable and coveted packaging in the world, the color, box and white satin ribbon are all trademarked, as is the term Tiffany Blue Box. Charles Tiffany decreed that boxes could only be procured with a Tiffany purchase, prompting the New York Times to report in 1906: "Tiffany has one thing in stock that you cannot buy off him for as much money as you may offer, he will only give it to you. And that is one of his boxes."





In the winter of 1848, John Young would, by chance, be in France for the fall of Louis Philippe. It would prove a fortuitous and decisive turn for the company. As it happened, the panicked aristocracy was selling off valuables, including jewellery, for whatever price they could get. Young bought up what he could of the offering, including a number of gems from the French Crown. Tiffany would, nearly three decades later, acquire additional stones from the collection, following the collapse of the Second Empire.

In the early 1850's, Young would retire, Tiffany would buy Ellis out, and the growing business would be rebranded as Tiffany & Company. The retailer was strategic in its partnerships, supplying swords and surgical instruments to the Union Army and, after crafting a medal of honour for the New York Police, Tiffany-created lettering would also be used for the logo of the New York Yankees. In 1861, President Lincoln would buy a Tiffany & Company seed pearl set for his wife Mary Todd to wear at his inaugural ball. Tiffany had become a trusted and influential brand.

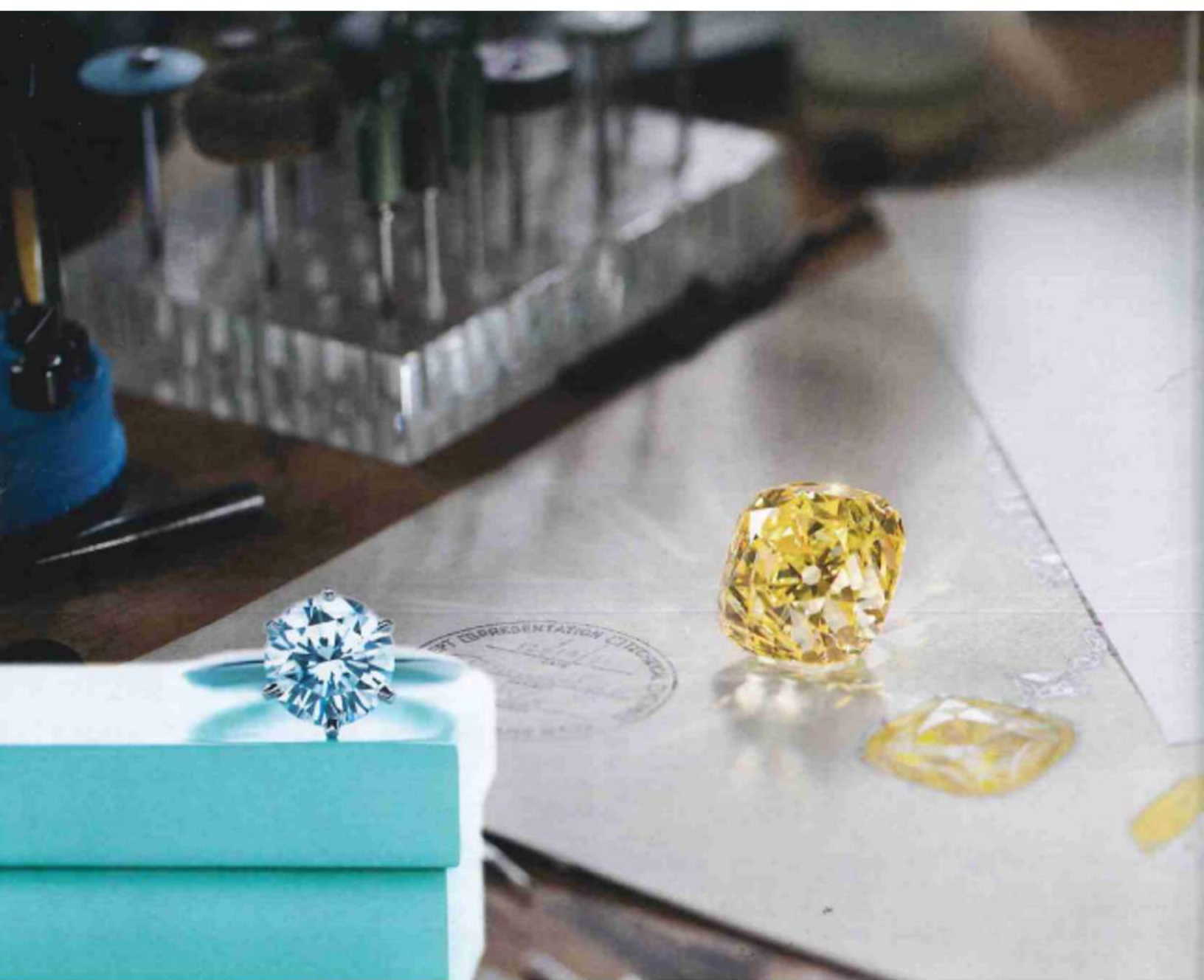
It was at the 1867 World's Fair in Paris, however, that Tiffany & Co. received international accolades. It took the grand prize for silver craftsmanship after becoming the first American company to adopt the British silver standard, using only metal that was 92% pure. The award was a noteworthy and significant nod to the quality and prestige of the company and its products.

The link between Tiffany & Co. and the world's finest diamonds would be firmly established in 1878. That year, the company would purchase

a 287.42 carat rough octahedron from South Africa, a stone that would eventually become the world-famous Tiffany Yellow Diamond.

A dozen years earlier, close to Hopetown, Erasmus Jacobs, a 15-year-old farmer's son, had unearthed what was to be the area's first authenticated diamond. The stone was aptly called Eureka. Three years later, the Star of South Africa, an 83.5 carat stone, was discovered by a Griqua herdsman. The find triggered the first diamond rush in the area, attracted prospectors from all over the world, and was followed, in relatively quick succession, by two more such fevered explorations.

Because the discovery of the Tiffany stone pre-dated the keeping of accurate records, it is difficult to know with certainty the mine of origin, or, in fact, when the stone would have been unearthed. It is believed, however, the find was in 1877 or 1878 at one of the Kimberley mines belonging to the French mining firm Compagnie Francais de Diamant du Cap.



The head of Tiffany's office in Paris, Mr. Gideon Reed, bought the Tiffany Yellow for \$18,000 on behalf of the firm. According to the official invoice, the stone was shipped to New York in June of 1880. There was, it seems, little fanfare or publicity heralding the diamond's landing. Charles Tiffany apparently feared that as unexceptional yellowish diamonds were coming out of South Africa in greater quantities than ever before, this might merely be one of many such stones. His hesitancy was eventually to be assuaged, however, when the stone's true colour emerged, a caste of rare deep canary yellow.

Aside from the colour, what makes the stone unique is the cut. 23-year-old gemologist George Frederick Kunz, a mostly self-taught expert, had just recently joined the company when he was charged with the duty of cutting the gem. He studied the stone for a full year and, in a reimagining of the traditional square antique brilliant cut, elected to create an additional twenty-four facets, bringing the total to a previously unheard of eighty-two. The pavilion of the diamond received three steps, the third one created between the regular two. According to Kunz, the greater number of facets was not intended to make the stone

more brilliant, but less brilliant. Because the stone was of yellow colour, Kunz had remarked that he thought it better to give the effect of a "smoldering fire." Priority may also have been given to weight retention, since the prestige of a diamond depended primarily on its weight. His ground-breaking design eschewed the governing rules of proportion, possibly so the result might exceed the magic figure of 100 carats, a benchmark that entitles a diamond to the enviable title of Paragon.

It was owing to interest from one of the triumvirate rulers of China that several years later the gemstone would become more widely known. In 1896, Viceroy Li Hung-Chang visited New York. About Chang, Ulysses S. Grant is said to have remarked, "There are three great men in the



Co.



The Tiffany Yellow Diamond was recently in Vancouver to herald the grand re-opening of the Tiffany & Co. downtown flagship store. Visitors were able to get an up-close look at the incredible gem in its current setting, one conceived as a tribute to Tiffany's 175th anniversary in 2012, a spectacular necklace that features the stone surrounded by more than 120 carats of white diamonds.



world, Gladstone, Bismarck and Chang, but the greatest of these is Chang." Chang announced that the one thing he wished to see was the Tiffany Yellow Diamond, a request that was, of course, accommodated by the firm.

Though the gem has since been seen by millions, only two women have ever actually worn the Tiffany Diamond—Audrey Hepburn, in her turn as the enigmatic Holly Golightly for the 1961 movie based on the Truman Capote novel *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and several years before her, Mrs. Sheldon Whitehouse, who wore the jewel at the 1957 Tiffany Ball.

Over the years, the diamond has been offered for sale a few times. In 1951, a price of \$500,000 was negotiated but the deal fell through when it is said the prospective buyer was unable to provide a check for the full amount. In 1972, a notice in the *New York Times* informed the public that Tiffany & Co. was selling the diamond for \$5 million. In 1983, the Tiffany Yellow was valued at \$12 million. Since then, the company has elected to make the stone a prominent symbol of its distinguished legacy as a long-time purveyor of the world's finest gems.

TIFFANY & CO.