

ÉCRITURE HAUTE COUTURE

Écrits couture, adaptations anglaises

Collection Haute Couture Baccarat

INTRODUCTION

Reinterpretations of Baccarat's exceptional works, the pieces in the Haute Couture collection embody the House's expertise throughout its history and in its celebration. Whether they are richly ornamental *Éclats de Lumière* or purified *Reflets Graphiques*, each of these creations traces a particular atmosphere and period. Crystal is a living material that requires a rare *savoir-faire*: its approach calls for very particular talents. None of these gems could exist without passionate and masterful craftsmen, some of whom are *Best Craftsmen of France*. Drawing on the archives of their trade, they have mobilized skills that, without their commitment and that of the Baccarat House, would have fallen into the forgotten. And to shape this collection, ancestral savvy is combined in an astonishing choreography: glassblowing wizards, masters of carving, and engraving prodigies, all know how to combine the intelligence of the hand and the eye with that of the mind. Because in preamble to these days invested in making their arabesques fluent, decades were needed to refine a single movement. By offering them the opportunity to take part in this heritage, Baccarat offers its craftsmen the most wonderful homage. For these creations to emerge, it was necessary to summon a large repertoire of know-how, hundreds of sketches, and torrents of molten crystal. Each piece in the Haute Couture collection celebrates the emotion that Baccarat has come to treasure: manifesting the alchemy of joy for our viewing pleasure.

ÉCLATS DE LUMIÈRE CUP

Through the precision and the intertwining of its motifs, the Éclats de Lumière cup evokes the rose windows of gothic cathedrals. Like them, its fragile beauty requires delicate craftsmanship; a demanding symmetry that only the synergy between a sharp eye and an expert hand is able to execute. This piece in clear crystal lined with pink crystal expresses the excellence of Baccarat's magicians in the mastery of a rich-cut decorative style, where the maker's gesture must be agile. The Manufacture's savoir-faire was already renowned in 1909: at the International Exhibition in Eastern France, the original model was presented to visitors for the first time. Already, its crystal was a perfect canvas for a range of advanced techniques, deployed to complete the various cutting patterns such as the flame, beveled diamond, and gemstone cut. From now on, everyone can project themselves into the Éclats de Lumière cup according to their own reveries, whether they bloom like the petals of a lotus, or a compass rose streaked with a thousand volutes. Or maybe it is a compass that subtly incites in us that the wonder of Baccarat has always steered the House towards new heights.

REFLETS GRAPHIQUES CUP

The sophistication of the Reflets Graphiques Cup can be seen in the sobriety of its lines and the intensity of its tones. Its pink color is in no way insignificant: exclusive to a process invented by Baccarat, it is the result of a mixture between molten crystal and 24-carat gold powder. The only thing missing was the craftsmen's serenity, guaranteeing the kiln's heat being adjusted to the very last degree. These colossuses demand more than plain competence – they can only be tamed by years of experience. Thanks to this alliance between the temperaments of the material and the rigors of the craft, Baccarat was already evoking emotion at a time when Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris and Georges Braque were revolutionizing aesthetic standards. In 1925, the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts established, with its first version, that the Reflets Graphiques Cup had everything to arouse passion. In designing this innovative piece, Georges Chevalier, Baccarat's artistic director at the time, honored a House that knew how to reconcile imagination with the trends of its generation. Like a hymn to Cubism, revived for the 21st century, with its high leg, geometric decoration, grooves, and angles, the Reflets Graphiques Cup remains faithful to this avant-garde movement that disrupted all codes and symbols. Connoisseurs will appreciate the whimsies of this seemingly sensible design, which still carries the sparkle of the Roaring Twenties.

ÉCLATS DE LUMIÈRE VASE

A kaleidoscope of glyphs, a fresco of details, the Éclats de Lumière Vase testifies to the Baccarat artisans' ample skill in the art of cutting crystal. Whether minute or opulent, if each of its ornaments appears almost hypnotic, it is because dexterity permeates the slightest technical gesture, rendering each piece magnetic. Because the crystal must be hollowed out to the nearest tenth to fulfill its promise, this gesture barely grazes – it is a caress. At Baccarat, the accuracy of depths and the mastery of relief are subject to extremely precise criteria, because in order to create a vase that meets the House's expectations of distinction, no face can suffer the slightest scratch or deviation. This is how the carved stem, crisscrossed bevels, and bodice emblazoned with pontilles and olives reveal their lightness. The challenge of this reinterpretation is brought on by this black-lined clear crystal's presence, whose crafting requires unfailing vigilance. Until a piece is definitively validated, the craftsman relies on all his senses and skills to sublimate it. It is up to Baccarat and its finest talents, whose savoir-faire over the years has been proven right, to solve the paradox of an element that is as much day as night. In this way, the House is placed at the equinox; finding poetry in making contrasts unite.

REFLETS GRAPHIQUES VASE

From the initial artistic sparkle to the first watercolors and drawings in pencil, from modelling attempts in multiple to the final touch on the diamond mill, the Reflets Graphiques Vase carries within it Baccarat's craftsmanship in its ensemble. To achieve a clear crystal lined with black crystal that distinguishes its appearance, the glassmakers must become the material's masters. The purity of its oval shape owes to the complexity of a mold with finely calibrated seams. After the blowers' work, its body is subjected to a lengthy process of carving with finesse. There, for hours on end, in a bubble of concentration, the craftsman will adjust the extent of the fluting and the rectitude of the rectangular prisms according to his own judgment. And when its proportions are at last balanced, a surprising play of mirrors is discovered. A contemporary counterpoint to a 1930 piece, the Reflets Graphiques Vase is like the quincunxes that give it pride of place: it is the connecting line between generations of mentors and apprentices, and the culmination of a bold design. Because the signature of the Baccarat House has been applied with discretion, harmony, and sound intent, each of its finished works is the realization of a true commitment.

ECLATS DE LUMIÈRE CARAFE

Inlaid with azure, as if a river of sapphires were flowing along its curves, the Éclats de Lumière Carafe evokes the art of gemmaking; in this creation, special meaning is instilled in diamond-cut decorations. Crafted in the most delicate cold work, its scalloped foot with flame tips recalls the iconic Tsar's glassware, ordered by Nicholas II. Its flared neck is surmounted by a stopper, the realization of which requires all the force of a steady blow performed exclusively by the Best Craftsmen of France. The Éclats de Lumière Carafe is a reinterpretation of the centerpiece of a service set created in 1908; a service whose nobility, fit for a king, seduced the maharajah Jagatjit Singh. A great collector of jewels and an eccentric sovereign to say the least, this French art lover admired the Château de Versailles – even to the point of having his own replica built under his eye. Dazzling like a sun, the Éclats de Lumière Carafe borrows from a unique savoir-faire and from all the elements of nature, making its crystal exquisitely pure; because its making spans workshops and generations, it has acquired an eternal character. The Éclats de Lumière Carafe sublimates crystal to draw out what makes it universal.

REFLETS GRAHIQUES CARAFE

Praised for its incomparable light, Baccarat crystal also shines when it is coupled with the culture of sharing. During the reign of Emperor Napoleon III, the refinement of French gastronomy was such that epicureans readily favored these bottles specially designed for serving white wine. The Reflets Graphiques Carafe revisits the slender contours of a piece from 1887; with its vibrant blue, it is a whole set of carved curves and edges that draw a silhouette of prominences. Thanks to the sobriety of its appearance, a ballet of beams vibrates and dances between its lines; it gives this creation the chance and power of radiance. Dressed with a twenty-four branch star on the bottom, its body is adorned with a faceted cord, giving it a touch of rounded elegance. Moreover, even empty, the Reflets Graphiques Carafe contains at least one drop; a blown drop of crystal, frozen under its stopper, further enhancing this bottle with a final touch of color. If the original pattern already mentioned a special request, the reinterpretation of this piece reminds us that at Baccarat, crystal is much more than a matter of exception: it embodies the joy of living, the art of celebration.

Maison Trafalgar