



'Hark the Herald'
A Victorian silver gilt
Angel brooch. £125 from
bagthejewels.com

On the Fifth Day of Christmas

My True Love Gave to Me...

5 Gold Rings, 4 Sapphire Stones, 3 Diamond Clasps,
2 Pearl Studs and a Glitzy, Sparkling Yuletide too!

by Nell Hobbs

2ct Tanzanite and 1.30ct
Diamond Trilogy ring
available at Laurelle
Antique Jewellery.



Deciding what to buy your nearest and dearest for Christmas can certainly be a struggle, especially if you're looking for something extra special, and whilst highstreet shops may be bursting with possibilities, they can't always offer exactly what you're looking for. This year then, why not consider giving a piece of antique jewellery for a present that will be cherished forever.

There are many benefits to buying antique and vintage jewellery compared to new. 'Firstly, it's generally of much better quality', explains Samantha Wilson of Laurelle Ltd Antique and Fine Jewellery. A point Arlene de Vries, of Bright Things Revisited is quick to reiterate. 'Pieces used to be entirely handset',

she explains, 'so great care was taken with every item. Better quality stones, sourced from all over the world, were also used and generally antique pieces are far superior to modern equivalents.'

Caroline Henney of bagthejewels.co.uk points out that recycling jewellery in today's disposable society is also a benefit. 'Modern jewellery, even if it's of a high quality and high price, is largely still mass produced, whereas with antique pieces you're far more likely to have a unique find; something no-one else has.' Moira Teale of Chic and Unique continues, 'it's also far more interesting. There's often a history behind a piece, which makes it more special and even more individual.'

Stepstones Dog's Sarah Lord advises on the monetary value of antique jewellery as well as the sentimental. 'You're getting value for money when you buy antique or vintage', she explains. 'Pieces will at least hold their value, if not increase.' Carole Franks of CaroleFranks.com agrees. 'If you buy from a reputable dealer, you are largely ensured that it will only go up in value, plus when you go to sell it you will find people who want to buy it; with modern jewellery people often find pieces simply aren't worth

A selection of name brooches
from the Victorian and latter
periods. All available at
bagthejewels.com

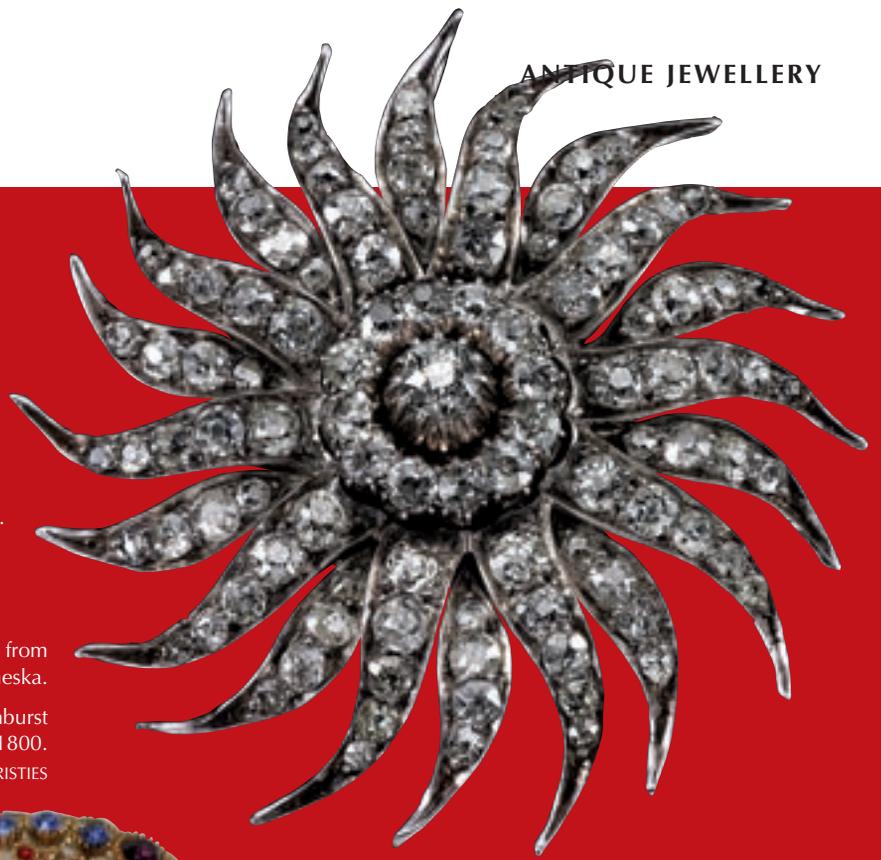


A silver panel bracelet in
the style of Liberty & Co.
C. 1930. Available at
Bright Things Revisited.



Above: 1950s brooch, signed Jomaz. £85 at Chic and Unique.

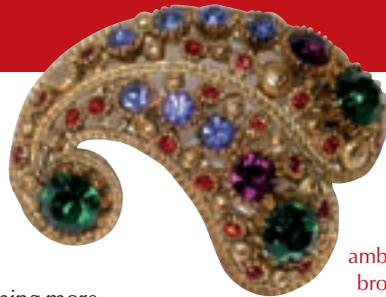
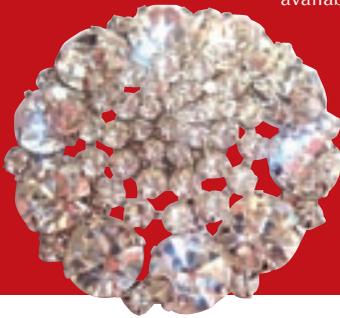
Left: A selection of pieces available at Carole Franks.



Left: A Hobe brooch from House of Francheska.

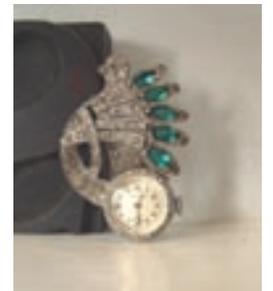
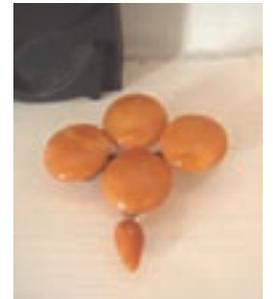
Right: Diamond Sunburst jewel c. 1800.

IMAGE COURTESY OF CHRISTIES



Left: Nina Ricci brooch c. 1960/70. £68 at Chic and Unique.

Right top to bottom: Vintage amber button brooch, diamante watch brooch and vintage red disc necklace all available at Steptoe's Dog. Diamond band ring available at Laurelle Antique Jewellery.



anything.' Whilst many pieces are now fetching good prices at auction, there are still bargains to be found that make great investments for the future as well as wonderful presents for now.

'Vintage and antique jewellery is becoming more and more collectable all the time', says Lorraine Evans of House of Francheska. 'Examples dating from right up to the 1970s are now sought after throughout the world.'

Before you head out on your mission to find the perfect gift, it's best to have an idea of what you're looking for; the selection on offer to you is huge and without a style, period, colour or budget in mind, you could find yourself overwhelmed. Have a look at your partner's, mother's, sister's or daughter's jewellery to see what style they normally wear as this is often the best indication of their individual tastes. Do they have more silver than gold in their jewellery box? More elaborate or classic pieces? Next consider the wearer's lifestyle; do they only wear jewellery on special occasions or will they want something they can wear everyday? If the latter, look for timeless settings that are often flatter and more suitable for active wearers whilst those intended for specific, important events can be more extravagant.

It can also be helpful to familiarise yourself with the different stylistic eras. Not only can this help define what you're looking for, but it will give you more confidence in what you are buying. Be aware of such broad terms as 'antique' and 'vintage' that are used when describing jewellery; generally jewellery from the 1920s to the 1970s is considered vintage, whilst everything before is labelled as antique. Each

individual era still contains a vast range of designs, so if you select a particular period, you're still ensured to have plenty to choose from.

Georgian Jewellery, which dates from between 1714 and 1837, of good quality can be quite rare as each piece is handmade and skill could vary greatly. Prices can therefore be higher and these styles are highly collectable. However, if handmade buyers are guaranteed a completely unique piece which is, after all, one of the most significant advantages to buying antique jewellery. Popular stones from this period include garnets, diamonds and coral and designs often feature leaf shapes, birds, flowers and other nature-inspired designs.

Victorian Jewellery is also very collectable and as fashions changed throughout the period so did the style and materials used in jewellery production, therefore there are varying aspects to look for when buying from this era. Early Victorian pieces continued to reflect nature and sentimental jewellery, such as brooches and lockets, also became popular. With the death of Prince Albert in 1861, the Mid-Victorian period was one of mourning and jewellery design reflected this sombre mood. Heavy dark stones, particularly Jet, were sought after as well as amethysts and deep red garnets. As the period

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drew to a close gemstones in more feminine colours, such as sapphires, became fashionable.

Art Nouveau Jewellery reflects the Arts and Crafts Movement and this graceful style often includes flowers, insects and figurines in designs made with excellent craftsmanship.

Edwardian Jewellery is very lavish in design and pieces are often elaborate and embellished with emeralds, rubies, pearls and, the essential stone of the period, diamonds.

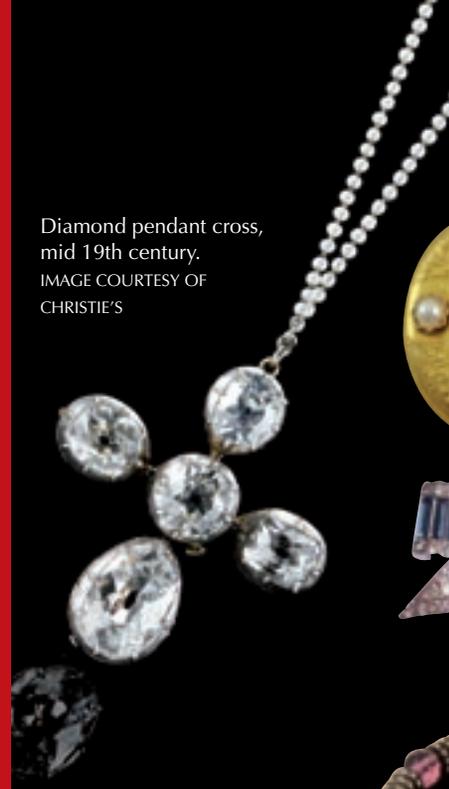
Art Deco Jewellery, dating from the early 1920s to mid 30s, includes some of the most stylistic designs you will find and the geometric shapes, abstract designs and strong lines make it one of the easier eras to identify. Bakelite, celluloid and enamel were popular materials as well as glass beads and imitation pearls.

It was around this period that vintage, or Costume Jewellery as it is often referred, began to be produced. This term generally describes jewellery that was not made from precious stones and includes pieces that were worn during the period as inexpensive alternatives to the real thing. Today however, vintage and costume jewellery has become a sought-after collectable in its own right, often fetching high prices. Pieces are mostly colourful and elaborate and feature such gemstones as Aquamarine and Citrine set in varying shades of gold. Into the 1940s large cocktail rings and bracelets became fashionable and the 1950s saw a rise in popularity of charm bracelets.

If you still find yourself baffled with the choice on offer to you, our jewellery experts offer this advice. 'Everyone loves a bit of bling at Christmas, so glittery pieces are particularly sought-after', says Moira Teale. 'Sparkles are always popular at Christmas!', explains Lorraine Evans, 'and a great choice if you're unsure of what to buy. Also, if you're buying vintage or costume jewellery, look for signed pieces by renowned designers for something extra special. Trifari, Hobe, Chanel and Schiaparelli are just some of the artists to specifically look out for.' Arlene de Vries agrees. 'American designer vintage costume jewellery is very sought after and pieces by Christian Dior, Joseph of Hollywood and Miriam Haskell always sell particularly well!'

Samantha Wilson always finds precious stones popular amongst her customers, as does Carole Franks. 'Rings are always best sellers at Christmas', explains Carole, 'as our earrings, especially in diamond.'

Diamond pendant cross, mid 19th century. IMAGE COURTESY OF CHRISTIE'S



Left: Victorian 18ct gold blue topaz and pearl locket. Available at Laurelle Antique Jewellery.

Left (below): Rare signed Pennino brooch available at House of Francheska.



Right: An Art Deco pink and blue glass and white paste necklace, c. 1930. Available at Bright Things Revisited.



Sarah Lord finds brooches, bracelets and bangles also a popular choice for gifts; 'they're items everyone can wear all the time, that aren't dependent on size or body shape', she explains.

Caroline Henney explains that if you're unsure what to buy, your loved-one's age is always a good indicator. 'Young wearers are always keen on sparkly, diamante pieces that are perfect for wearing to Christmas and New Year parties, whereas older women prefer classic vintage pieces that remind them of the glamour of their youth.'

No matter what you eventually decide to buy, all our experts agree that once you've found a promising piece, it's important to closely examine the quality and condition of the item before making any purchases.

Lorraine Evans advises to check that all the pieces are there. 'Have any of the stones been replaced or is it entirely the genuine thing? If a replacement has been made, but you're not completely sure a good job has been done, put it back and look for something 100% original. This way you know you want have risked a poor



Above: Joseph Wiesner necklace, 1950s. Available at House of Francheska.

Left: A stone set brooch by Christian Dior, c. 1940. Available at Bright Things Revisited.

Below: Victorian 2.10ct Solitaire Diamond Ring available at Laurelle Antique Jewellery.



ANTIQUÉ JEWELLERY



Above: A Vintage sterling vermeil pin by Trifari, c. 1940. Available at Bright Things Revisited.

Below: Trifari Red Friut Salad parure by Alfred Philippe for Trifari, 1949. Available at House of Francheska.



investment.' Carole Franks agrees and explains that 'it is always best simply not to buy jewellery in anything but very good condition.' Arlene de Vries advises to 'always spend a little more money on something top quality rather than trying to save on something that is in poorer condition; it'll be greatly appreciated in the long run as it will keep its value and attractiveness for far longer.'

Check the back of the piece and take note of differentiating shades of gold or noticeable seams as these can indicate that an alteration or repair has been made. Whilst a well-done repair is of not much concern and will be almost unnoticeable, a bad repair can ultimately make a piece more fragile as well as drastically affecting its value.



Above: 1960s gilt and diamante brooch, £25 at bagthjewels.com.

Top: Early sterling paste drop necklace set with a faceted emerald green stone in the centre, c. 1880/1900. £335 at Chic and Unique.



If you fall in love with an item that needs repair, get an estimated cost before proceeding with the purchase as this can be higher than the item itself. Examine the condition of the piece closely before you make a commitment and, as Caroline Henney advises, always buy from a reputable dealer or jeweller. 'They will be able to let you know the age and any history of the piece which, as well as being something extra for the new owner to know, will also give the buyer piece of mind regarding its authenticity.'

Once you've made your decision, placed your purchase under the Christmas tree and watched on Christmas morning as the carefully wrapped package is opened with glee, you'll want to preserve both the value and beauty of your gift.

Advise the recipient that hair spray, body spray and perfume can dissolve the surface of antique jewellery and can stain gold and silver and to generally keep their piece dry. Remove all antique jewellery when using household cleaners or when doing physical activities and clean stones with a baby wipe and a soft cloth. When stored, keep antique pieces separate and in soft pouches if possible to protect them from the elements and dust, all of which can be abrasive.

Ultimately, deciding which piece of antique jewellery is more desirable than any other is up to the individual and one person's treasure can be another's trash no matter what the age or value of the piece, so ensure you know what your loved one will fall in love with; if you get it right, your gift this year will be adored at Christmas and treasured forever. ■

BUY IT

■ **Laurelle Limited**
Antique and Fine Jewellery
01524 67238
www.laurelleantiquejewellery.co.uk

■ **Caroline Henney**
cahenney@aol.com
www.bagthjewels.co.uk

■ **House of Francheska**
01179 658992
www.house-of-francheska.co.uk

■ **Chic and Unique**
0131 332 3889
moira.teale@homecall.co.uk
www.vintagecostumejewellery.co.uk

■ **Steptoe's Dog**
Antique and Vintage Online Store
www.steptoosantiques.co.uk

■ **Carole Franks**
carole@carolefranks.com
www.CaroleFranks.com

■ **Bright Things Revisited**
enquiries@brightthingsrevisited.com
www.brightthingsrevisited.com

Below: High quality pin, c. 1950. £125 at Chic and Unique.

