



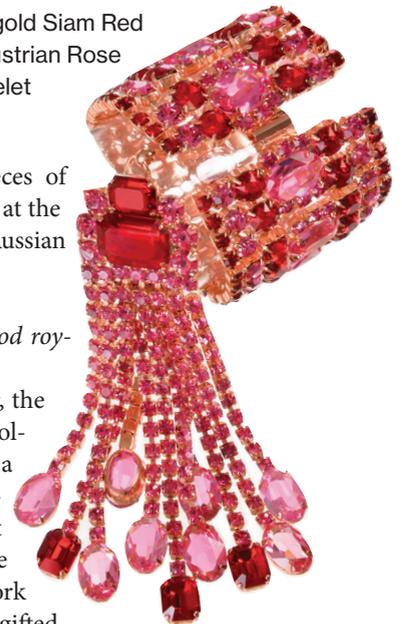
1950s rose gold-plated Siam Red Ruby and Austrian Rose crystal earrings

1930s 'Chinese Jade' and 1950s Swarovski crystal Japanned plated collar



I love the glamour of 1930s Hollywood

1950s rose gold Siam Red Ruby and Austrian Rose crystal bracelet



• ALAN ANDERSON THE COUTURE COSTUME JEWELLER

DINE You were a successful senior visual presentation technician for a major department store. Why did you start designing jewellery?

Alan Anderson It was a trip to Rhode Island with a friend and prominent costume jewellery designer, Robert Sorrell—who did Thierry Mugler's runway jewellery—to source crystals for his pieces. I was absolutely crazed by the crystals and stones. I bought rhinestone chains, settings and stones but had no idea how to use them. So I sat at my kitchen table night after night teaching myself. The work on some of those first pieces looked like someone took a pastry bag full of solder to them.

DINE You still design by hand...

A.A. In my Toronto studio. There are no molds and I don't sketch. Rather I work from an image in my head then sit with clay, vintage stones, copper findings and a hot soldering gun to create one-of-a-kind pieces.

DINE Why costume jewellery? Why not gold and diamonds?

A.A. I find fine jewellery boring and small. I like the scale of stones and "show" of big, bold costume jewellery. I heard an expression in Dallas, Texas—"If you can't see it from the highway, don't bother wearing it." Perfect. I'm happiest to see women wearing my pieces during the day, for no special reason other than their own desire to feel good... and stand out.

DINE What inspires your creations?

A.A. I have vivid memories of my Auntie Marie, my mother's sister, stepping off the plane from England in full finery and pounds of jewellery—both costume and real, including a 10 carat emerald ring that she bought in Istanbul. She was friends with Norman Hartnell, the Queen Mum's clothing designer, and so "over the top." I love the glamour of 1930s

Hollywood. And vintage Cartier, the pieces of Paulding Farnham who worked for Tiffany at the turn of the century and Fabergé for the Russian Imperial Court.

DINE How did Elizabeth Taylor—Hollywood royalty—come to own one of your pieces?

A.A. I received a call from Harrice Miller, the woman curating the Elizabeth Taylor collection for Christie's. She inquired about a purple bracelet I had made for House of Lavande in Palm Beach in 2005, but wouldn't give details. At that time, House of Lavande was working with Henri Bendel's in New York so I believe someone bought it there and gifted it to Dame Elizabeth. It was only when the Christie's catalogue for the Elizabeth Taylor auction came out, that I knew. Shocked! Thrilled!

DINE Describe your collection.

A.A. My collection is about big, bold, statement pieces, interesting colour combinations and rare vintage materials. It's kind of Cartier-meets-Aladdin's treasures, but with a modern twist. There are basics, but each season has its own punch of colour, and I usually don't revisit them, just because of the availability of the materials. Once a wonderful vintage stone is gone, it's gone.

DINE What makes Jewels by Alan Anderson unique?

A.A. I think that it's handmade, like a couture dress. It's not mass produced or made in a factory. And, it is truly a Canadian brand. I've discovered there are a lot of women, from age 16 (our youngest client to date) to over 80, who just want something unique. They have no desire to 'blend in.' In the 1950s, there were about 1,000 craftsmen in North America who made this type of couture costume jewellery. Today, there are only about seven of us, so I really feel I am keeping a craft alive. —Jill Killeen