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BOUCHERON BEYOND LIMITS

Directed by Olivier Nicklaus
Produced by Slow Production



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An exclusive deep dive into the secrets of creation behind the House of Boucheron and its perennial modernity for over a century and a half. Today, the two women at the head of the company are rethinking luxury by proposing creative and innovative collections, far from the traditional codes of high jewelry.





Summary

It is in the heart of Paris, on Place Vendôme, that the world's greatest jewelry Houses sit across the legendary Ritz Hotel. The very first to set up shop on this iconic square at the end of the 19th century was Boucheron. High jewelry dazzles and fascinates the whole world, elevating jewels to the rank of works of art, and passing down well-kept trade secrets.

This documentary offers an exclusive look backstage at the creation and development of the collections – which over the years have established Boucheron's privileged spot among the most modern high jewelry Houses in the world. Today, a duet of women upholds this tradition of innovation, by designing exceptional jewels, as poetic as they are technologically innovative: Claire Choisne, Director of Creations and Hélène Poulit-Duquesne C.E.O.

From Claire's first intuitions, nourished by inspirational travels, to the first drawings and models, she often lets her creativity run wild, doing away with commercial security. Then, these ideas are materialized thanks to the unique know-how of the research and development teams, the goldsmith's workshops, and the involvement of specialists whose professions are sometimes a far cry from the world of fine jewelry, such as a member of NASA or a "petal artist".

On all floors, at the Place Vendôme workshop, teams of mostly women are at work – but also all over the world – to obtain the most beautiful stones, with a real ethical and ecological concern about their origins. Once these unique pieces are completed, marketing enters the stage to publicize the collections, which are intended to be "genderless" – for both men and women. Modern and trendy jewelry.

This exclusive deep dive into a refined artisanal process allows us to fully understand that there are no hard limits to the possible achievements of this tirelessly creative spirit. One that, collection after collection, reexamines luxury and reinvents high jewelry.

SYNOPSIS

Paris, the Place Vendôme, its Column erected by Napoleon, and its multitude of household names in high jewelry.

The first company to set up shop there was Boucheron, founded by Frédéric Boucheron in 1858 and established at 26 Place Vendôme in 1893, five years before the inauguration of the Ritz Hotel, almost opposite, at 15.

We could go on at length about the achievements of the House of Boucheron since its inception. But let us leap 130 years forward and enter the intimacy of this House today. What do we then discover? A very singular House compared to its competitors on the Place Vendôme.

Unlike the others, which are run by men, and remain firmly anchored in the realm of high jewelry, Boucheron shines thanks to its creative innovation.

At its head, two women.

The Director of Creations, Claire Choisne, opens the doors of her design studio (when designers of other Houses are rarely allowed to step to the front of the stage). She lives half the year in Paris, and the other half in Comporta, Portugal, surrounded by nature, in an atmosphere conducive to creation. It takes silence and introspection to conjure up the ideas that revolutionize the world of high jewelry. Every year in July, Claire Choisne is given

“carte blanche”; a time she makes full use of, by pushing the most unexpected ideas to the limit: capturing the sky’s shifting colors in a necklace, applying the petals of a real flower to a ring, confronting raw, natural materials such as wood with traditional golds and diamonds... Ideas that constantly force introspection upon the House’s habits and customs, from the workshop floors to the sales departments.

Claire Choisne draws much of her inspiration from her travels – such as in Iceland, where the light of dusk reflecting on the glaciers congealed into the idea for an exceptional piece in the designer’s mind.

But another woman helps bear these wild ideas to fruition: Hélène Poulit-Duquesne, the C.E.O. of Boucheron. In this quest for originality, one cannot work without the other. Without the CEO’s endorsement, there would be no collections that are as daring, pioneering and singular. And without the designer’s seemingly extravagant ideas, the House of Boucheron would be your “run of the mill” high jewelry House of the Place Vendôme, without a unique identity.

Boucheron is owned by the Kering Group, which also participates in developing a strategy with Hélène Poulit-Duquesne. The January

collection, known as “signature” is for lovers of the House’s archives, which are reinterpreted under the contemporary eye of Claire Choisne. The illustrious question mark necklace, the first clasplless necklace invented in 1879 that women could put on by themselves, has been revisited. However, even in this reinterpretation, Claire Choisne shows modernity, by changing the scales, zooming in on details and inventing new patterns. In the end, while the strong presence of exceptional stones remains a feature, an air of absolute modernity blows through these collections, presented to the press on both men and women. A “genderless” requirement that is one of the House’s mottos today.

You have to understand that high jewelry takes time. A lot of time. When a collection is revealed to the press, it may have been five years in the making. It all starts with an intuition by Claire Choisne, a flash of genius that makes her say “We could create a whole collection on this theme” – as absurd as it may seem at first. Very quickly, she pitches it to Hélène Poulit-Duquesne to see if the latter’s eyes light up. The first volumes take shape, soon translated into drawings and models. Claire can rely on an all-female team to translate her ideas into first drafts: Larissa and Thaïs for the drawings and Géraldine in charge of making the first models of the jewels,





often in an entirely artisanal way.

Once the model is validated, we head to Tucson, Arizona, where the largest international gemstone fair is held, to find the most beautiful diamonds, rubies or emeralds that will fit into the designer's vision – and that will meet the high criteria of traceability imposed by the company to guarantee ethical and responsible sourcing.

At the same time, the discussion phase begins with the Research & Development department, which proposes materials that are sometimes unheard of, or not yet widely used in high jewelry, such as cofalit or bio-acetate, again with an ecological concern.

In both cases, materials and stones, the reflection is based on three criteria:

aesthetics, cost, and weight – knowing that high jewelry always ambitions to be as light as possible. Some rather monumental pieces of jewelry turn out to be as light as a feather; another proof of the excellent craftsmanship their elaboration requires.

The next step is equally important: the management committee has to render a judgement. It is where Thierry Lamouroux, Sales Director, plays his part by assessing the piece's marketability. But the final decision rests upon Hélène Poulit-Duquesne's shoulders. This is a key moment where several imperatives intersect: to leave a mark thanks to strong and innovative pieces, while not losing sight of their commercial potential. This is all the more important as each piece is unique.

It is also a moment of apprehension: if a piece that is dear to Claire does not convince Thierry, and that he manages to convince Hélène of this as well, then this piece is abandoned. Once the pieces are approved, the workshop takes over at the 26 Place Vendôme (still a whole floor of workshop, the place is surprisingly much more than a mere storefront). The artisans then work their magic: they meticulously cut, polish, set, and make the dream come true. While 20 years ago, the workshop was an all-male floor, today we observe that a majority of women work there. And while this section of Boucheron is entirely dedicated to excellence in their craft, it does not do away with camaraderie – people talk,

laugh, and seem to forget that they are holding treasures worth hundreds of thousands of euros in their hands.

Little by little, piece by piece, the collection is elaborated, becomes reality. Once validated by Hélène Poulit-Duquesne, the pieces are photographed by big names in fashion. Casting of the models, choice of clothes, settings, and lights... The brand's messages are crafted with as much care as its jewels. Paradoxically, it is at this moment that these exceptional jewels will be worn the most. The workshops scrupulously ensure that nothing can alter the quality of the creations. Sometimes they even go back to the workshop for a touch-up after a shooting. They are then





for innovation. Every stage of the creation process is rich in intense moments, but also more joyful ones. All the characters the film elected to portray, from François- Henri Pinault to Julie Pantaloni, who is in charge of making a spectacular diamond and rattan necklace, are treated equally, as they all play a role in the precision mechanics that is a high jewelry House such as Boucheron.

presented to the press, in the befitting setting of the suite “le 26” on the fourth floor of the House, with parquet flooring in the style of Haussmanian apartments and an unobstructed view of the Vendôme column.

Concurrently, the House’s sales representatives approach its most prestigious clients; some of whom follow Claire Choisne’s work closely and collect her creations as they would contemporary works of art. Most of the pieces in high jewelry are unique, so buying them becomes a strong gesture. And a costly one at that, so much so that payment is made in several stages:

again, a long process. One does not buy a piece of high jewelry overnight. And not all of them are sold. But the risk also serves as a test for Boucheron’s level of excellence.

An excellence that François-Henri Pinault, the CEO of the Kering group, monitors during the Designer’s Meetings – ultra-secret meetings filmed here for the first time, during which the group’s designers conduct an exclusive presentation of their next collection for his eyes only. Like all of Claire’s collaborators, François-Henri Pinault is consistently dazzled by her capacity



MAIN CHARACTERS



The Creative Director, Claire Choisne

The CEO, Hélène Poulit-Duquesne

The CEO of the Kering Group (owner of Boucheron), François-Henri Pinault

The studio team:

Larissa Bugnet, Thaïs Cruz, Sarah Goncalves, Géraldine Rohrer

At the workshop, Julie Pantaloni

The Research & Development project manager, Adrien Jasinski

The International Sales Director, Thierry Lamouroux

The International Marketing Director, Ombeline Palluat de Besset

The International Communications Director, Aurélie Boué

PRESENTATION OF THE HOUSE

Founded by Frédéric Boucheron in 1858, the House of Boucheron has been built up through four generations of direct descendants. A visionary creator and the first of the great contemporary jewelers to open a boutique on the Place Vendôme, Boucheron still embodies excellence in jewelry, high jewelry and watches. The Boucheron style, creative and innovative, consistently heralds the classics of tomorrow. Today, Boucheron has more than 85 points of sale throughout the world and is part of the global luxury group Kering.



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In 2021, 700 REQUINS (700 Sharks) by Luc Marescot and Laurent Ballesta

In 2014, REBELLES DU FOOT (Soccer Rebels) by Gilles Perez and Gilles Rof

In 2012, DECHETS, LE CAUCHEMAR DU NUCLEAIRE (Waste, a Nuclear Nightmare) by Eric Gueret

In 2007, SIGNE CHANEL (Signed Chanel) by Loïc Prigent

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