

Montblanc and Van Cleef & Arpels unveil limited edition 'Mystery Masterpiece'

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Both Companies Celebrate the Start of their Second Centuries by Collaborating on Exceptional Work of Art -- A One of a Kind Creation

Montblanc and Van Cleef & Arpels Thursday unveiled an exceptional work of art -- a writing instrument of the finest craftsmanship and artistry -- the Limited Edition Mystery Masterpiece. The two luxury industry giants celebrated their centennials in 2006 and have joined forces to collaborate on a one-of-a-kind creation that showcases each company's area of expertise as they both mark the start of their second centuries in existence. The piece was unveiled today at a luncheon event in New York City.

Luxury industry leaders Montblanc and Van Cleef & Arpels unveil the \$730,000 limited edition Mystery Masterpiece. The companies collaborated on the handmade work of art - the most expensive writing instrument ever created - that takes an artisan a year and a half to create. It is being released in three variations, set with over 20 carats of rubies, sapphires or emeralds, and nearly 840 diamonds. Each variation is limited to three pieces worldwide for a total of nine pieces. (PRNewsFoto/Montblanc)The limited edition Mystery Masterpiece is being released in three variations, set either with rubies, sapphires or emeralds, and accented by diamonds. Each variation is limited to three pieces worldwide for a total of nine instruments, and has nearly 840 diamonds and over 20 carats of gemstones. The Mystery sells for \$730,000, making it the most expensive writing instrument ever created.

The singularly unique piece of art is handcrafted by a highly skilled artisan and has taken over a year and a half to create. The Mystery Masterpiece features the legendary "Mystery Setting," patented in 1933 by Van Cleef & Arpels, that completely conceals the gemstone settings and creates the illusion of vivid blossoms formed by the rubies, sapphires or emeralds. The writing instrument has up to 70 gems set in this fashion. Each setting requires at least 90 minutes of work on the part of the lapidary, who can spend hundreds, even thousands, of hours creating a single precious object. A special groove is made on the "culet" of each stone, which has also been given four extra facets. Slid onto the threads of the lattice design, the stones are held in place side by side without any visible setting and without any spaces between them.

Montblanc's meticulously crafted skeleton body allows the delicate white gold ornaments to appear to float on the background of transparent resin. A butterfly in white gold with diamonds sits on the clip. The rhodium-plated solid gold nib is finely engraved to commemorate the two companies' centennials.

"The Mystery is the world's most original, beautiful, intricately jeweled creation," said Lutz Bethge, Managing Director, Montblanc International. "It marks the beginning of a new category of art; it is fine jewelry, that happens to write. It's an unparalleled creation, as Montblanc and Van Cleef & Arpels are at the pinnacle of jewelry design and craftsmanship."

"This is a proud day for us because we're unveiling an original masterpiece that is unique and lasting, which will give the owner an opportunity to pass something truly unique on to the next generation," said Stanislas de Quercize, president and CEO, Van Cleef & Arpels. "The Mystery is a result of the passionate dedication and innovative spirit that has inspired us throughout our hundred year history."

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