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ENTER A FASHION DREAMSCAPE OF RICH TEXTURES,
BOHO SILHOUETTES & FLORAL BEAUTY

French luxury house and master of crystal glassware Baccarat teams up with renowned Hong Kong architect and designer Steven Leung to reimagine the iconic Zénith chandelier, bringing into the world Printemps Bleu, a limited-edition chandelier with delicate motifs of nine swallows, flowers and butterflies in cobalt hues. A matrimony of pure crystal and high quality porcelain, Steven takes inspiration from 19th-century Baccarat motifs and Qinghua Ci pottery, subtly evoking Chinese Yin-Yang philosophy, and expressing a creative dialogue between heritage and modernity in the form of lights.

The first Asian designer to partner with Baccarat, Leung shares with BAZAAR on the design journey and his world view.

How did the opportunity to work with Baccarat come about?

Our journey began with Chinese tea, wine, and dining sets. Subsequently, Baccarat extended an invitation to reimagine their renowned Zénith collection—a task that I consider both a tremendous honour and a significant challenge.

How long did the entire process take, from conception to execution and completion? Any memorable challenges or lessons?

Over about eighteen months, we progressed through roughly five design iterations from concept to launching my design.

First, achieving the ideal shade of blue posed a challenge as the fired porcelain often differed from the sample swatches. This trial-and-error process spanned approximately six months, while the design phase took an additional two to three months.

Another challenge we faced was in crafting the porcelain lampshades. While chandeliers are often admired for their grandeur, the lampshades are frequently overlooked, but I think they are a crucial element. Unlike most of Baccarat's chandeliers that feature fabric shades,

we opted for delicate porcelain lampshades. We focused on achieving a translucent effect, requiring the porcelain to be thin. To maintain a refined look, we kept the exterior white and reserved the intricate patterns for the interior, subtly revealing themselves when illuminated.

A design piece is more than an object; it can exude vitality. For instance, this chandelier offers a



Rhapsody in BLEU

Hong Kong architect Steven Leung becomes the first Asian designer to partner with the house of Baccarat, with a reimagining of the iconic Zénith chandelier.

BY CRYSTAL WOO

distinct experience whether lit or unlit. While at eye level, the focus is on the lampshade, a different world of intricate details unfolds when viewed from below, inviting a different perspective when seated.

How does it feel collaborating with a giant such as Baccarat?

Collaborating with Baccarat and their seasoned artisans was a remarkable journey. Their professionalism and unwavering passion for achieving the utmost craftsmanship, despite encountering technical hurdles, left a lasting impression on me. This milestone underscores the recognition of Asian design aesthetics, acknowledging the importance and impact of Asian culture at large.

What was it like visiting the legendary Baccarat workshop?

Exploring the exclusive behind-the-scenes of Baccarat's workshop proved to be both exciting and enlightening. Immersing ourselves in their extensive historical archives, with a legacy spanning 260 years,

felt like embarking on a journey through time, unveiling the brand's rich history and steadfast commitment to craftsmanship through the ages.

During our visit, we meticulously examined the products in development and engaged in in-depth, face-to-face discussions with the R&D team. This collaborative exchange allowed us to leverage the strengths of both parties effectively. Witnessing firsthand the intricate art of crafting their exquisite crystal pieces and conversing with seasoned artisans underscored why Baccarat holds such esteemed status: each creation encapsulates the wisdom of artisans and centuries-old traditions. The Zénith chandelier is so much more than a source of light. It becomes a highly sought-after work of art and collectible.



Many luxury items tend to depreciate over time. What ways can be taken to ensure the final creation will continue to have a history of appreciating in value? Or if it even matters?

As a designer, distinct from an artist or collector, the potential appreciation in value is not our primary focus. Design epitomises the fusion of functionality and aesthetics. I am dedicated to ensuring that the design remains human-centric, crafted with top-tier materials, impeccable quality, and exquisite craftsmanship. The design shall be user-friendly, durable, and timeless so that it transcends fleeting trends and serves its purpose effectively for years to come.

What is Art? What is Culture? How does time and space fit into them?

Art and culture are complex aspects of human expression and societal identity that intertwine in profound ways. Time and space give us a perspective to comprehend and interpret them. Depending on the context, different art styles, customs, and traditions can convey diverse meanings or connotations. When we incorporate cultural elements into the design, we enrich the narrative, infuse authenticity, and foster connections that resonate deeply with individuals and communities.

Is A.I. a threat or an aid to art and culture?

Art and culture, in my view, are rooted in humanity.



While A.I. or technology functions as a tool that becomes an integral part of our lives, it would not lead, form, or define our art and culture. I believe that A.I. can never fully replace the creativity and essence of human beings. Therefore, it is crucial for us to prepare ourselves by harnessing the power of A.I. while also embracing the unique perceptual thinking that is intrinsic to human nature.

Complete the sentence. The Printemps Bleu Zénith Chandelier should be hanging from...?

The Printemps Bleu Zénith Chandelier can be hung even close to the floor. There is no set height for hanging a chandelier, you can be as creative as you want.

Printemps Bleu (meaning "Blue Spring" in English) Zénith Chandelier commemorates Baccarat's 260th anniversary and honours the 60th anniversary of the maison's Sino-French friendship. The piece launches worldwide in 2025, with only 60 limited-edition pieces. To learn more, visit www.baccarat.com

WHAT A STORY

In the 1930s, opulent Baccarat chandeliers to the Maharajah of Gwalior arrived in the majestic palace in India. During installation, the sheer weight of pure crystals from the chandeliers collapsed the ceiling. What's a Maharaja to do? Build anew and to avoid the previous mishap, elephants were suspended to properly test the strength of the restored ceiling. (From the book "Baccarat 1764: Two Hundred and Fifty Years" written by historian Laurence Benaïm and Murray Moss)



Printemps Bleu Zénith chandelier, Baccarat

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