

JEWELS FOR CHRISTMAS

Duchess of Windsor's diamond earclips are included in a special section devoted exclusively to earrings

SOTHEBY'S traditional pre-Christmas jewellery sale of Important Jewellery this year features a section devoted exclusively to earrings and among the 77 pairs on offer is a pair of earclips which once belonged to the Duchess of Windsor. The sale is on Thursday, December 3, 1998 at Sotheby's in London.

Earrings have been known to exist since the 3rd millennium BC, although it is probable that both men and women adorned their ears with such as things as shells and polished pebbles for centuries before that. Today earrings are among the most desired item of jewellery. Many women possess more than one pair of earrings and often feel naked when not wearing any.

Sotheby's sale includes earrings dating back to the 17th century but one of the highlights are the earclips which, are not only stunning in themselves, but have the added attraction of having been in the collection of doyenne of style herself, the Duchess of Windsor.

Set with fabulous pear-shaped diamonds, the earclips originally by Harry Winston, were re-designed on the Duchess's instructions by Cartier in Paris in the early 1960s. Cartier subsequently set the diamonds in a striking formation of informal clusters which sparkle effectively in all lights. These exceptional earclips which were originally sold by Sotheby's on April 2, 1989 are estimated to fetch £180,000/220,000.

Earrings set with a variety of different gems and in a host of different styles are on offer in the sale. An attractive and highly wearable pair of 'Creole' earrings by Cartier, Paris, is estimated to fetch £3,500/4,500, while a stunning pair of earrings set with heart-shaped diamonds is expected to fetch in excess of £25,000.

Equally stylish is a pair of diamond, amethyst and tourmaline earclips by Bulgari estimated to fetch: £5,000/7,000, while another pair set with diamonds by Chaumet, circa 1935, should fetch £3,500/4,500. A pair of diamond pendent earrings designed as pear-shaped diamond drops suspended from baton-shaped links set with baguette diamonds is estimated to fetch £7,000/9,000. Fun, frivolous earrings are also included such as a pair designed as a tennis player; one as a pair of skiers and another as golfers. Each is estimated to fetch £3,000/4,000.

Important Jewels in the sale include a stunning and exquisite corsage ornament/tiara combination originally in the collection of the Duke de Leuchtenberg, the grand son of Eugène de de Beauharnais, son of Empress Joséphine. Made by the court jeweller to Emperor Napoleon I, the jewel, designed as a spray of flowers with several of the flowerheads en tremblant, is set with emeralds and diamonds (est: £45,000/55,000).

Another piece with a distinguished provenance is a bracelet by Carlo Giuliano, which was a present from Queen Victoria to Princess Victoria von Baden on the occasion of her marriage to Gustav V Adolf King of Sweden on September 20, 1881. The bracelet, set with quartz cat's eyes, rubies and diamonds, was bequeathed to Marie-Luise Freifrau Marschall von Bieberstein who grew up with the Princess of Baden. It has since passed by descent to the present owner and is estimated to fetch £3,000/4,000.

Among many stylish necklaces, each one more beautiful than the next, is a late 19th century necklace in the 'Ballet Russe' style, a design of a fringe of diamonds inspired by a traditional Russian head-dress which is estimated to fetch £30,000/40,000. Another is a superb modern necklace set with two rows of oval mixed-cut Burmese rubies flanked by marquise and pear-shaped diamonds. With matching earrings, it is estimated to fetch £100,000/150,000. An important cultured pearl necklace, a single strand composed of 25 pearls, is expected to fetch £130,000/150,000.

The ever-romantic tiara is another feature of this sale. One, dating from the 19th century, is designed as two branches of laurel leaves rising to a gabled point in the Hellenistic style (est: £32,000/38,000), while another is of foliate scroll design set throughout with rose, cushion and pear-shaped diamonds (est: £15,000/20,000). A third tiara, dating from circa 1860, takes the form of a wreath of diamond-set leaves and berries and is estimated to fetch £15,000/20,000.

For the lady who loves rings on her fingers there is an overwhelming choice to choose from, the ultimate being an

impressive ring set with a dazzling step-cut diamond of 17.37 carats which is estimated to fetch £80,000/100,000. In addition the sale includes brooches and bracelets, as well as dress sets and cufflinks for the gentlemen.

All the great names in jewellery design and production are to be found such as Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Graff, Harry Winston, Bulgari, Chaumet, Kutchinsky and Boucheron to name but a few.

GALLERY TALK

On

Monday November 30, at 6.45pm In Sotheby's New Bond Street Galleries, 34 & 35 New Bond Street, London W1

Alexandra Rhodes, F.G.A. Sotheby's Senior Jewellery expert in Europe will give an illustrated talk on the highlights of the many exciting jewellery sales which have been held by Sotheby's in Europe during 1998

The jewels discussed will include some of the best examples of design and creativity produced over a period of two centuries by many of the great jewellers

Highlights of Sotheby's December 3 sale of Important Jewels will also be presented and modelled