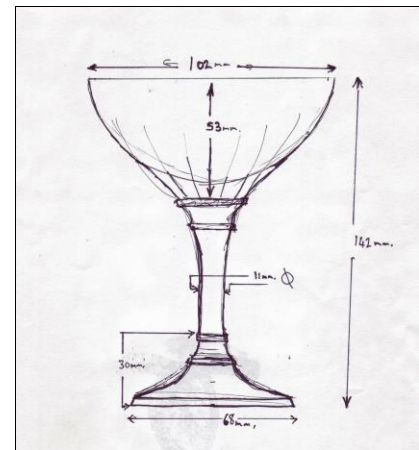


Out of the Box! Symbiosis in Craftsmanship

GN OLSSON Mastercraftsmen were requested by John Calleija, (Calleija Jewellers of Marina Mirage, Gold Coast) to design a custom, presentation keepsake box for what is believed to be the world's most expensive champagne glasses. These commissioned glasses are hand carved from quartz rock crystal, and are diamond encrusted and trimmed with rose and white gold. It is the anticipated destiny of these glasses, to become an heirloom for the new owners' descendants. So, the box must keep the glasses safe and protected during all the likely activities over future centuries. This is what we pride ourselves on, as our slogan reflects, "Today's investments . . . tomorrow's antiques and heirlooms".



Coincidentally, the glasses are on loan to John Calleija, by the new owners, for the official toasting of the opening of his new Calleija Jewellers shop in Old Bond St, London on the 24th of June 2008. Therefore, the box, when opened for display, was designed to let light play amongst the diamonds and the carved quartz crystal glasses to exquisite effect.

Fit for royalty the sparkling pair of champagne glasses consists of approximately 15ct of white diamonds and 6ct of the rare Argyle pink diamonds. Embellished with platinum 18ct white and rose gold, they incorporate an amazing 1700 diamonds in total.

It was somewhat of a design challenge for GN Olsson Mastercraftsmen, to make the box. Particularly since the glasses had not themselves been finished at the time we were commissioned. However, drawings of the champagne glasses were made available to us, so we hand turned a model champagne glass from solid cedar to assist us throughout the design stage.

For safe keeping, the upholstered interior must prevent the glasses from rolling into each other or the hard sides of the box. The inner upholstery, traditionally crafted, ensured no movement was possible in



any direction once the lid was closed. Midnight (Blue) Carlton Velvet linings covered over strategically chosen low and high density foams, following a pre-moulded and laminated solid timber base to ensure this occurred. The moulded base was made in this fashion to minimise the likelihood of movement over time. The upholstery inside the lid is a decorative, diamond buttoned, floral design in velvet covering the softest of all the foams.

The shimmery, velvet colour matches the Calleija Jewellers corporate dark blue colour. Most importantly, it offers an excellent contrast colour to highlight the light and colour emanating from the carved quartz crystal, the rose and white diamonds, and the rose and white gold.



The box, itself, is a work of art, commencing with the hand selection of the finest grain character Queensland Red Cedar. Ebony trim was incorporated on each edge and in the feathered mitre joints to give longevity to the strength and aesthetics of the joints. Traditionally, ebony is always an excellent accompaniment to diamonds and gold.

Under normal circumstances brass fittings would have been used for such a box, however, the colour theme meant this would be a mismatch. The client wished to avoid the prospect of tarnishing and given the anticipated life of this heirloom of the future, chrome plated brass was not an option. With this in



mind, we especially engineered stainless steel fittings, including the escutcheon, classic style key, locking plate, and quadrant hinges. This is a particularly intricate part of the box, as the fittings represent very fine craftsmanship, and stainless steel is notoriously a very hard and difficult metal to work with. In the end, it was worth this extra effort, as the silver of the stainless steel is an excellent match for the silver of the white gold on the champagne glasses. Perhaps the initial of the client, "E", will be included in the oval of the key tab, as final touches may continue yet. John is also considering inlay of jewels into the box itself.

The box will undoubtedly sit on a range of surfaces during its life, and traditionally baize or felt is used to line the underneath of boxes to ensure scratching does not occur on the surfaces upon which they are placed. Highest grade English Haynesworth baize was chosen, in black, to compliment the black ebony trim.

The box was French Polished in a traditional pure shellac base, which was then built up with a high quality lacquer, spray applied and then hand finished. This deviation from using pure shellac only, was to give a harder wearing finish, yet retain the crystal clear reflection so typically associated with shellac finishes. Staining was kept to a minimum to ensure the box is in keeping with the crystal clear champagne glasses. There is a wonderful crystal clarity right through to the beautiful Queensland Red Cedar grain. We ensured the box would appear *obviously* of Queensland Red Cedar, yet still resonating of the characteristic rich, dark timber tones of the Calleija Jewellers shop.

The classique corporate image of Calleija Jewellers' rich, dark blue soft furnishings and rich, dark timbers is staunchly reflected in the box design. One would think in future, if the makers stamp were not apparent, that it would immediately be evident upon inspection, that one is looking at a Calleija piece. Much the same way one can walk into a room of a renown interior designer and just know intuitively by the colours and style, that it must be the mark of a particular artist. Surely that is what custom design is all about - no matter how large or small the commission.

We watched the various media events covering the debut of the champagne glasses with delight. The box displayed the glasses with superlative and sumptuous impact, yet did not overshadow the obvious mastery of the \$400 000 diamond encrusted champagne glasses. It's truly an honour to receive such unique commissions. I'm sure Australians are proud of the award winning local and international achievements of Calleija Jewellers and wish them every success in the opening of their new shop in Old Bond St London.

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