

Natural Inspirations

Evelyn Clothier salutes Art Nouveau with iridescent enamel and precious stones.

BY STEPHANIE L. SNYDER

design, lending extraordinary color gradations and a light-as-air feeling to the jewelry. Clothier combines this delicate enamel with precious stones to create whimsical, ro-

mother and the full-time executive director of the American Medical Foundation for Peer Review and Education (the largest national nonprofit organization for medical-staff peer review and assessment of specialty departments and quality of hospital care)? And on top of it all, she's up many nights till the wee hours designing her jewelry.

Visiting Evelyn at her Manhattan apartment, where she is surrounded by Chinese and Japanese cloisonné, I cannot help wondering why a wom-

an with such a rigorous schedule and so many interests dared to take on yet another challenge. The answer? She has an unyielding passion for all things with intricate enamel design (sparked, in her teenage years, by Japanese cloisonné) and for all things Art Nouveau. "I became smitten with enamel when I was very young, and later with Art Nouveau jewelry, which I discovered at an auction in the early 1980s. I have been collecting the jewelry ever since. Recently, while traveling in Europe, I met highly skilled craftsmen who were using plique-à-jour, and I thought how wonderful it would be to share the beauty of this magical jewelry with others." This is precisely what she has done—masterfully. ❖

Butterflies and friends, from Clothier's "Treasures From the Garden" collection (\$1,500–\$90,000; brooch shown: \$6,300–\$31,000) Available exclusively at Bergdorf Goodman, NYC, or call (800) 218-4918.

As I was strolling through the fine-jewelry department at Bergdorf Goodman, I spied an oval vitrine filled with exquisite butterflies, dragonflies and grasshoppers exploding with light. I was drawn to their delicate look and shimmering colors but could not determine if they were old or new: there was something antique in their appearance, yet the colors were so vibrant. I was sure that no matter what they were, I would certainly remember these captivating creatures—and the name of their maker, Evelyn Clothier.

I met the woman herself two weeks later and learned that her jewelry is both old and new. Old, in that she is creating Art Nouveau-style jewelry using plique-à-jour, an enamel technique—used widely in jewelry from the late 19th and early 20th centuries—that dates back to 14th-century France; new, because she has found craftsmen currently employing this age-old process with modern materials. Jewelry made using this technique—which produces the stunning translucence in her work—has no solid backing to block the light. The fired glass is supported only by a loosely woven wire

mantic pieces: butterflies inlaid with rubies, dragonflies with sapphires, birds with emeralds—a natural selection of exquisitely jeweled flora and fauna set in 18-karat gold and platinum. No two pieces in this collection, called "Treasures From the Garden," are exactly alike; each is made lovingly by hand. (The collection also includes a great variety of jeweled and enameled earrings, brooches and necklaces made without plique-à-jour.)

Keeping up with Evelyn Baram-Clothier is no easy task. Would you believe that the woman behind this dainty, ultra-feminine jewelry is a lawyer, a pharmacologist, a self-educated botanist, a wife, a

