





FRENCH FANCIES

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As luxury jewellery meccas go, Place Vendôme is up there with the greats. On every side of the stunning Parisian square, boutiques belonging to the world's most iconic brands vie for attention with window displays to rival Aladdin's Cave. But while Cartier, Mikimoto and Chanel glitter, gleam and glow respectively, it is Boucheron that shines brightest for one good reason.

In 1893 Frédéric Boucheron opened a boutique at No. 26 Place Vendôme and in doing so became the first jeweller to set up shop on the square. If the stories are to be believed, he picked that par-

ticular spot because it was the sunniest, which meant that the diamonds in his windows would sparkle more brightly than those of his rivals.

As a ploy it worked, and in the intervening years Boucheron – whose flagship store still occupies the same spot – boasted an illustrious clientele that included the ill-fated Tsar Nicholas II, the aspirational Wallis Simpson, and the ultra-moneyed Astors and Vanderbilts. Known for its whimsical pieces, sinuous shapes and rich palettes, Boucheron's voluptuous jewels naturally appealed to

flamboyant characters such as Oscar Wilde and actress Sarah Bernhardt as well as Tinseltown greats Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Rita Hayworth.

With their regal purple and gold colour scheme, these Esquires Confidences Earrings are pure Boucheron. Fashioned from delicately frilled yellow gold, 128 round diamonds, 22 round rubies, a pair of round rubellites and the charmingly monikered tassel cut pompom amethyst, these mouthwatering marvels look good enough to eat. Price: £19,500