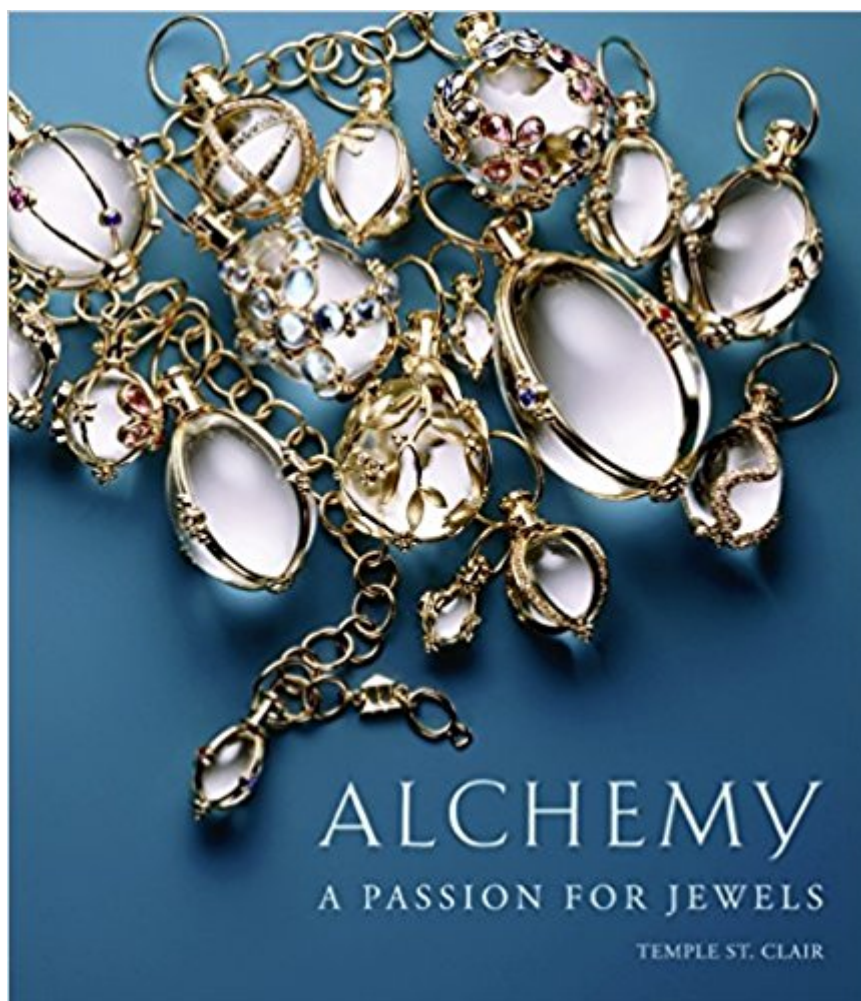


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Alchemy: A Passion For Jewels



Synopsis

An exquisite look into the art of fine jewelry making, through the eyes of famed designer Temple St. Clair. A Southern girl with a nomadic spirit and a voracious appetite for history and culture, Temple St. Clair grew up spending summer vacations in Morocco and Bavaria, studied at an international boarding school in Switzerland, and went night diving in Honduras with the son of Jacques Cousteau. In her early twenties, St. Clair landed in Florence, where she completed a master's in Italian literature. In fact, she had no exposure to jewelry making until her visiting mother bought an ancient coin and asked St. Clair to commission a local goldsmith to make a piece of jewelry around it. Armed with the coin and a sketch, St. Clair entered the ancient Palazzo dell'Orafo of Florentine goldsmiths, where she first discovered the centuries-old art of fine Italian jewelry making. Inspired by the distinctive craftsmanship, St. Clair continued to work with artisans to bring her designs to life. A new world soon began to open up to her—a world that engaged her multicultural education, vast experiences, and rich curiosity; a world that awarded her with a new identity as "an amateur anthropologist, a hopeless hunter and gatherer, a bit of a wanderer, and a self-made jewelry historian who loves to dream and draw." With an artist's eye for detail and an unwavering esteem for the historic, St. Clair creates one-of-a-kind pieces that combine ancient influences with traditional craftsmanship and contemporary flair. In *Alchemy*, she takes readers on an idiosyncratic excursion into the intricate history and craft of jewelry making—from the ancient origins of talismans and charms, to the complicated pursuit of the perfect gemstone—all through the lens of her own fascinating experiences. The result is a mesmerizing and visually stunning book that will appeal to jewelry lovers, artistic dreamers, and anyone who suffers from wanderlust.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“St. Clair presents a quirkily luxurious scrapbook of the experiences that led her to jewelry design, beginning in her junior year abroad in Italy, when she hunted down a Florentine artisan to help her make a necklace for her mother.” (New York Times)
“An illuminating memoir.” (In Style)
“With her proper private-school upbringing in Virginia, penchant for escape, and genteel-sounding name, Temple St. Clair Carr is the kind of woman Henry James might have immortalized as a heroine.” (Elle)
“A Renaissance woman.” (Travel and Leisure)

Working in an airy studio above the streets of New York’s SoHo, Temple St. Clair draws inspiration from varied and far-flung sources: a color in a Mannerist painting, an architectural element in a Venetian church or a Kyoto temple, the shifting shades of the sea. In her designs, as in her life, she blends a modern aesthetic with a deep love of art, history, and storytelling. In combining exquisite materials and craftsmanship in an old world tradition with an independent and modern spirit of design, Temple creates distinctive jewelry for the modern woman. She lives in New York with her husband and two children.

First, a confession: I might not have known about "Alchemy: A Passion for Jewels" if Temple St. Clair’s mother had not contacted my mother to tell her about it. Temple and I were childhood pals, although even then it was not hard to tell that her life would take her in directions that many of us Southern Girls could hardly dream of. I enjoy collecting books by people I know, so there was no question that I would buy this one, sight unseen. Well, dear readers, "Alchemy" blew me away! The photography and design, combined with the subject matter, make it one of the most physically beautiful books I have ever seen. Seamlessly interwoven among the many gorgeous pictures of St. Clair’s jewelry pieces are conceptual sketches, details of fine art and architecture that have helped inspire some of her creations, photos from her travels, and nostalgic images from her early life. But the text is every bit as engaging as the imagery. St. Clair not only recounts her experiences but melds them with her interior journey as a creative artist, including healthy doses of art history, philosophy, mythology, and spirituality that lend authenticity and gravitas to her life’s work. Socrates said, "An unexamined life is not worth living." With "Alchemy," Temple St. Clair has offered a thoughtful examination of her own life that can serve as an inspiration to any reader. This book is --

dare I say it? -- a gem.

This is not a how to book. The author is not a goldsmith and I doubt anyone could follow her design processes without sharing her education as outlined in the biographical part of her book. On the other hand she has a nice eye for jewelery and there are pages of photographs of attractive wearable pieces. I came upon a copy in our public library and liked it well enough to buy one for myself.

Beautiful book!

Very nice book , showcasing many of her pieces and work.

A nice book, not worth the price, however. Nice photos, but her writing is a tad bit disjointed; not awful, but was expecting much better.

Beautiful photographs of incredible pieces of jewelry, also some insight into the creative process!

I bought this book yesterday from the bargain bin at my local store due to skimming it and see the gorgeous jewelry photos. I was hoping it to at least have some information on the designing of said jewelry. Instead, what I got was how the designer was deeply privileged growing up, traveled/s a lot, had great parents, and was lucky enough to study abroad, all of which led her to be a designer. While there were some sketches, there was only a handful of pages and the process was not described at all (in terms of technicality). There was some tidbit information on a few gems and jewels, but nothing major. Basically, it's a sparse autobiography with great photos. I will admit that her passion clearly comes through, though. It makes a good coffee table book, but not much else. The construction of the book itself was very nice. It has thick pages and a heavy dust jacket, but still pricey in my opinion. 3.5/5 stars

jimmy love it , would purchase again. fast . have a good experience. Great little business. Lovely, friendly follow-up. Awesome bread product. Go get yourself one.

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