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Cartier

البحرين

IN SEARCH OF PEARLS
THE TRAVELS OF JACQUES CARTIER IN BAHRAIN



Bahraini pearls with some of the tools of the trade.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Bahrain may be the smallest Arab state, but it is perfectly proportioned and proud of its character, style and culture.

The Pearl of Arabia: “El Bahrain” in Arabic means the ‘two seas’, specifically referring to the unique natural phenomenon where fresh water springs burst out in the middle of the Arabian Gulf, creating the natural habitat for the rarest types of natural pearls. Jacques Cartier frequently visited the Island in the 1920’s to select specimen pearls for his exceptional jewelry. And now the flag of Bahrain, with its red and

white colors is a living memorial to its traditional pearling economy: pearls presented to merchants against a velvet red cloth to display their quality and sheen.

Bahrain, a destination for Cartier and other famous illustrious visitors where legend recounts that almost 5000 years earlier, Gilgamesh, the epic hero, landed here in search of paradise, where he is said to have found the flower of eternity – the pearl – along the shores of ancient Dilmun, now modern Bahrain!

*The Tourism Sector, Ministry of Culture & Information,
and the House of Cartier
have the pleasure to introduce to you this rare photo collection
of Jacques Cartier's visits to Bahrain
in the early 20th Century*

السلامة

It was in 1847 that Louis-François Cartier (1819 - 1904) started his own business, at 29, Rue de Montorgueil, in Paris.

It was the end of the reign of Louis-Phillipe. In 1877, Louis-François Cartier's

son Alfred (1841 - 1925) succeeded him, later to join forces with his own eldest son, in 1898.

The family moved to the famous Rue de la Paix.



The coast at Muharraq, Bahrain's capital in the early 20th century.



Pearl diver at work.

The 20th century having just begun, Alfred Cartier gave the company an international dimension while conferring a branch store on each of his three sons: Louis (1875 - 1942), Pierre (1878 - 1964) and Jacques (1884 - 1942).

London and New York were the first cities to house Cartier outside French borders.



Jacques Cartier welcomed at Mugbil Al-Thukair's house.



From right to left: Yusuf bin Ahmad Kanoo, Salman Mattar, Jacques Cartier, Mugbil Al-Thukair and a pearl expert, taken in 1911 at Mugbil house.



Jacques Cartier, Mugbil Al-Thukair and Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo at Mugbil Al-Thukair's house in Manama

Pierre and Jacques scoured the world in search of the most beautiful precious stones. That's how Jacques made a stop in the Gulf while on the way to the Durbar ceremonies in 1911.

From then on, the house of Cartier established enduring commercial links with Bahrain, which assured the provision of pearls to its Paris workshops.



Jacques Cartier with his sales assistant Mr. Maurice Richard meet a pearl expert associated to Mugbil Al-Thukair, at his house.



Jacques Cartier in local dress with Mugbil Al-Thukair and Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo, visiting the ruler of Bahrain Shaikh Isa Bin Ali Al Khalifa.



Jacques Cartier at Mugbil Al-Thukair's house, with Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo and his sales assistant Maurice Richard.

Each of the three brothers developed a passion for the arts of “faraway” civilizations. Jacques fell in love with Indian and Asian art. Louis collected Persian miniatures, and was one of the first Europeans to collect Islamic Art.

In 1928, he participated (as an expert and lender) in a related exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New-York.

Jacques Cartier onboard a Bahraini pearling boat.





Jacques Cartier on a local pearling boat from Muharraq, home of Bahrain's pearl divers.





Jacques Cartier embarking on local pearling boat from Muharraq, home of Bahrain's pearl divers.

transpired in House of Cartier's creations during the 1910's.

Egyptian, African, Asian and Middle Eastern influences were to bestow, through Art Déco style, a nuanced effect never since equaled in jewelry – the

exotic and the sophisticated blending in a most perfect harmony.

Nowadays, the House remains loyal to this cosmopolitan spirit started by the three Cartier brothers.

The travels they embarked on allowed



Jacques Cartier visits Bahraini pearl merchants at their tent.



The coast at Muharraq, the capital of Bahrain in the early 20th century.

them not only to develop commercial contacts with local clients (princes, bourgeoisie, governors) but also to find local suppliers of precious stones and pearls (from Bahrain in particular) that eventually adorned their client's jewelry.

On their journeys through different

countries, they drew inspiration from the details in traditional arts and crafts that they admired and photographed. Upon their return, the House designers interpreted these details, integrating them into their new creations.

l'agenda
Your Cultural Guide with a French Twist

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