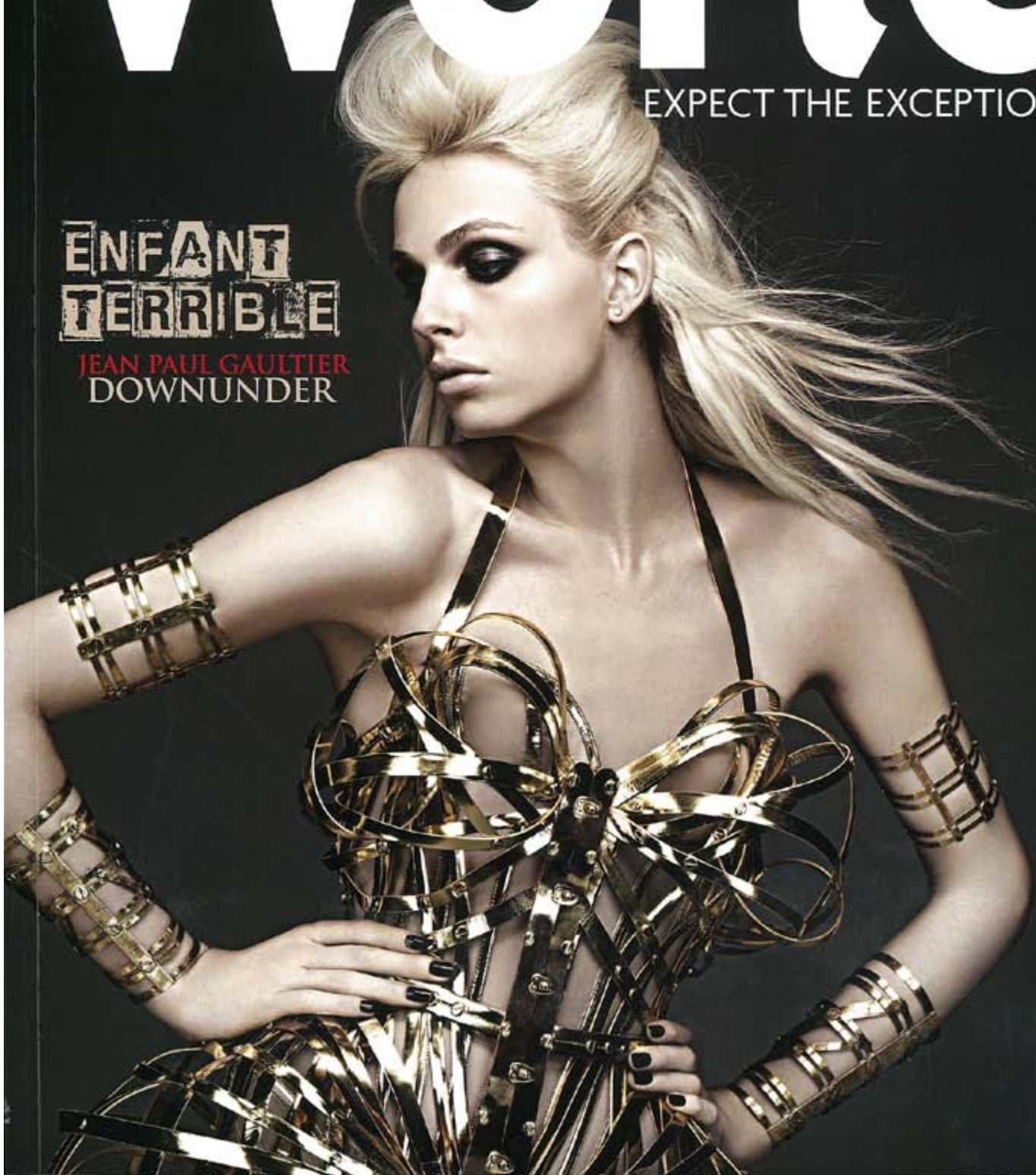


World

EXPECT THE EXCEPTIONAL

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LALIQUE

Lalique, makers of the world's finest crystal home accessories, is a perfect example of French style. Its crystal vases, bowls and general objets d'art have represented the pinnacle of art nouveau decorative arts from the early 20th century since its founder, René Lalique, first began working with glass.

Lalique has been around a long time, but only now has the brand opened its first dedicated boutique, at 20 rue de la Paix, in Paris. The ground floor includes 200 pieces from its high jewellery collection and a selection of iconic works such as the Gourmande ring designed by René Lalique in 1931. A second floor, underground, is a more private salon designed to reflect French style as it was in 1900, at the time of the Paris World Exhibition.

René Lalique (1860-1945) described his work as Art de Vivre or "the art of living." Ever since then Lalique crystal has been distinguished by its clear, satin-crystal glass that's commonly juxtaposed with vibrant colours fluid and illuminating in a way that intentionally blurs the boundary between lifestyle and inventive exhibition.

The new Paris boutique pays tribute to René Lalique's original approach as inspired by the art nouveau and art deco periods in French design. For example, the Oran and Flamme vases are based on the original vases he created but re-imagined in stunning midnight blue and amber. As if he were in some way unhappy with the work, the Flamme – clear crystal and hand-applied black enamel – has seldom been seen in public and is available now only in a numbered limited edition.

If the opening of its first boutique was not enough for one year, Lalique has also staged a four-city launch of Crystal Architecture, a new collection created by the award-winning Iraqi-British architect, Dame Zaha Hadid.

Zaha Hadid is the first woman to win the coveted Pritzker Architecture Prize. For more than 30 years she has been a leading figure in design research, creating new and innovative work that's produced critically acclaimed exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Design Museum in London and the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua, Italy.

When asked what Lalique meant to her, she replied: "Lalique is synonymous with elegant, fluid designs that are innovative and timeless yet do not compromise the integrity of the medium or the craftsmanship of its production. Each piece is a true celebration of the unique properties of crystal."

Launched in Paris, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Manila, Hadid's collection features vases and bowls in midnight blue. They are so beautiful they ought to be equally understood as crystal sculpture – the finest French crystal addressing the interplay of object and art. The apex of French style.

The new Paris boutique and a new collection created by one of Europe's leading designers was more than enough to attract our attention. So we thought you might want to see some of the work yourself.

