

Faraone

Founded by Raffaele Faraone in 1945, Faraone is an Italian jewellery house based in Milan. Faraone's first jewellery shop opened in Florence on Ponte Vecchio, which offered wealthy both Italian and international movie stars and nobility custom-made jewellery¹. The style of Faraone was adored by the Milanese and their business flourished during the 1960s, when the Settepassi family² - the oldest Italian goldsmith and jewellery family with over 400 years of history - purchased the firm. With their expertise, the charm of Faraone jewellery was elevated with a hint of traditional technique³.



Figure 1. The Settepassi family's first jewellery shop opened in Florence on the Ponte Vecchio, 1856.

Faraone closed temporarily when founder Raffaele Faraone passed away in 1960. Guido Settepassi (n.d.) reopened the boutique on Via Montenapoleone in Milan in 1960, specialising in pieces of the 1950 style⁴, where jewellery was commonly worn in a set, with a clean, big and gold-toned design⁵. The exquisite pieces created by Faraone were worn by Grace Kelly (1929-82), Princess of Monaco; opera diva Maria Callas (1923-77); neorealist Italian actress Anna Magnani (1908-73); as well as Ava Gardner (1922-90) and Ingrid Bergman (1915-82), Swedish screen icons.⁶

In 1990, Faraone partnered with Tiffany & Co⁷., and Cesare Settepassi (b. 1943), son of Guido Settepassi (n.d.), was appointed vice president of Tiffany's Europe. Tiffany's

¹ McNaught-Davis (2021)

² The Settepassi family opened their shop in 1856 in Florence.

³ Business & gentleman (2010)

⁴ Bonhams (2022)

⁵ Vintage Jewelry Girl (2018)

⁶ Faraone Casa d'Aste (2022)

⁷ McNaught-Davis (2021)

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was not that well-known in Europe at that time, and Cesare's main job was to promote the brand and consolidate its market in Europe. While working for Tiffany's, Cesare also expanded the Faraone business in London, which expanded from one tiny shop to several branches across the city.⁸ However, as Cesare Settepassi was technically working for Tiffany's, he was forced to shut down the store on Monte Napoleone temporarily. In the 2000s, Tiffany's sold Faraone back to Cesare Settepassi, who reopened Faraone to continue his family legacy⁹.

To celebrate the reopening of the shop, the 'One of A Kind' collection was launched to reintroduce the iconic designs of Faraone¹⁰. All the designs were unique and used only high-quality gemstones. The uniqueness of each gemstone represents the main concept of this collection – the idea of exclusiveness, which was also the brand motto. (what was the motto?)¹¹.



Figure 2. Ring from 'One of A Kind' collection.

In 2011, Faraone was sold to a group of Italian investors and Vittoria Bianchi (n.d.), was appointed the new CEO of the firm. Bianchi guaranteed that original and signature designs of the firm would remain. Apart from the 'One of A Kind' collection, Faraone also offered a new collection: the 'Monte Napoleone' collection, also known as 'F' di Faraone', in 2014 which focussed on the 'F' icon of the brand¹². This collection was aimed at offering a modern, timeless and 'edgy' design to a younger audience. The highlight of this collection is a gold link that is featured on every piece¹³.

⁸ Design ikon (2022)

⁹ Design ikon (2022)

¹⁰ Morelle Davidson (2022)

¹¹ Faraone Casa d'Aste (2022)

¹² Faraone Casa d'Aste (2022)

¹³ "Via Montenapoleone" Faraone Gioielli (2022)



Figure 3. A pair of earrings from “F” OF FARAONE

In face of the rising demand of vintage jewellery, Bianchi turned Faraone into an auction house known as ‘Faraone Casa D’Aste’ in 2016 while continue selling Faraone jewellery online and in their showroom. Regarding the vision behind ‘Faraone Casa D’Aste’, Bianchi once commented¹⁴:

“Opportunities to wear jewels of a certain importance are now rare. Today, the jewel is worn differently; a single piece, even flashy, that can be worn every day, and one or two, very pure but at the same time discreet, for special occasions. This is how our grandmothers’ sets and brooches left the scene. Why not sell them, or turn them into something more portable?.”

At present, Faraone remains open as an exclusive jewellery brand based in Milan, at 9 Via Montenapoleone.

In the collection

Liang Yi Museum houses 8 vanities made by Faraone from the 1940s to 1980s, which include nécessaires and compacts. The design of these vanities is characterised by a minimalist style with a highlight, usually on the clasp. The works demonstrate Faraone’s unique style of bringing together different gemstones and gold-tone designs to create pieces that fuse the traditional techniques of goldsmiths along with distinctive elements of the 1950.

The exterior of figure 4 is finished with wavy chevron guilloché¹⁵, while the highlight of this vanity lies on the clasp of the nécessaire. The clasp consists of a jewelled motif in diamonds, detailed with a line of calibrated sapphires in the shape of a stylised vase containing two stylised bouquets. The one on the left is embedded with diamonds and sapphires while that on the right consists of diamonds and rubies. This nécessaire is

¹⁴ Faraone Casa d'Aste (2022)

¹⁵ Guilloché is the application of a translucent enamel paste on an engine-turned metal base, which allows the patterned background of the metal to be visible even after the enamel paste has been fired.

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divided into two parts: the left is an open compartment, whereas the right side contains three components, including a mirror at the back of the lid, a powder compartment with a hinged lid, and a fitting for a tube of lipstick, also mounted on hinges. This nécessaire travelled to the exhibition *Ultra Vanities- Bejewelled make-up boxes from the Age of Glamour* held at Goldsmiths Hall, Central London in 2013¹⁶.



Figure 4. Nécessaire, Signed: Faraone, c. 1940, Materials: Gold, diamond, sapphire and ruby, Height 15.5 x Width 5.4 x Length 2.7cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 5. Interior of Nécessaire (fig. 4)

¹⁶ Nick Ansell (2022)

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The following (fig. 6) is a similar style of nécessaire made in the 1960s. Unlike the previous example, the clasp of this nécessaire is shaped as a stylised vase with a beautiful bouquet embedded with diamond, sapphire, ruby and emerald. A tortoiseshell comb is stored in the case. This nécessaire also comes with a black satin cover.



Figure 6. Nécessaire with a cover (with a comb), Signed: Faraone Milano, c. 1960, Materials: Gold, diamond, sapphire, emerald, ruby and tortoiseshell, Height 15.4 x Width 8.3 x Length 2.9cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 7. Nécessaire (fig. 6) with a black cover

The Museum also houses two oval powder compacts (fig. 8 and fig. 9) made during the 1970s. Both compacts consist of a cushion and a mirror, but with a distinct design.

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The first one is made in a ribbed pattern that stretches along the length of the box; the push button of this box is set with diamonds. While the other one is made of tortoiseshell with a diamond push button.



Figure 8. Compact, Signed: Faraone, 1970-1980, Materials: Gold and diamond, Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 9. Compact, Maker: Faraone, 1970-1980, Materials: Gold, tortoiseshell and diamond, Height 5.36 x Width 3.72 x Length 2.18cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

The following set was made in the 1950s, and includes a compact, a cigarette case and a lighter. The exterior of the set is decorated with beautiful turquoise enamel stripes

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with gold lining, the clasp of the compact and the cigarette case are also embedded with diamonds¹⁷.

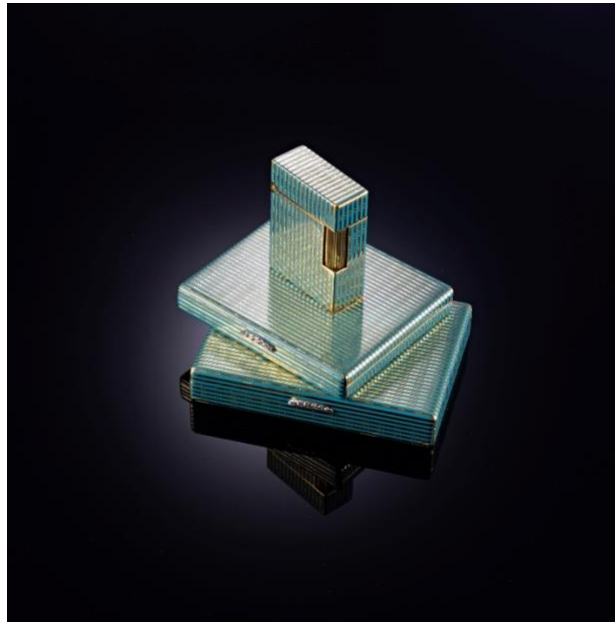


Figure 10. Compact with a Cigarette Case and a Lighter, Attributed: Faraone, c. 1950, Materials: Gold, enamel and diamond, Compact: Height 7.91 x Width 6.6 x Length 1.22cm, Cigarette case: Height 9 x Width 6.4 x Length 1.5cm, Lighter: Height 4.8 x Width 3.5 x Length 4.7cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

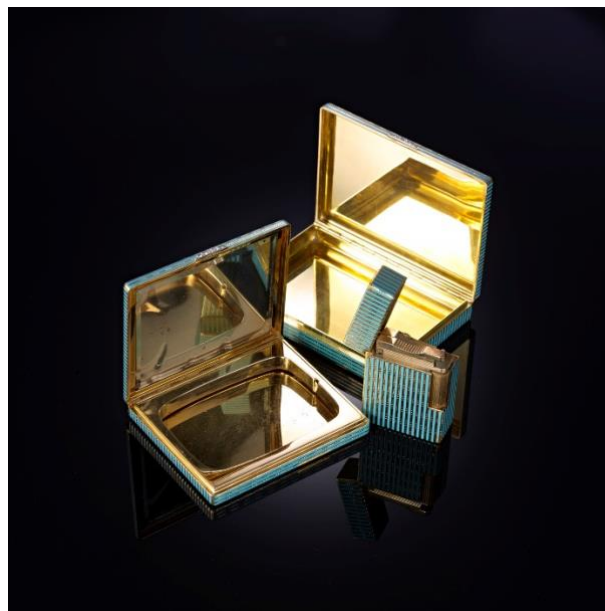


Figure 11. Interior of the Compact with a Cigarette Case and a Lighter (fig. 10).

This colorful compact (fig. 12) made in the 1950s combines the classic gold design of Faraone with a playful use of guilloché enamel in vibrant and contrasting colours. At

¹⁷ Sotheby's (2022)

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the time, a new art style emerged in New York known as colour field painting, which used colour as the main subject of paintings in the expression of human emotion.

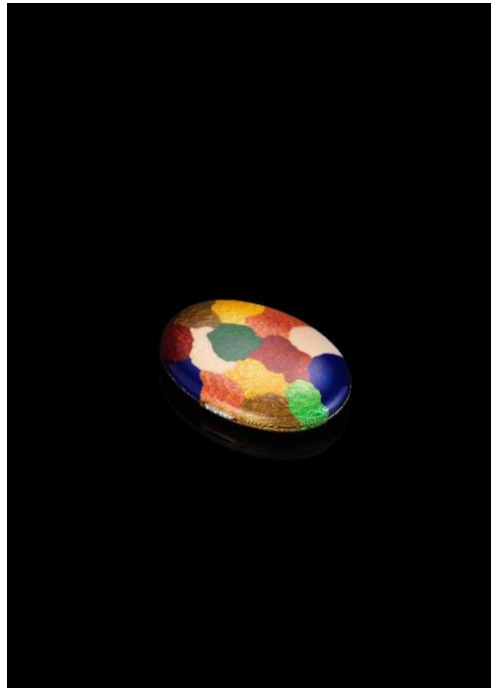


Figure 12. Compact, Attributed: Faraone, c. 1950, Materials: Gold and enamel, Height 8.4 x Width 6.1 x Length 1.7cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

Another nécessaire (fig. 13) made in the 1960s has a clean, modest and timeless design. The structure of this nécessaire is similar to that of figure 4, where it could be opened into two parts, the left side being an empty compartment, and the right with a mirror, a powder compartment with a lid and a fitting for a lipstick. The cover of this case is made by silver, while round-cut diamonds are scattered equally on the surface. The clasp is also set with diamonds that matches the pattern on the cover.

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Figure 13. Nécessaire, Signed: Faraone-Milano, c.1960, Materials: Silver and diamond, Height 15.7 x Width 7 x Length 1.8cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

The last nécessaire (fig. 14) in the collection was made in the 1960s. The whole case is made of gold with fine-cut diamonds set on the surface, forming floral and raindrop patterns. The clasp is also embedded with brilliant-cut diamonds. The interior of this nécessaire contains three compartments with a lid and a lipstick tube, a comb is also included.



Figure 14. Nécessaire (with a comb), Signed: Faraone-Milano, c. 1960, Materials: Gold and diamond, Height 14 x Width 9 x Length 3cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

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Faraone's jewelry was top of the line during the 1960s, with timeless design and the finest materials, Faraone's work was the state of the art. Even now the quality of their jewelry remained the best as it was in the 1960s, which highlights the significance in collecting this brand. The compacts and Nécessaire in our collection are the living objects that reflected the taste in the past, especially in the sector of Italian jewelry, which perfects our collection of Vanity made in Europe.

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