

My Favourite Pieces: Victoria Tang mixes vintage with now

The scion of an Asian design dynasty and creative director of Shanghai Tang is drawn to jewellery imbued with memories



Victoria Tang dressed in Shanghai Tang, where she is creative director © Berton Chang/FT

An eye for aesthetics is in Victoria Tang's blood. The trained photographer is the creative director of Shanghai Tang, the Chinese fashion house founded in 1994 by her father, the late Sir David Tang — *bon vivant*, tastemaker and former [Financial Times Agony Uncle](#).

The company was sold to Swiss group Richemont in 1998, and changed hands once again in 2017. As of last December it has been owned by a group of Chinese investors, which acquired the brand and brought Ms Tang on board to front design.

Today, Ms Tang can always be found wearing her wedding ring and three different gold necklaces: a white gold Tiffany bean pendant, a “push present” from her husband to mark the birth of their child; a rose gold Chaumet ribbon motif Liens pendant, also from her husband; and a yellow-gold pendant from Shanghai Tang.

“That was from myself,” she says of the latter. “I’m a fan of mismatched, clashing stuff and I needed to add another type of gold to the mix.”

Ms Tang also owns pieces by Georg Jensen, Mawi and David Yurman, but despite these contemporary leanings vintage jewellery resonates the most.

“For me, jewellery is not an accessory,” she says. “It triggers a memory and, whatever the piece is, it has to be part of a story that I can tell.”

Graff diamond earrings and necklace suite (2014)



© Berton Chan/FT

Her father had chosen this particular suite as a wedding gift for her because the design “was very beautiful and very Chinese”, she recalls.

“It was probably the first and only time I walked into Graff,” she adds. She wore the jewels at her wedding in 2015 at Beijing’s China Club, a private-members club founded by her father.

Diamond and emerald earrings (vintage)



© Berton Chan/FT

Ms Tang loves the teardrop design of these earrings, a gift from her brother after a trip to India. “It has an intricate balance that has the look of, I would say, an octopus. I like that it has an oriental feel.” A fan of yellow gold combined with emeralds, Ms Tang likes how she can easily dress the piece up or down.

“Just by wearing different jewellery, the look and how you present yourself is different,” she says. “If you wear a *qipao* [the traditional Chinese dress] with something very high-end such as with diamonds, then you feel much more sophisticated. But if you play around with the *qipao* and sneakers and big tassel earrings to be more fashionable, then it becomes more fun.”

Gold ring with armour charm (2018)



© Berton Chan/FT

Ms Tang calls this ring her “armour”, referring to the shieldlike mesh of diamonds that dangles from it. Full of movement and engraved with the words “I am so proud of you”, the piece was a gift from her husband after she landed the creative director role.

“It obviously was a huge step for me. Not only career-wise, but also towards working with my father somehow,” she says.

“It was only a year after he passed away that this opportunity came up. Everyone said he must be so proud of you, and somehow it made me very sensitive that maybe this was meant to be. It’s strange because I never would have thought that this would be my path. But it’s amazingly comforting that I’ve been given this opportunity to make my father proud.”

Locket pendant (c. 1990s)



© Berton Chan/FT

Ms Tang received this necklace, engraved with her name, from her godmother when she was around six years old. “She had this humble little gift shop,” Ms Tang recalls. “She passed away about 10 years ago and the shop has since changed hands, but I think still exists.

“Her daughter and I are best friends and our kids now play together, so it’s a really meaningful piece for me.”

Describing the locket as the “tiniest thing — the size of your nail”, the locket has housed different portraits through the years: her brother, parents and best friend. Today, it holds pictures of her two-year-old son, Rocco.

“One is when he was six months old, with daddy. And the second was his first trip to America, on a ski trip. He’s in this amazing little fluffy hat and I just thought it’s so cuddly. It warms my heart whenever I look at it.”

Yellow gold cocktail ring (c. 1980s)



© Berton Chan/FT

Ms Tang says she received this funky, gold and citrine ring from her mother. She particularly loves its combination of yellow gold, small round diamonds and sapphires and “very modern” little studs, she says.

“I remember my mother wearing it all the time when I was young, when she left for parties or picked us up from school. It’s always reminded me of mum and it’s comforting for me,” says Ms Tang, who likes to wear it on her middle finger when going out. “It gives colour and is a really fun piece of jewellery.”