

House of Janesich

Famed for its Art Deco jewellery and accessories, Janesich was first established in 1835 in Trieste by Leopold Janesich (1802-80), a goldsmith hailing from the region of Dalmatia, Croatia. Under the direction of his son, Giovanni Battista Janesich (1836-1927), the firm rapidly expanded from Trieste to Paris. The family-run firm produced many exquisite pieces for prestigious international exhibitions, such as the *Salon du Goût Français* (1921), and members of high society, such as Queen Mary (1867-1953), for nearly 200 years. They received a Royal Warrant in 1925 from the House of Savoy and had important patrons, such as an appointment by Duke Amedeo of Aosta (1898-1942) in 1933. Despite economic hardships caused by the first and second World Wars, Janesich remains open to this day in Trieste, led by the 6th generation of the Janesich family, Francesco Janesich.



Figure 1. Leopold Janesich (1802-80)

History

Founder Leopoldo Janesich was an accomplished draftsman and goldsmith with over 10 years of workshop experience when he established the firm Janesich in Capo di Piazza, Trieste in 1835¹. At the time, Trieste was a developing port city of the Austrian Empire and home to artists such as Irish writer James Joyce (1882-1941) and Italian writer Italo Svevo (1861-1928). The city became the fourth largest urban area

¹ Janesich 1835 (2022)

of the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the end of the 19th century after Vienna, Budapest and Prague². The city was favoured for big capital investments leading to a diverse and rich population of bankers, ship owners, merchants and noblemen³. In addition, Trieste was also a popular holiday destination for the wealthy. Leopoldo was able to quickly grasp the refined and sophisticated taste of his international clientele, which led to a well-established reputation for quality jewellery design and products⁴. This reputation allowed Janesich to expand their network of suppliers and connections beyond Trieste, including other Italian cities such as Florence, Rome, Venice and Milan, but also internationally in Hanau and Vienna.

After Leopoldo passed away in 1880, the firm was passed to his son, Giovanni. Giovanni and his son, Alberto (d. 1933), spent a lot of time in Paris, and by 1896, had opened a gem and pearl wholesale shop on Rue de Lafayette, which was managed by Alberto, who had a discerning eye and was a connoisseur of gems⁵. Giovanni's other son, Giuseppe (d. 1937), took after his grandfather in his talent for jewellery design and managed the Trieste branch. At this time and throughout Janesich's operations, there was a continuous exchange between the shops and products produced in Paris and Trieste. Although the shops were managed by his sons, Giovanni remained actively involved with the business, promoting relations and correspondence with their partners such as Bulgari and Settepassi in Italy, and Vever, Boucheron and Chaumet in France.

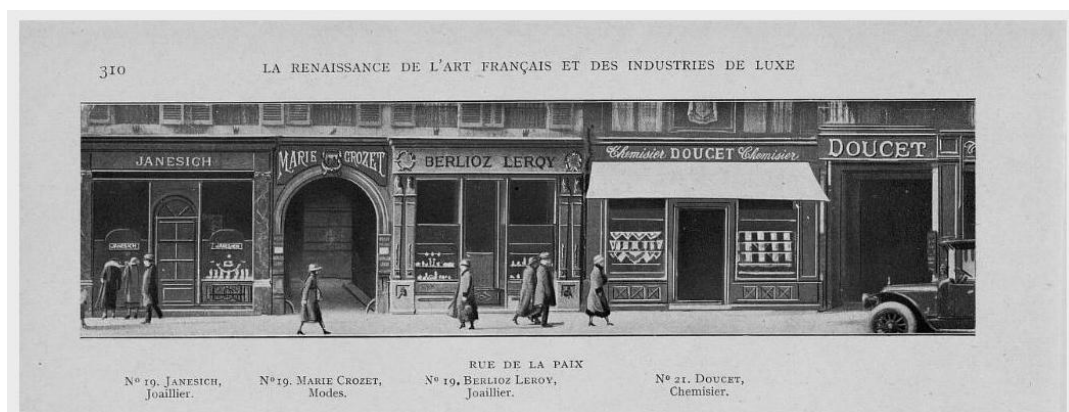


Figure 2. Janesich on the Rue de la Paix 1923.⁶

In Paris, Alberto was active among high society and frequented the opera as a guest of

² The World of the Habsburgs (2022)

³ Janesich 1835 (2022)

⁴ Janesich 1835 (2022)

⁵ Hancocks London (2022)

⁶ Lapauze, Henry (1923), p. 310

Princess Pauline von Metternich (1836-1921)⁷. The success of Janesich led to the brief expansion of their business in 1913 to Russia for the tercentenary celebrations in St. Petersburg. In the same year, Alberto also opened a shop in London at 179 New Bond Street, and then purchased two other spaces⁸; one shop was situated in Paris at 19 Rue de la Paix; and the other in Monte Carlo, opposite the world-renowned casino, Casino de Monte-Carlo⁹. The newly established branches proved successful, but the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918) the following year impacted the development of the firm. Expansion of the firm continued after the war ended, opening new branches in the fashionable French resort towns of Deauville and Vichy, and in 1921, Janesich exhibited at the *Salon du Goût Français* in the Palais de Glace on Champs-Élysées along with Cartier, and Van Cleef & Arpels¹⁰. The firm's clientele also continued to grow, receiving royal warrants from the House of Savoy in 1925 and appointment by the House of Aosta in 1933. Another example of Janesich's high-profile clientele is evident through this jade box (fig. 3) in the Royal Collection Trust, which was presented to Queen Mary (1867-1953) on her birthday by Dowager Lady Glentanar (1853-1935) in 1933. Other important clients of Janesich at the time include King Nicholas of Montenegro (1841-1921), Duke Amedeo of Aosta (1898-1942), and Baroness Rothschild (1902-64).



Figure 3. Jade box, c.1910-1930s, Marked: Janesich Paris, The Royal Collection Trust¹¹.

⁷ Janesich 1835 (2022)

⁸ Jean-Jacques (2012)

⁹ Janesich 1835 (2022)

¹⁰ Nadelhoffer (2007), p. 186

¹¹ The Royal Collection Trust (2022)

Janesich found particular success during the 1920s and 1930s, producing jewellery and other small objets d'art in the Art Deco style. Art Deco is characterised by simplicity and symmetry, often showcasing simple and clean lines and shapes, and the use of contrasting motifs and materials, such as the juxtaposition of geometric shapes with flora and fauna; and the mix of man-made materials like glass with natural materials like jade. Janesich worked with some of the best designers and craftsmen in the industry such as Alfred Langlois (n.d.), who was well-known for his creation of compacts and small cases. Langlois' workshop supplied major jewellery houses during the early 20th century, such as Cartier, Lacloche Frères, Boucheron and Mauboussin, before they were contracted exclusively with Van Cleef & Arpels in 1932 and were instrumental in further developing the “mystery set”¹², one of Van Cleef & Arpels' most well-known techniques. In 1923, Janesich participated in the first *Biennial International Decorative Arts Exhibition* (fig. 4) held in Monza, on the outskirts of Milan, where prime examples of decorative arts from different regions of Europe were displayed¹³. The main purpose of the exhibition was to promote the best of the industry and creative design at the time. The exhibition travelled to Milan in 1933, where *Triennale di Milano* is still held to this day.

¹² The Mystery Set TM, also known as invisible setting, is a technique that makes it possible to set precious stones with no prongs or other visible metal, patented by Van Cleef & Arpels in 1933. The original patent for this technology was given to Chaumet in England 1904, and Cartier also received a patent for their invisible setting technique in 1933. However, VCA's technique remains the most perfected and well-known example.

¹³ Janesich 1835 (2022)



Figure 4. 1923 *Monza Biennial International Decorative Arts Exhibition* poster, Triennale Milano 2022.

Giovanni Janesich passed away in 1927 and Giuseppe brought his son, Pietro (d. 1971), into the family business. Unfortunately, Alberto passed away in 1933 and Janesich's shops in France closed over the next two years. Giuseppe then passed away in 1937, leaving only Pietro to manage the firm as Europe was brought into a Second World War (1939-1945). Pietro resumed business when the war ended, but he noted that all the great clients have “disappeared”¹⁴. Janesich closed temporarily in 1968, before reopening in the same year, and is currently still in operation in Trieste. It is run by Francesco Janesich, the sixth generation of the Janesich family.

¹⁴ Jean-Jacques (2012)

In the Collection

Liang Yi Museum is home to 16 bejewelled vanities produced by Janesich between the 1920s to the 1940s. The 1920s was a time of prosperity in Europe and America, generally known as the ‘Golden Twenties’ or the ‘Roaring Twenties’, due to an economic boom following World War I (1914-18). With peace and economic prosperity, the arts continued to flourish, and popular decorative styles at this time include Art Deco (1920s-30s), in addition to the use of neoclassicism, orientalism and pan-Slavism motifs. All but one of the Janesich vanities in the collection come from this era, showcasing the golden years of this firm.



Figure 5. Nécessaire, c. 1920s, Signed: Janesich, Materials: gold, diamond, onyx and enamel. Length 11.2 x Width 4.4 x Height 2.4cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.

Characterised by the use of symmetry, metallic and achromatic colours; intricate line art and geometry, the Art Deco style takes its name from the 1925 *International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts* held in Paris. At the time, the style was known as the ‘modern style’ seeped into all forms of decorative arts, from architecture to jewellery. This nécessaire (fig. 5) is an archetype of the Art Deco style; it consists of a black and gold colour combination in a striped pattern, both of which are iconic for the era and style. The simple design is paired with a line of diamonds on either end, enhancing the elegance of the piece. On the other hand, figure 6 shows a

nécessaire from the same era with green dots outlined in black and white geometric flowers. During the Art Deco period, contrasting elements were a common theme. In this case, the natural form of flower is reproduced into man-made and rigid shapes. Gold is used as the main colour, paired with white, black and green. The nécessaire opens with a push button, revealing a mirror, compartment for powder, two lipstick holders and a pen.

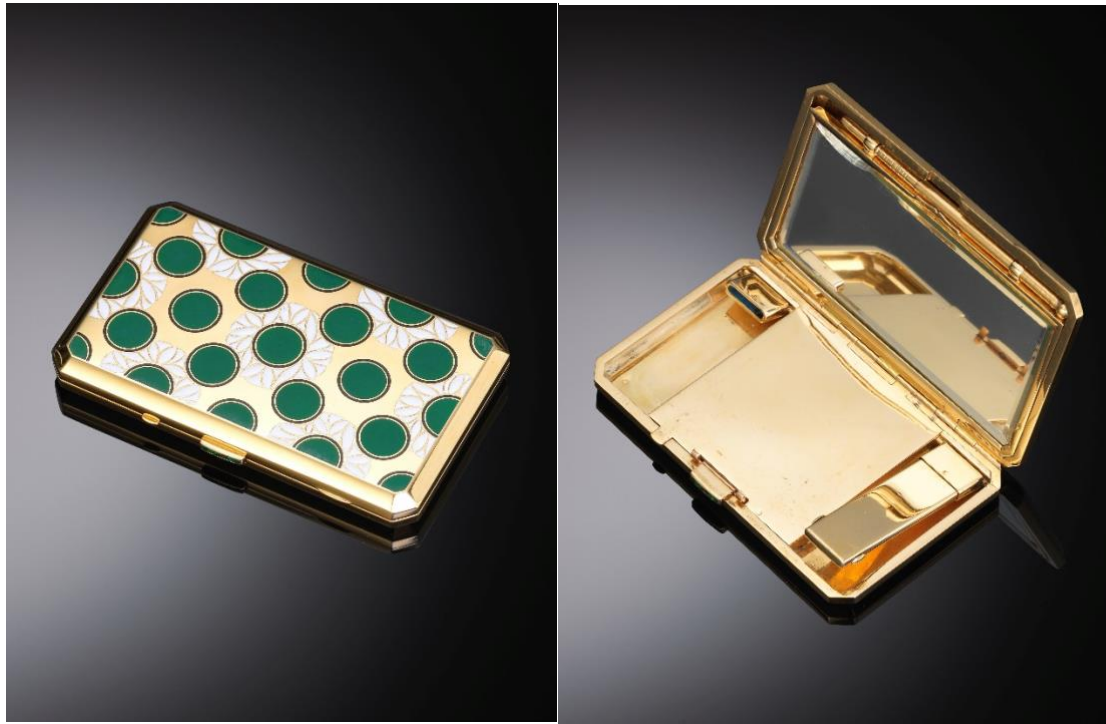


Figure 6. Nécessaire, c. 1920s, Signed: Janesich, Paris, Materials: gold, ivory and enamel. Length 8.8 x Width 5.1 x Height 1cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.

As an Italian company, Janesich also produced items that feature neoclassical motifs. The neoclassical movement is a revival of motifs and themes from the Classical era, which encompasses both the ancient Greek (c. 800BC-146BC) and ancient Roman (c. 753BC-476AD) periods. The neoclassicism movement began in Rome during the 18th century due to the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-68) and the rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum, further popularised by art students who studied in Italy. The movement mainly ran between the 18th to 19th century, experiencing periodic revivals during the 20th and 21st century. One such case within the Art Deco period which called upon neoclassicism motifs in a more subdued and subtle manner is this nécessaire (fig. 7). The borders around the nécessaire is composed of a simple black and white wave pattern found in Greek and Roman decorative arts such as architectural columns, mosaics (fig. 8) and pottery. It blends seamlessly with the Art Deco style of the nécessaire. At the same time, there was also

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a movement towards ancient Egyptian motifs. The compact (fig. 9) as seen here is characteristically Art Deco in its style and form, only using limited amounts of bright colours and decorative motifs such as the Egyptian lotus. Both pieces are primary examples that showcase the use of subtle motifs in combination with the Art Deco style.



Figure 7. Nécessaire, c. 1920s, Signed: Janesich Paris, Monte Carlo, Vichy, Materials: gold, diamond, enamel, pearl and ivory. Length 7.1 x Width 4.5 x Height 1.2cm.
Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 8. Roman mosaic with the head of a Gorgon, Hall of Mosaics in the Alcázar of the Christian Monarchs in Cordoba, Spain.



Figure 9. Compact, c. 1920, Marked: Janesich, Materials: tortoiseshell, gold and enamel. Length 6 x Width 4.4 x Height 1.4 cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.

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Similarly, Eastern civilisations have fascinated those in the West for centuries, adopting Eastern-stylised motifs in decorative arts as early as the 17th and 18th centuries. Oriental styles include *chinoiserie*, *japonisme*, and *turquerie*, which were applied into all forms of decorative arts, and experienced periods of popularity throughout the centuries. In vanities, orientalism manifests itself through the use of materials, colours and iconography. Figure 10 is a nécessaire produced by Janesich, with gold and enamel as the main materials. The top of the nécessaire is made to look like *maki-e* – a traditional Japanese decoration technique that applies gold on lacquer – and depicts a landscape scene with pine trees, a popular motif in traditional Japanese paintings and *maki-e* lacquerware. At the same time, figure 11 uses onyx and diamonds to depict a stylistic landscape, an adaptation of compositions often seen in Japanese and Chinese paintings, and is contained within a circular frame in the centre.



Figure 10. Nécessaire, c. 1920s, Maker: Janesich, Materials: gold and enamel, Length 8.1 x Width 4.6 x Height 1.2 cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 11. Compact, c. 1925, Maker: Janesich, Paris, Materials: gold, enamel, diamond, ruby, onyx and silk. Length 7.9 x Width 5.4 x Height 1.1 cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.

On the other hand, figure 12 and figure 13 are made using ‘exotic’ materials, such as jade and lapis lazuli, in an attempt to imitate Eastern decorative arts, reimagined in a Western-style. Figure 12 is a hexagon-shaped compact with a separate lipstick attached. The entire body of the compact and the lipstick is made of jade, and lightly decorated with diamonds and enamel. The hexagonal shape of the compact is unique, and in Chinese literature, represents all six directions – north, east, south, west, the Heavens, and the Earth – symbolising ‘completeness’. Figure 13 is a compact that also uses jade as the main decorative component and is carved into a stylistic flower pattern. The base of the compact is made with silver, and the edges are decorated with lapis lazuli and turquoise.



Figure 12. Compact with a Separate Lipstick, c. 1920-25, Marked: Janesich, Materials: jade, gold, enamel, platinum, and diamonds. Length 13.8cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 13. Compact, c. 1920, Marked: Janesich, Paris. Materials: silver, jade, turquoise and lapis lazuli. Diameter 5.8 x Height 1.3cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, there was a movement towards folk art and Slavic identity in Eastern Europe known as the pan-Slavism movement, which re-emerged in the 1930s as an important tool for Soviet foreign policy and propaganda. This led to an outpour of Slavic-inspired decorative arts, mainly consisting of stylistic flora and fauna patterns and representative pan-Slavic colours of red, blue, and white as defined by the Prague Slavic Congress in 1848. The compact (fig. 14) is inspired by this movement. Gold is used as the base with blue and white enamel as the main colours for the decoration. This shows that Janesich's popularity was widespread and kept up with contemporary trends.



Figure 14. Compact, c. 1930, Marked: Janesich. Materials: Gold, enamel and diamond. Length 7.9 x Width 5 x Height 1cm. Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 15. Compact, c. 1940, Marked: Janesich, Materials: gold, sapphire and diamond. Length 8.2 x Width 4.6 x Height 1.3cm

At the end of the 1930s and early 1940s, the world was thrown into a Second World War (1939-1945) and the decorative arts turned to simpler, masculine designs. In war, resources are limited, and this compact (fig. 15), made from gold and precious stones, indicates the wealth and prosperity of the individual who commissioned the piece. The compact opens to reveal a single compartment and a mirror behind the lid. The simplicity of the design and the structure of the compact is in stark contrast to the extravagance of the materials used for this time period.

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