

Zodiac bling

Jewellery inspired by the Chinese zodiac hits the high street

The Chinese zodiac is based on a 12-year cycle with 12 specific animals representing each year, and the rooster is placed 10th in the cycle. It is the year of the Fire Rooster since fire is the chosen element this year. "This means different things for people born at different times of the year as Chinese astrology is complex. People born in the Year of the Rooster are generally known to be observant and confident, besides being punctual, hard-working and resourceful," says Wendy Yue, Hong Kong-based jewellery designer. The zodiac sign has prompted jewellers and watchmakers to explore creative options inspired by the fowl. Yue's rose gold rooster pendant crafted in black jade, embellished with corals, garnets, black diamonds, tsavorites, rubies, yellow sapphires and diamonds took her nearly three months to complete. The pendant, which is a black jade bottle, is in fact a real perfume bottle — hollow on the inside — marked by meticulous craftsmanship. "In ancient China, these were called snuff bottles and were used to hold herbal medicines that could be inhaled. They were also used for perfume and tobacco," Yue explains about her piece.

Fowl play

Never one to shy away from daring designs, Paris-based designer Lydia Courteille offers us the perfect opportunity to marvel at her gold Fire Rooster ring from her Animal Farm collection, as well as a pair of drop earrings. Featuring luminous fire opals and coloured gemstones, these precious pieces are undeniable conversation starters. A proud rooster is the inspiration behind Roberto Coin's latest whimsical creation. The Gallo ring, glorifying the bird, is an addition to the Italian jeweller's Animalier collection. Expertly crafted in white gold and set with diamonds and black, yellow and orange sapphires, these gemstones were chosen to symbolise the lucky colours for 2017.

Russian jewellery house Master Exclusive draws upon its exquisite enamelling techniques to realise a gallant rooster brooch in multicoloured enamel, while London-based designer Annoushka Lucas embellishes her yellow gold rooster amulet with black and brown diamonds. The limited edition Fire Rooster amulet is a new addition to her popular Mythology collection.

Keeping time with the bird

Watchmakers too have come up with miniature artworks to celebrate The Year of The Rooster. Paying homage to the Fire Rooster, they have successfully captured the beauty of its plumage on the dials. Chopard, Vacheron Constantin, Ulysse Nardin and Sicis have designed coveted timepieces with high levels of creative flair while keeping with the fowl theme.

We were won over by Bovet's Amadeo Fleurier watch that boasts a clever reversed hand-fitting and eye-catch-

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Cuckoo-over-gold
Paris-based designer Lydia Courteille has a gold Fire Rooster ring to add to her Animal Farm collection



One-ring-to-rule-them Courtelle's rooster inspired ring with opal, garnet and sapphire



Jewelled fowl Chopard, Vacheron Constantin, Ulysse Nardin and Sicis have designed coveted timepieces with the rooster as the muse

ing dial: the white lacquered dial has Roman applied numerals on the front and white mother-of-pearl with a miniature painting of a rooster on the reverse side. Bovet has shown its devotion to the Chinese zodiac sign with two models of the watch; one featuring a white-gold case and the other a red-gold case. Renowned for its groundbreaking creative approach to watchmaking, Piaget has presented an elegant addition to its horology portfolio. The maison has turned to its favourite artist — world-renowned master enameller Anita Porchet — to embellish the 38-piece collector's edition rooster watch, featuring a white-gold case adorned with 78 brilliant-cut diamonds. Masterfully handcrafted in the Grand Feu cloisonné tradition, Porchet unleashes her creativity to bring to life Piaget's handsome rooster that seems to pontificate from the dial.

Monochromes and miniatures

Exploring the rooster theme, Jaquet Droz has created four new watches to celebrate the Chinese New Year. A stunning collaboration with Ateliers d'Art, Jaquet Droz resorts to miniature painting for two of the models: the Grand Feu enamel dials in red-gold cases set with diamonds, feature the rooster along with peonies, to evoke springtime renewal, while bamboo shoots in the painting represent the promise of happiness.

Limited to just 28 pieces, two other models are made using the miniature sculpture technique. To accentuate the details on the Petite Heure Minute Rooster watch, volumes of red gold have been combined with a dial inlaid with jadeite and mother-of-pearl — hand-engraved in the maison's workshops. Jaquet Droz has also launched eight timepieces entirely hand-painted in monochromatic shades, which highlight the relief.

Symbolising courage, confidence and fidelity, Harry Winston's majestic rooster in Grand Feu enamel has been perfected by hand. The Harry Winston Premier Rooster Automatic watch features an emerald-cut diamond on the dial embodying Winston's love for emerald-cut gems. Indulging in his fascination for blue diamonds, the feathers of the rooster have been painted in deep blue, while the diamond-set lugs at either end of the case emulate the arched stone entrance to the maison's flagship salon on Fifth Avenue (New York). The case is elegantly adorned with 57 brilliant-cut diamonds.