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PRESS RELEASE

## PHILLIPS UNVEILS *THE VANDERBILT FAMILY JEWELS: ICONS OF AMERICAN ARISTOCRACY*

Belle Epoque Masterpieces, Led by “The Vanderbilt Sapphire” of 42.68 Carats,  
To Star at *The Geneva Jewels Auction: V*  
On 10 November 2025



**“The Vanderbilt Sapphire”, Tiffany & Co.**

Exceptional 42.68 carat sugarloaf Kashmir sapphire and diamond brooch, early 20th century  
Estimate: USD 1,000,000-1,500,000 / CHF800,000-1,200,000

GENEVA – 17 SEPTEMBER 2025 – Phillips is honoured to present the Vanderbilt Family Jewels, an extraordinary collection of Belle Epoque treasures by two of the world’s most esteemed *maisons* – Cartier and Tiffany & Co. – as the leading highlight of *The Geneva Jewels Auction: V*. These magnificent jewels, rich in historical resonance and crafted for lineage and legacy, arrive amid strong market appetite for period and signature pieces. The auction will be held at the Hôtel President in Geneva on 10 November 2025.

**Benoît Repellin, Worldwide Head of Jewellery**, said, “The Vanderbilt Family Jewels stand as the purest embodiment of Gilded Age elegance – pieces of extraordinary beauty, historical resonance, and fascinating provenance. We are deeply privileged to present these iconic creations at our Geneva Jewels Auction, which promises to capture the imagination of collectors worldwide. This comes at a time when the market is particularly enthusiastic for period jewels – Belle Epoque and early-20th-century masterpieces are in especially high demand – reflecting a broader appetite for rare signed and historically rich pieces.”

## The Vanderbilt Family Jewels: Icons of American Aristocracy

Few family names evoke the grandeur and opulence of America's Gilded Age as powerfully as Vanderbilt. With a fortune founded on railroads and shipping, the Vanderbilt dynasty became synonymous with wealth, taste, and influence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Central to this legacy is the Vanderbilt family's extraordinary collection of jewels – pieces that stand as enduring emblems of elegance and sophistication. Over generations, they were cherished heirlooms passed through generations of American aristocracy, each carrying stories of heritage and ambition.

The present collection comes from Gladys Moore Vanderbilt, Countess Széchenyi, who was born in 1886 in Newport, Rhode Island. She grew up in the largest private house ever built in New York City, the Vanderbilt II family mansion on Fifth Avenue, and The Breakers, in Newport, Rhode Island, that she inherited and leased to the Preservation Society of Newport County after 1948, where she held an apartment until her death in 1965.



Portrait of Gladys Vanderbilt, Countess Széchenyi by Philip de László, 1921



Cartier Tiara given by Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt to her daughter, Gladys Vanderbilt upon her marriage in 1908



Gladys Vanderbilt, Countess Széchenyi, wearing the tiara at the Coronation of Emperor Charles and Empress Zita of Austria in 1916

### Highlights of the Collection

The star of the collection is "The Vanderbilt Sapphire", an exceptional sugarloaf Kashmir sapphire and diamond brooch weighing 42.68 carats, in illustrious 'Royal Blue' colour. Mounted by Tiffany & Co., this extraordinary gem is accompanied by certificates from AGL, SSEF, and Gübelin. It was originally gifted by Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt to her daughter Gladys Vanderbilt, Countess Széchenyi. The brooch's intricate openwork design embellished with old-cut diamonds typifies quintessential Belle Epoque refinement. More than a family heirloom, this jewel embodied the era's artistic and social ambitions, pioneered by one of the greatest American dynasties.

Among the most outstanding examples is the Cartier Diamond Brooch, originally part of a diamond tiara from the Belle Epoque, designed as eight lily sprays and adorned with interchangeable pear-shaped amethysts and similarly shaped diamonds. Commissioned by Alice Vanderbilt, *née* Gwynne, for her daughter Gladys Vanderbilt upon her marriage to Count László Széchenyi in 1908, the tiara was eventually dismantled, and the present brooch set with an old-cut pear-shaped diamond weighing 4.55 carats stands as a surviving symbol of social power, familial ambition, and transatlantic prestige. Gladys, the youngest daughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, represented the last generation of Gilded Age heiresses whose marriages bridged American wealth and European nobility.



**Cartier**, Magnificent diamond brooch, circa 1908  
Set with a pear-shaped diamond weighing 4.55 carats, E Colour  
Estimate: USD 100,000-150,000 / CHF80,000-120,000

The family collection also includes delicate objects and fine jewels from the late 19th century to the first third of the 20th century, including an emerald and diamond brooch of bow design, a diamond comb, a Cartier vanity case bearing the monogram of Gladys Vanderbilt, an '8-Days' traveling clock given to Gladys, Countess Széchenyi, on Christmas 1913, and a gold, ruby and diamond wristwatch.



Diamond and emerald brooch, late 19th century  
Estimate: USD 5,000-8,000 / CHF4,000-6,000



**Cartier**  
8 Day traveling clock  
With GS monogram, and engraved from DS Xmas 1913.  
Estimate: USD 5,000-8,000 / CHF4,000-6,000



Diamond comb, early 20th century  
Estimate: USD 3,000-5,000 / CHF2,200-4,000



**Cartier**  
Gold, ruby and diamond vanity case  
With the monogram of Gladys Vanderbilt  
Estimate: USD 8,000-12,000 / CHF 6,000-9,500



**Cartier**  
Gold, ruby and diamond wristwatch  
Estimate: USD 3,000-5,000 / CHF 2,200-4,000

Today, pieces from the Vanderbilt collection are exceedingly rare and highly coveted by collectors, not only for their intrinsic beauty but for their unparalleled provenance. Each jewel is an icon of visionary patronage, epitomising timeless taste and an illustrious legacy. The twelve pieces included in *The Geneva Jewels Auction: V* give a unique opportunity for collectors to acquire a beautiful jewel that carries a part of history.

## Auction

10 November 2025, 3pm CET

**Auction viewing:** 5 - 10 November

**Location:** Hotel President, Quai Wilson 47, Geneva, Switzerland, 1211

## Highlight Tour

**Hong Kong:** 24 - 30 September

1/F, WKCD Tower, West Kowloon Cultural District, No. 8 Austin Road West

**New York:** 5 - 6 October

432 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022

**Singapore:** 10 - 11 October

The St. Regis Singapore, 29 Tanglin Rd, Singapore 247911

**Taipei:** 18 - 19 October

Taipei Marriott Hotel, 199 Lequn 2nd Road, Zhongshan District, Taipei

**London:** 24 - 26 October

30 Berkeley Square, London, W1J 6EX

**Geneva:** 5 - 10 November

Hotel President, Quai Wilson 47, 1211 Geneva

### ABOUT PHILLIPS

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium; prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

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