

**RIGHT:** HEMMERLE WORKS  
FROM THE REVIVED  
TREASURES COLLECTION  
**BELOW:** TURQUOISE,  
ALUMINIUM AND WHITE  
GOLD EARRINGS  
**BOTTOM LEFT:** CHRISTIAN  
AND YASMIN HEMMERLE



# A TALE OF *Two Worlds*

Egyptian heritage and German craftsmanship are being brought together at the 125-year-old jewellery house Hemmerle with dazzling results

WORDS SOPHIE STEVENS



**Y**asmin Hemmerle's foray into jewellery began long before she met her husband Christian, fourth generation of the Hemmerle family jewellers with whom she runs the business today. "My paternal grandmother was a big jewellery lover," she says. "It always fascinated me how she got dressed, with the outfit having to match the jewellery. It was like a ceremony."

Born and raised in Cairo, the Egyptian designer therefore notes that her journey into jewellery was somewhat of a foregone conclusion ("I think Middle Eastern women love jewellery more than anyone else"), and one neatly cemented by an early internship with a Parisian diamantaire. By the time she met Christian Hemmerle at university in London 16 years ago, it made perfect sense for her to join his family's business once they were married.

"It's funny, but I had always wanted to work with my husband," says Yasmin, "My parents were friends with a couple who worked together and it always fascinated me when I was younger. My mother was very creative but she took care of us and didn't work, so I said when I grow up I want to work with my husband."

Today the duo oversee Hemmerle alongside Christian's parents, Stefan and Sylveli, from the Munich atelier where the company has been based since 1904. It was in 1893 when the Hemmerle brothers, Joseph and Anton, took over a traditional goldsmith's firm creating medals and insignia for clients including the Bavarian Royal family and the Vatican, a specialism the house still continues for select awards today.

Stefan took the reins of Hemmerle in 1970, having trained as a goldsmith and worked with jewellers in France, Italy and Denmark, and soon developed a distinctive style of setting unique – and often antique – gemstones and pearls in unorthodox materials including iron, copper, wood and aluminum.

Yasmin received much of her training from her father-in-law upon arriving at the company. “My father-in-law took me under his wing and we used to travel a lot together, buying from gem shows all over the world,” she recalls. “After we bought the stones I would sit next to him and we would just brainstorm and design together.”

Inspiration can strike from anywhere, with Yasmin recalling a book about space she was reading to her son one night as the brainwave behind a recent pair of earrings: “We had these two beautiful natural pearls, big brown buttons, and everyone was asking ‘what are we going to do?’ I thought of planets and a galaxy spiraling around them. Inspiration can be anything, but as soon as you see our jewellery you know it is Hemmerle. It has its own DNA.”

The company celebrated its 125th anniversary last year with two important collections. *Hidden Treasures* stunningly reinterpreted ancient embossing stamps stored in the cellars of the Munich atelier into gem-set showpieces. “The stamps have always fascinated me so I was adamant we had to do something with them,” she adds.

The *Revived Treasures* collection followed in October and speaks to Yasmin’s own heritage, with the jewels featuring a series of ancient Egyptian artefacts acquired by the family from antique fairs. “My in-laws and husband are big fans of Egypt,” Yasmin happily explains. “The collection gives a new life to all the artifacts we slowly collected over the years.”

Notable pieces include a pair of turquoise and aluminum earrings featuring two ancient Egyptian faience figurines suspended in the



## “Middle Eastern women love jewels more than anyone else”

centres. The decision to combine them with turquoise came after ‘playing around’ with the drawers full of materials and stones in the Hemmerle workshop. “Turquoise was just the perfect colour,” Yasmin says. “Even though they’re very big, they’re very light; you can wear them with jeans and a sweater, or an evening gown. They just work.”

Despite museum-quality collections – Hemmerle designs have been exhibited at institutions including the Cooper Hewitt, V&A and Museum of Islamic Art – it’s important to Yasmin that the jewels are worn and enjoyed. “We don’t want them kept in a safe and only taken out for special occasions. Every day should be made a special occasion.”

An average of 200 pieces are currently produced each year (with some taking as much as 600 hours), but they are becoming rarer. “We are extremely detail-oriented, and as we are trying to push ourselves, the pieces are taking longer to make,” Yasmin explains. “But we are free to decide what we want to do next, and this is always to share our work with jewellery lovers.” □



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** BRONZE AND WHITE GOLD BANGLE; EMERALD, SAPPHIRE, AGATE, BRONZE AND WHITE GOLD NECKLACE; DIAMOND, BRONZE AND WHITE GOLD RING; A FRIEZE FROM THE EGYPTIAN TEMPLE AT THE MET IN NEW YORK, WHERE HEMMERLE HELD ITS 125TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY