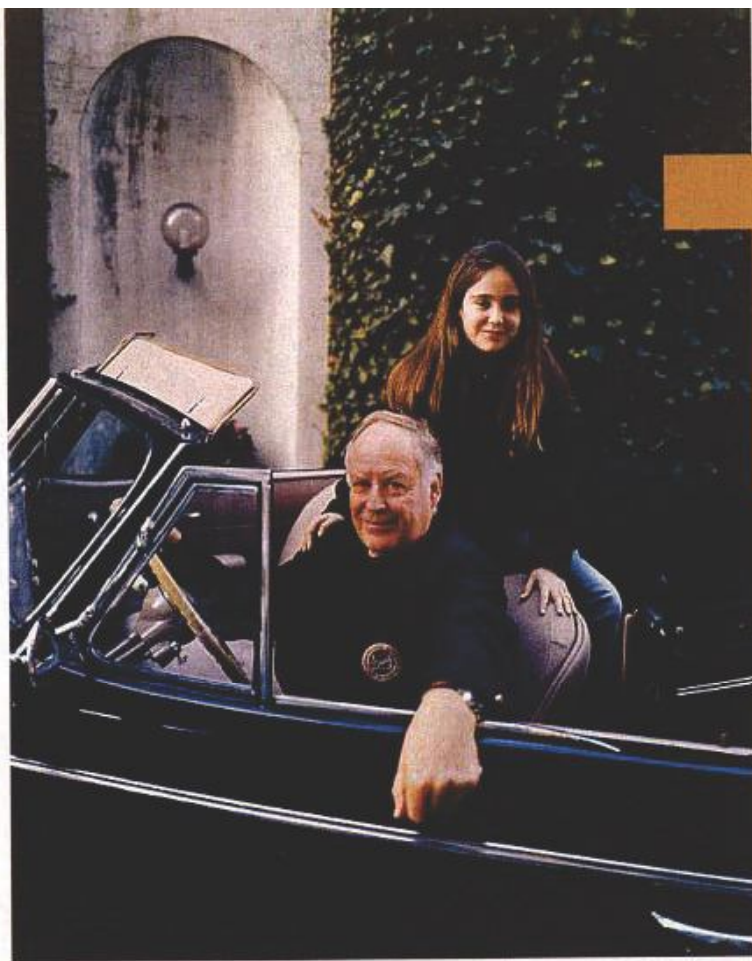


Francesco Trapani and Princess Lorenza de Liechtenstein stand in the courtyard of their home, Palazzo Lancellotti, this page. The 16th-century palace was constructed by Francesco Caprini da Volterra and Carlo Maderno. Trapani, CEO of Bulgari, is the nephew of Nicola and Paolo Bulgari. The princess's evening dress is from Valentino's spring collection ■ A colored sapphire and diamond necklace from Bulgari's High Jewelry collection, opposite page. Each exquisite piece is still made by hand at the company's workshop in Rome.





**T**

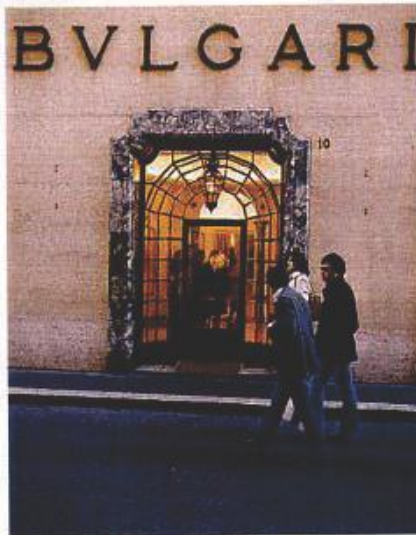
he Ceylon sapphire is perfectly cut on all sides. Holding it steadily between tweezers, the Roman craftsman, who has plied his trade for more than a decade, gently places it in its setting. It will form part of a glittering necklace by the Italian luxury brand Bulgari. Once known primarily for bracelets made with cabochon rubies, emerald necklaces given to Elizabeth Taylor, and diamonds worn by Sophia Loren, Bulgari has taken its origins in the heady realm known as high jewelry and applied the sensibility to the concept of lifestyle. Along with the company's jewelry, watches, perfumes, and accessories, Bulgari hotels and resorts have come to symbolize the aesthetics of a family-run concern that is more than a century old and now global.

Francesco Trapani, nephew of the brothers Paolo and Nicola Bulgari, is CEO of Bulgari and the architect of its rise. Trapani's voice warms when he speaks of the Antonio Citterio-designed Bulgari hotel in Milan. Entertaining there, he says, is "like bringing someone home"—a really

exclusive home, that is, where bedrooms have Frette sheets, furniture by B&B Italia, and bathtubs that look like free-standing sculptures. Nicola Bulgari often stays there when attending the opera. It is no accident that Bulgari has recently opened a lifestyle hotel in Bali, using indigenous materials and architecture that preserves the Italian fusion of comfort, design, and art.

For this family, life, art, and business are one and the same. Nowhere is it clearer than in the Roman homes of the firm's owners. Trapani lives off one of the city's most historic streets, in a picturesque area where small jewelers jostle antiques shops. His home, which he shares with his wife, Princess Lorenza de Liechtenstein, is an oasis of calm, a gem in the bustle of Rome.

Nicola Bulgari, by contrast, lives in Parioli, farther from the hectic center. His home occupies the ground floor of a building from the 1930s, a monument to Italian Rationalism,



Nicola Bulgari and daughter Ginevra pose outside their home in Rome, this page, top left. ■ The Bulgari flagship store on Via Condotti in Rome, above. ■ A palette of sapphires, left, was chosen for the necklace in this drawing, rendered at the design center in Rome. ■ Nicola Bulgari's home has a collection of impressive contemporary art and vintage pieces. In the corridor, opposite page, two original chairs by Marcel Breuer are stacked with books. A striking geometric motif is created by the carpets: a Berber of palm canes and colored leather stripes; a black-and-white block kilim carpet; and a black-and-white ponyhide model by Andrea Gobbi. An English 19th-century table is in cream lacquer and gold.

THROUGHOUT NICOLA BULGARI'S HOUSE,  
THE PLACEMENT OF ART IS DELIBERATE  
AND SUCCESSFUL. IN THE ENTRY, TWO  
GLEAMING, BRIGHTLY COLORED TORSOS  
ARE A DRAMATIC WELCOME TO VISITORS



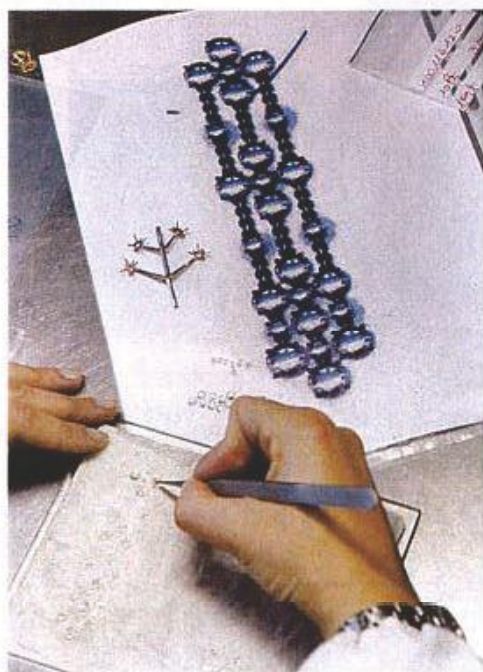
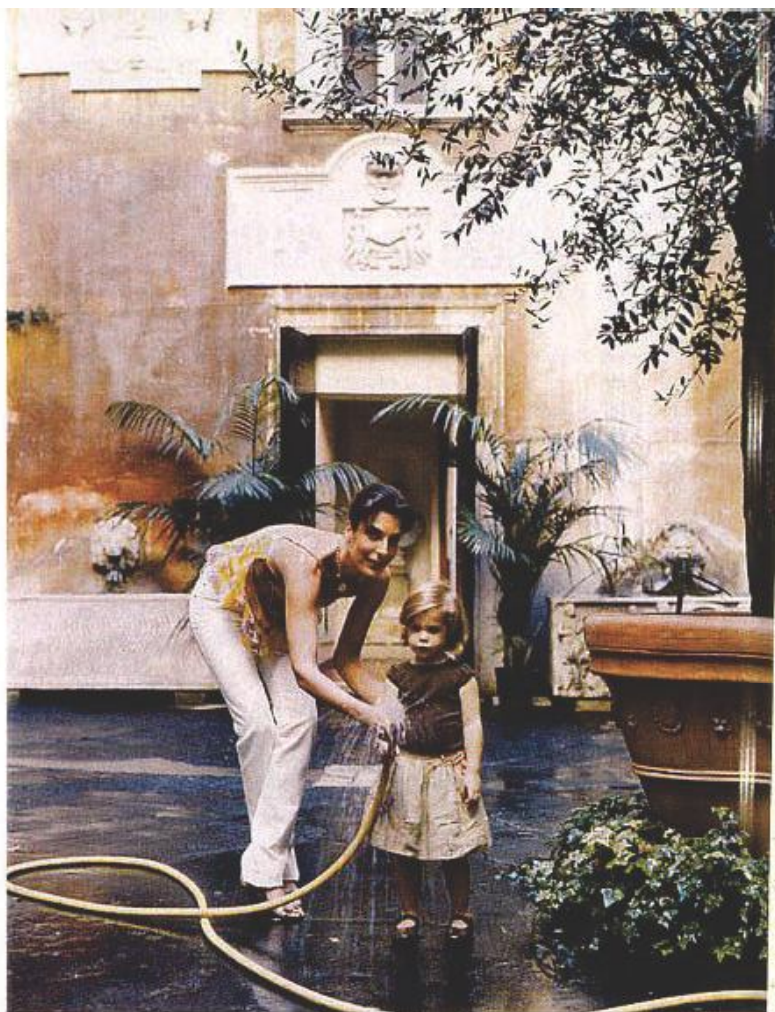
an Art Deco movement. Bulgari, who has children from a former marriage, lives there with his wife, Beatrice, a costume designer for the cinema, and their daughter. The home's main feature is a long rectangular living room facing an extraordinary garden, which the couple created with Roman landscape architect Isabella Casali di Monticelli. It loosely represents a Persian garden, with fruit trees, bamboo, an arbor, and numerous seating areas. There is a pool and, near the arbor, one of Sandro Chia's few outside sculptures, a polychrome work.

**F**or all its length and grandeur, the living room is surprisingly informal, dominated by an 18-foot-long sofa designed by Andrea Gobbi, copying a late-nineteenth-century English sofa. There is plenty of other seating, as well, including a 1930s Poltrona Frau armchair, upholstered in green leather, and an armchair from the 1950s, which Beatrice rescued at Cinecittà and reupholstered in red leather. Several iron tables topped with marble, as well as a nineteenth-century Empire round table inlaid with marble, are casually placed around the room. Gobbi custom-designed the room's geometric-patterned carpets. The Bulgaris are serious collectors, and Nicola animatedly discusses his personal relationships with artists whose works line the walls, including Alighiero Boetti, Gino de Dominicis, and Tano Festa.

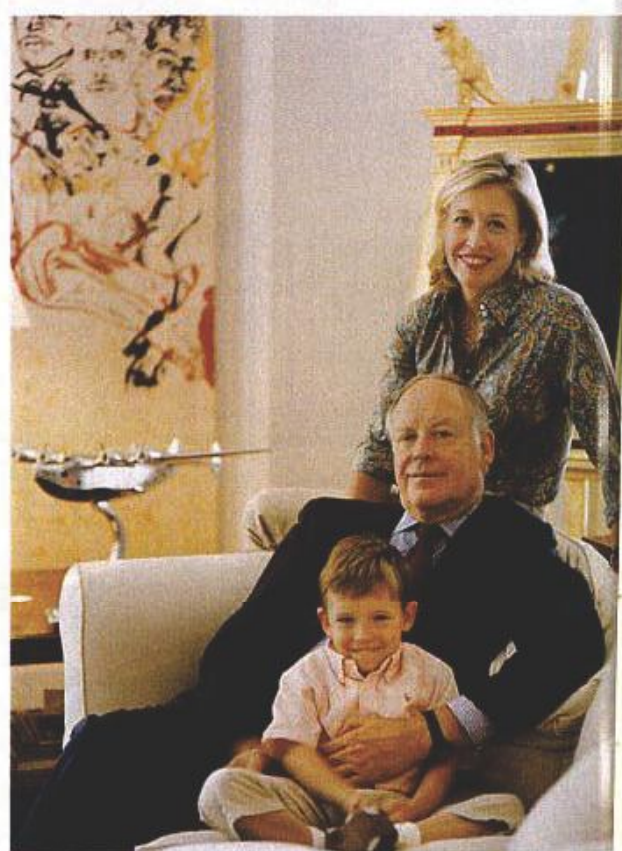
In the dining room, a painting by Julian Schnabel is juxtaposed with magnificent Neapolitan silver angels on ebony stands, by the famed metalsmith Francesco Saverio Rossi, who executed the figures in the style of Roman Baroque angels. Bleached white reproduction antique chairs from London dealer Christopher Howe surround the magnificent dining table, and a 1930s Austrian Bohemian crystal chandelier hangs over it.

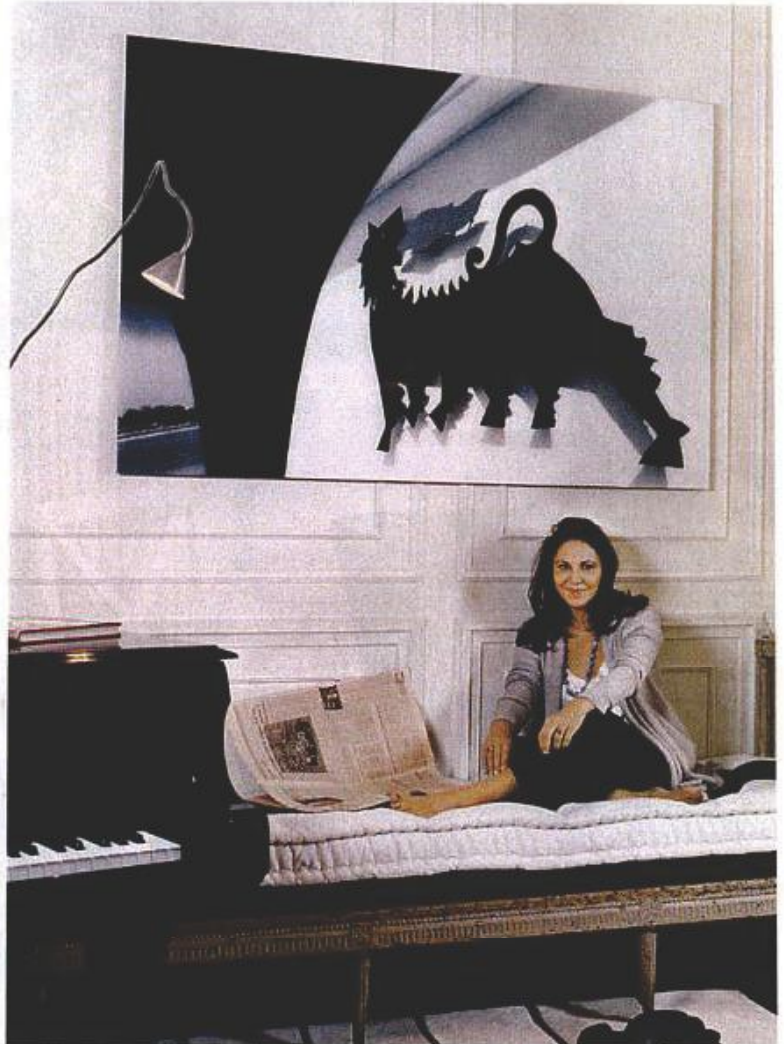
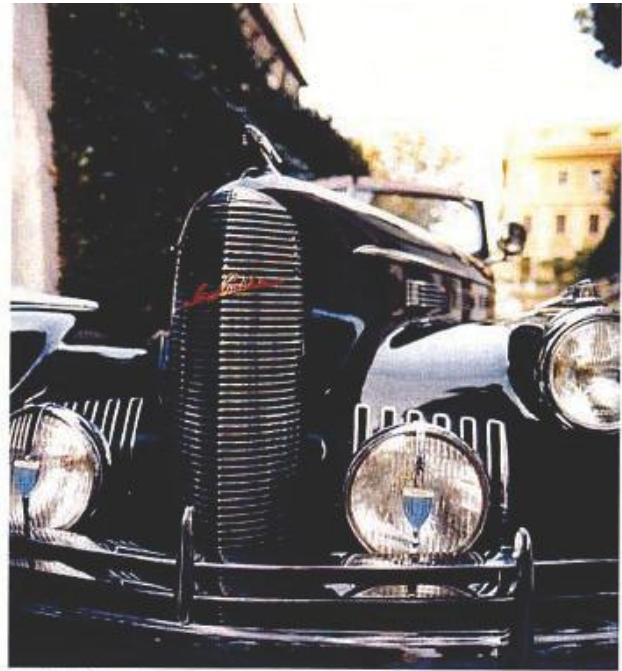
Among all the treasures in this home, it is perhaps the nineteenth-century twin amethyst and ormolu columns that are most dear to Bulgari, who bought them at auction a few years ago. The carved Corinthian capitals are based on a late-eighteenth-century French model in the Louvre, and are by the same artisan who made the columns that have been displayed in the Roman flagship store since Nicola Bulgari's father's time.

Though Bulgari is a family business, Trapani is careful to say that relatives do not pervade it. Under his financial guidance, Bulgari has grown from 500



Princess Lorenza de Liechtenstein, in a Valentino blouse, and daughter Allegra, top, water plants in the courtyard at Palazzo Lancellotti. ■ Nicola Bulgari sits with daughter Veronica and grandson Henry in his New York City apartment, right. ■ In Bulgari's Aurelia workshop, above, a craftsman positions diamonds by size, following the design of a High Jewelry sketch. Approximately 25 talented artisans create and assemble every piece by hand, ensuring luxurious results.





Clockwise from top left: In the Aurelia workshop, each mounting is individually prepared, specific to the gemstone's size. A shellac stick and *bulino* (engraving tool) are used to shape the metal prongs that securely hold the stone in place. ■ Nicola Bulgari's 1940 LaSalle convertible, parked outside his home in Rome. ■ In the music room—a symphony in black and white—Nicola's wife, Beatrice, sits under a photograph by Davide Tranchina. The handcrafted Mason & Hamlin grand piano is from Faust Harrison Pianos, NYC. ■ The garden, designed by Isabella Casali di Monticelli, evokes a small Persian one. Citrus trees frame a sculpture by Sandro Chia.

**IN THE ELEGANT DINING ROOM, CENTURIES COLLIDE, AND THE IMPACT IS DAZZLING. THE ORNATE ANGELS AND CHANDELIER ARE IDEAL FLOURISHES AGAINST CLEAN-LINED FURNISHINGS**



employees, in 1995, to 3,000 in 22 countries, with almost 200 stores and more planned. The freshly renovated New York store reopens in April.

Back in the workshop, a jewelry craftsman picks up another gold setting, carefully bending each prong. This tiny armature has been created through a complex technique known as lost wax. Each stone is unique but must appear identical to the others. Every element of the necklace will be made and assembled by hand in the Bulgari workshop.

The workshop has only about 25 craftsmen, but its spirit guides the company, which the silversmith Sotirio Bulgari founded in 1884. The historic mother store on Via Condotti opened in 1894. By the 1930s, its wares were craved by Hollywood, and the myth of Bulgari was complete when the firm's present logo was chosen, in conscious imitation of imperial Roman script, with a V functioning instead of the U. The empire grew again in the 1960s, when dependence on French jewelry, the historic denominator of style, was abandoned and Bulgari began to take on a look entirely its own. Design,

color, flexibility, and proper weight were—and are—paramount.

By the mid-1990s, Bulgari had diversified, but the artisanal origins of the firm persist. Surprisingly, the many artists that Paolo and Nicola Bulgari know are not asked to design jewelry. The house uses its own designers, who share the credit for their work. "Made in Italy," the historic postwar epithet, has been transformed into "Made by Bulgari," an expansion policy based on the highest traditions of artisanal fabrication.

*Cornelia Lauf is a writer and curator who teaches at the University of Venice and lives in Rome and New York City.*

In the Bulgari's dining room, this page, gilded silver angels, ca. 1840, by Francesco Saverio Rossi, atop lacquered wood columns from a Paris flea market, are a counterpoint to a contemporary work by Corrado Sassi on the wall. ■ In the Aurelia workshop, opposite page, raw materials become works of art. Master models are imprinted in wax in preparation for casting. A sheet of gold is used to make settings for a High Jewelry necklace with rubies and diamonds.