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## ARTIST PROFILE ●

# All Things French

Kas A Designs rolls out a new jewelry line influenced by the owner's travels.

BY LAUREN SABLE FREIMAN

PHOTOS BY TRAVIS DUNCAN

With a French grandmother and a family lineage based in France, it's no wonder that Kas Jacquot, owner of Kas A Designs, has always been drawn to French design. Now a new jewelry line, *Joie De Vivre*, celebrates the sights and influences of French architecture and art.

"Everything is beautiful in France," Jacquot says. "The food is beautiful, the people are beautiful, the architecture is beautiful and the language is beautiful."

Although she traveled to France twice before, it was a two-week trip three years ago that set her creativity awirl. Starting in Paris, Jacquot took a 1,500-mile journey along the Rhone River to the French Riviera, then over to Provence and back. While soaking in the scenery, she snapped photographs of the intricate ornamental ironwork and architectural embellishments that pleased her artistic eye.

Additional travels took her to Portugal and the Balkans, where she also looked for inspiration, but there wasn't a place on earth that inspired her quite like France.

"I've been in France before and have always been intrigued by the architecture," Jacquot says. "The ornamental ironwork is made like jewelry and is beautiful. I thought it would be a good stimulus for a new line of jewelry."



When Jacquot returned from her trip to her home in the country, the international award-winning designer and gemologist closed herself off from the outside world for a week while she sketched her newest jewelry line.

Her collection currently includes eight pendants loosely based on architecture that Jacquot photographed throughout France. With names such as Provençal Balcony, Provençal Ceiling and Napoleon's Boudoir, the pieces are reminiscent of beautiful and intricate architecture that Jacquot admired on doors and balconies around the country and in the world-renowned Louvre.

Each piece is adorned with a mix of diamonds, pearls and colored gemstones,

which are Jacquot's true passions. Some pieces are made of mixed metals such as white gold and rose gold, silver and gold and white gold and yellow gold. Much of the collection has interchangeable stones that can be switched in and out by the wearer.

Now that the pendants are complete, Jacquot is at work on the rest of the line, which includes rings and earrings. Eventually the collection will likely include bracelets as well.

In addition to challenges such as creating rings that are both beautiful and functional, the entire process of creating jewelry is painstakingly detail-oriented and time consuming.



Napoleon's Door Pendant

Provincial Gate Pendant



Napoleon's Boudoir Pendant



Napoleon's Door Earrings



Provincial Balcony Pendant

Once Jacquot completes a jewelry sketch, which can take days, the hand-drawn sketch is turned into a 3-D drawing through a computer software program.

"This can take some time because the design software is not always exactly accurate on making the curves just the way I want them, and we have to keep redoing it," she says.

The next step involves Jacquot and her team creating a wax mold that can be cast with metal, allowing them to reproduce the piece.

"The intricacy of the piece dictates how long it takes to make the model," Jacquot says. "Polishing every finished piece in all of the tiny little areas and setting stones can take a week or two for each piece."



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— Kas Jacquot





**ALTHOUGH JOIE DE VIVRE** showcases French influences within one collection, Jacquot has also used that French influence in commissioned one-of-a-kind pieces. She recently redid an engagement ring set that she first created 20 years ago using the architectural curves she admired in France. She has also created a large gold cuff bracelet with multiple colored stones that have similar architectural features from the line.

As she looks forward to celebrating 40 years as a jewelry designer this coming December, Jacquot has her eye on more European travel.

"When you drive around in a country and spend time in different parts, you really get a feel for it," Jacquot says. "I'd love to go back to Provence and spend more time there. I just love everything about it." 