

# Miss Goldfinger

From Nefertiti to Mr T there is a long and distinguished line of gold lovers. Pile it on, says **Bronwyn Cosgrave**



affordably satiate my desire for gold; brands I advise want me to wear their work to deliver accurate feedback relating to its design.

Because high metal prices stimulate jewellery crime waves, I can't divulge exactly what I own and wear but when I asked my boyfriend if he felt I flaunt a lot of gold, he briskly responded: 'Are you kidding? You're like Nefertiti!' Though the ancient bust of the Egyptian queen, currently on display in Berlin's Neues Museum, shows her bereft of jewels, Evelyn Wells, Nefertiti's biographer, describes her Pharaonic jewellery chest as my ultimate treasure trove. 'Bracelets, amulets, earrings [and] necklaces so wide they lay on the shoulders,' she notes. 'Nefertiti was one of the first women to wear earrings in large loops, pendants, buttons or studs. Nearly all were gold.'

Ancient Egyptians associated gold with the sun, believed it was the 'flesh of the gods', and pioneered techniques which define modern jewellery, from the production of gold leaf and gold chain to 'lost wax casting' (pouring molten metal into a wax mould to achieve a unique form), as well as the mixing of alloys to improve its hardness and achieve its beautiful colour variations. But I only wear jewels made of yellow gold as it is the perkier shade, created by mixing in silver and copper alloys.

The mask of Tutankhamun's mummy is the

bauble that first ignited my interest in gold. Composed of ten kilos of solid beaten and burnished yellow gold, I first spied it, aged 13, on tour with the 1979 *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibition, and the impact of that golden, god-like face remains with me to this day.

Shortly after I viewed King Tut's treasures, my mother provided me with my first memorable fashion moment. Setting off to claim her front row seat at a Frank Sinatra concert, her lithe frame was clad entirely in gold. She had accessorized a floor-length gold kaftan bought in a Tangier souk with matte gold sandals, a gold chain evening bag and a chunky gold charm bracelet which weighed half a kilo. Off she went, trailing a heady cloud of Joy by Jean Patou, the Bulgarian rose and jasmine perfume that was then the costliest in the world. The bottle my father had bought in Paris was adorned with golden thread entwined beneath its Baccarat crystal stopper. It stood stately atop my mother's jewellery box until I tipped it over.

Joy remains my favourite scent and my wardrobe references my mother's gilded 1970s style, too. I own dresses, coats, sweaters and even a vintage Lanvin kaftan from rich golden fabrics. Upon my gold-painted toes I wear white gold J Crew flats, rose gold Rupert Sanderson courts or a pair of Nikes emblazoned with golden swoosh symbols. I first spied the

gold python Sergio Rossi evening bag I take everywhere with me in the Gritti Palace hotel in Venice and, overcome with desire, suggested to the French journalist toting it that we switch. Luckily she preferred my silver python version and, handing over her gold model, described it with utter disdain as 'bling'. Music to my ears, as my gold, embellished fingers clutched the glittering prize.

**'My mother wore a gold charm bracelet weighing half a kilo'**

Above: Papillon necklace, Claude Lalanne. From left to right: Pavé diamond ring with pink spinel, Luigi Scialanga; 'Autumn Leaves' 18ct yellow gold and brown pearl earrings, Antje Géczy; 'Harmony' brass, gold and brown diamond bangle and ring, Hemmerle

