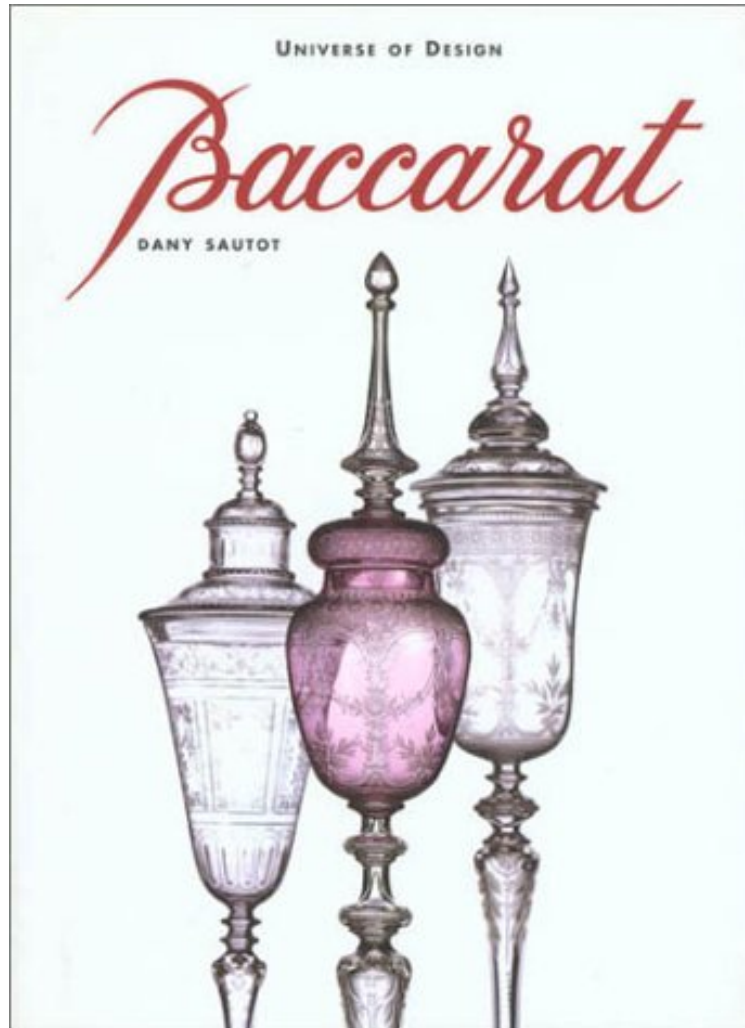


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Baccarat (Universe of Design)

Dany Sautot

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Since the early nineteenth century, the mention of luxury glass immediately has brought to mind the legendary French House of Baccarat. Where Steuben and Tiffany are quintessentially American, and Waterford is renowned for its rigorous attachment to cut crystal, Baccarat signifies a variety of things to many different people. For the wine connoisseur it is paper-thin glasses shaped especially to enhance the character and bouquet of Bordeaux, Sancerre, champagne, vintage port, or Napoleon brandy; for collectors, it means the most beautiful opaline and millefiori paperweights ever produced; for the fashion plates, it recalls the exquisite bottles of perfume designed for Guerlain, Patou, Schiaparelli, Dior, and Paco Rabanne, among others; and for potentates, popes, heads of state or Maharajas it has always been known as the Crystal of Kings and the King of Crystals. The Baccarat glassworks were established in 1764 by permission of Louis XV in the province of Lorraine at the foot of the Vosges mountain range. The natural surroundings, the plenitude of hard woods to stoke the furnaces, and the region's tradition of glass-making were the determining factors for choosing the little-known village of Baccarat. In 1816 the first furnace was kindled and masterpieces soon flowed from the fiery mixture of water, sand, potash, and lead. Louis XVIII was the first monarch to grant Baccarat his patronage, followed by Charles X, Louis Phillipe, and the Emperor Napolon III and his Empress Eugnie, the trend-setters of the Gilded Age. Sultan Abdul Mecid of Turkey illuminated his newly built Dolmabahce Palace on the Bosphorus with giant Baccarat chandeliers, and orders such as twelve-foot-high candelabras from Tsar Nicholas II were so demanding that soon Baccarat had to set aside a furnace just for his needs. But the most extraordinary commissions came from India; thrones, settees, crystal tombs, and chandeliers so heavy that one brought down with it the roof of the Maharajah of Gwalior's palace. All the magnificence that epitomized French art de vivre is crystallized in this lovely book.

About the Author Dany Sautot worked for the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris before becoming an independent curator. Director of the Baccarat museums, she is the author of *Baccarat, une histoire* (published by Baccarat in 1993), and has collaborated on the publication of several catalogs including *Tables royales, Versailles, 1994* and *Paris Belle Epoque, Essen, 1995*. She oversees Baccarat exhibitions in France and abroad.