



THE THREE GRACES

The Three Graces is a Texas-based, luxury e-tailer dealing in exquisite antique, estate, and period jewelry and objects. Sold via the web at www.georgianjewelry.com, The Three Graces specializes in fashion accessories crafted prior to 1850, each hand-selected from the world's finest antique centers by owner-collector-historian Lisa M. Stockhammer. As Stockhammer says, "We are only temporary caretakers of these precious objects, and one day they will pass on to others. We can only hope they will treasure them as much as we do."

{ INSPIRATION }

Headquartered in urban Houston and the idyllic Texas Hill Country, Stockhammer's modern venture found inspiration in the past. Her company name and guiding philosophy are inspired by a particularly stunning, 17th-century enamel bracelet painted with a trio of women, graceful ingénues presumed to be the Three Graces. The website's imagery is also based upon that bracelet's poetic scene.

In Greek mythology, the Three Graces are the personification of joy and charm in human life and, indeed, in all of nature. These goddesses are also said to love all things beautiful and to bestow their talents upon humans, as immortalized through the ages in poetry and the visual arts. It follows that the Three Graces serve as the company's own muse to bring both long-time collectors and first-generation aesthetes accessories that are exceptional in quality and eternal in style.

{ OLD WORLD TREASURES }

Three Graces specializes in providing its clients, near and far, access to rare antique jewelry and fine period and estate jewelry, focusing on Georgian accessories of the 18th and early 19th centuries, as well as 17th-century pieces and earlier. As the five-year-old business continues to evolve, it has added Victorian baubles dating from 1840 to the end of the century, expanding its trove to include Edwardian and Art Deco lovelies as well. Stockhammer has also recently added wedding engagement rings to her collection, as modern brides are craving a token beyond the store-bought solitaire. "Regardless of style or origin, every piece we represent is guaranteed as authentic; we stand behind everything on our site," she promises.

Her ever-rotating collection often spotlights lover's eye and portrait miniatures, mourning and sentimental jewelry, and pieces crafted from cut-steel, antique paste, and Stuart crystals, many from Spanish or Portuguese descent. In addition, diamonds, such as early table and rose cuts and old-mine and antique European diamonds, are prominent in many pieces. Other materials – coral, jet, garnets, turquoise – are just a few of the types of precious and semi-precious elements found within The Three Graces' offerings.

Furthermore, the site showcases pieces for a range of investors. Prices range from the modest \$200 – commemorative Haley's comet brooches circa 1836 – upward to the indulgent – a \$20,000 emerald stomacher – with many treasures costing between \$600 and \$5,000. All told, Stockhammer is constantly inspired by the buying standards of Wartski in London and Manhattan's A la Vielle Russe, what they represent in the antique jewelry market and how they replenish their shelves so perfectly.

{ NEW WORLD TECHNOLOGY }

Providing immediate and international access to jewelry seldom found in brick-and-mortar boutiques, The Three Graces fills a niche in the accessory market that attracts devotees. "Once clients discover us, they purchase again and again. It's an obsession," Stockhammer says, noting that some customers profess checking the site as part of their morning routines.

Because of the enthusiasm of its clientele – hailing from as far away as the U.K., Holland, Switzerland, Japan, Italy, France, and Sweden – The Three Graces is always trying to outdo itself in the rarity and the sheer beauty of its offerings, posting new images and descriptions almost daily, possible with the flexibility of the web. Stockhammer’s focus is also on educating patrons on each piece, and the Internet is a perfect medium, combining a broad reach with the ease of disseminating information by visual means as well as through the written word.

On view at www.georgianjewelry.com, each piece is photographed from numerous angles, and these images are accompanied with detailed, often poetic descriptions. Amid the accounts of each accessory’s features, Stockhammer weaves anecdotes that are pure fashion history. Striving for an educated shopping experience, she personally pens descriptions filled with historical context and technical information. “We hope to instill a sense of the workmanship and beauty behind the glitter – the symbolism, sentiment, and history,” she says. Furthermore, Stockhammer offers curious browsers a glossary of terms – Berlin iron to Vauxhall glass – advice on purchase and care, and lists of books and sites on the topic.

And as Stockhammer’s own clientele proves, buying antiques is quickly becoming an arena for the under-50 crowd, not just the old-guard collector. Younger, web-savvy enthusiasts relate to the obvious elegance, quality, and artistry as well as the immediacy and convenience of shopping online. She constantly surprises them with pieces that are, in her words, “not your grandmother’s cameos.” Buying something of beauty that, even while enjoying it, increases in value over time, is a satisfying experience, no matter the age or personal style.

{ EXPERTISE }

In her fourth year in business, proprietor Lisa M. Stockhammer has been involved with period and antique jewelry for more than 20 years, as a collector, buyer, and historian. Her field of expertise is Georgian jewelry, so named for the reign of England’s four King Georges from 1714 to 1830, as well as the Queen Anne period (1702 – 1714) and 17th-century jewelry. In addition, she is a member of The American Society of Jewelry Historians and a regular attendee of the Antique Period Jewelry and Gemstone Conference. “We do our utmost to be as knowledgeable as possible about the history of antique jewelry as well as adept at spotting modern copies. We represent only authentic antique jewelry with no reproductions whatsoever,” she guarantees.

With this knowledge in tow, she unearths jewels during seasonal buying trips to France and throughout the United Kingdom. And once a piece finds its new home, each purchase comes with a certificate of authenticity, along with the circa date the piece was fashioned, a brief description including metals, materials, gems, and stones, and other pertinent facts.

“Investing in the romance, value, and history of antique jewelry is undeniably sexy; each piece of jewelry tells a remarkable tale,” she continues. A tale of who gave these tokens of affection, who wore them, what of life’s dramas did they witness, what parties did they attend – these are questions that arise when you grasp a piece of jewelry more than 200 years old. Most jewelry from this era had symbolic meaning as well as its intrinsic beauty. And while much of its history will forever be undiscovered, there is a kind of hieroglyphic there to experience. “Every piece is a path to learning,” says Stockhammer. “You haven’t just bought a piece of early jewelry; no matter how great or how small the price, you become a caretaker.”

{ COORDINATES }	www.georgianjewelry.com 713.449.0095 office	info@georgianjewelry.com 877.449.0090 toll-free
{ PROPRIETOR }	Lisa M. Stockhammer	
{ ESTABLISHMENT }	July 2002	
{ MERCHANDISE }	Exquisite antique, period, and estate jewelry and objects, including pieces crafted prior to 1850. Each piece is hand-selected by the site's owner, a collector and historian herself, from Georgian and Edwardian to Victorian and Art Deco. Prices range from the modest investment of \$200 upwards, with many treasures priced between \$600 and \$5,000, and new pieces added to the site daily.	
{ ACCESS }	The site offers a global audience access to jewelry uncovered around the world any time of day. Since most collectors don't live in New York, London, or Paris, it brings pieces of those cities' standards to jewelry lovers living in all points in between. The site is a window to hidden markets, haute couture museums, and high-end dealers.	
{ GUARANTEE }	The Three Graces, one of few jewelry e-tailers to carry no reproductions whatsoever, stands behind every piece it represents with a full guarantee.	
{ SERVICES }	Though The Three Graces has sold at premiere venues such as The River Oaks Country Club – Houston and The Triple Pier Antiques Show – New York, the owner prefers more intimate events. TTG can orchestrate private purchases or glamorous trunk shows for larger group of its collection or major pieces during travels in the U.S. and Europe. TTG also offers missives to its devoted clientele: notice of shows, website improvements, new items from buying trips. Furthermore, Stockhammer will hunt for specific pieces, based on a customer request, as well as work with friends and lovers to arrange a gift purchase or to meet with antique engagement or anniversary bands for sale.	
{ MEDIA INQUIRIES }	Stockhammer is available as an expert source for a story, event, or film – whether commenting on fashion history, web entrepreneurship, online shopping, or the luxury market. She can also act as an on-set accessory supplier for editorial, commercial, or celebrity projects and shoots. TTG can also quickly provide high-resolution, press-ready photographs. Please email or call her for interview or image requests.	

{ BACKGROUND }

It's no wonder The Three Graces proprietor Lisa M. Stockhammer has melded commerce and design with such a sophisticated, studied edge. Born in Albany, New York, she was raised amid merchants and artists both. After graduating from what would later become Manhattan's Parsons School of Design, her father pursued set design and later retail as well as fine arts, using 1920s Paris as his teacher. Her mother was an interior decorator, early on for Burdine's department store and later for Palm Beach country-clubbers.

"My love of jewelry began when I was a tot. My mother was an avid collector, and she brought me a shirt box full of her castoff jewelry when I was five or six. Life has never been the same," Stockhammer recalls. "We looked at every type of jewelry imaginable, every time we went antiquing. This was some of the best training I ever had. No matter how beat we were at the end of a long day, loaded down with packages, we still went by every jewelry case we could," she continues. She remembers her mom's obsessions. In the 1960s, it was "drippy, chunky, colorful, and fab pieces (it *was* the height of costume jewelry production)" and later, emeralds, diamonds, gold Italian bracelets, and garnets, "always matchy-matchy," she laughs.

The Stockhammer family migrated to Singer Island, Florida, in 1970, and then Lisa alone moved to Houston, Texas, in '78, graduating from Rice University with two art degrees. During college she began collecting costume jewelry herself, entranced by flea markets, luxe boutiques, and antique shows alike. She soon owned more than 200 pairs of earrings – from 1960's papier-mâché hoops to a paste set from the '20s. Upon completion, she moved back to the Northeast, working in corporate posts in New Jersey and Boston.

Stockhammer then left the business world to travel extensively from 1991 to 1996 – Europe, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore, living six months to a year at a time in southern India, South Africa, and Taiwan. It was during these adventures she lost the belongings she held most dear. "Almost all my jewelry was stolen in South Africa," she says. "For several years after, I did not have anything to do with jewelry or wear jewelry of any kind. This helped me learn to part with it, rather than keep all these beautiful things for myself."

Though the urge to uncover these antiquities struck again. "I started looking at mountains of jewelry – whether made of telephone wire by an African artist or at David Webb or Black Starr and Frost," she continues. "My first love since then was the 18th century – its jewelry, ideas, art. I was exposed in London to the fact that these pieces still exist and not just in museums."

She also owned two ventures before embarking on The Three Graces. She designed a line of costume jewelry – amalgams of collage and sculpture, beads and feathers, antique buttons and bits. "They were gigantic, as only the '80s would allow. I even gave a pair to the songstress Astrud Gilberto, who I adored." Then in the '90s she imported antique and modern silver from Thailand, China, and Bali and sold her finds across the U.S.

Exposed to the Internet more and more through her corporate posts, she started putting a few treasures up for sale in an antique mall website. "I became entranced by the idea of my own website, and I decided in 2001 it was now or never" She's now in her fourth year of running the site full time: scouring global markets, selling at premiere antique shows, writing and taking photographs for the site, corresponding with her passionate clientele, and working another penchant into the business, too, her dogs Esme, Manella, and Bud. "I have a weak spot for canine-, feline-, and equine-themed antiques. These tender pieces are a mainstay of both my personal trove and The Three Graces collection."