

Making a Difference

Leading by Example

An Interview with Frédéric de Narp,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Cartier North America



EDITORS' NOTE In his current post since September 2005, Frédéric de Narp has worked for Cartier since 1991, serving in such notable posts as Retail Manager of Cartier Switzerland, Retail Manager of Cartier Italy, and CEO of Cartier Italy. De Narp holds a master's degree from Le Havre University.



Frédéric de Narp

COMPANY BRIEF Founded in 1847 by Louis-François Cartier and headquartered in Paris, Cartier SA was deemed "the jeweler of kings and the king of jewelers" by no less a connoisseur than King Edward VII. Today, it remains one of the world's most esteemed luxury brands, designing and manufacturing exclusive collections of fine jewelry, wristwatches, leather goods, fragrance, pens, eyewear, and scarves, which are distributed worldwide through more than 250 Cartier boutiques. Additionally, Cartier watches and accessories are distributed through select dealers. The firm is a subsidiary of Compagnie Financière Richemont AG, a Swiss luxury-goods conglomerate.

How important is corporate social responsibility to the culture of Cartier?

My corporation's responsibility to the community is part of the DNA of the brand for two main reasons. First of all, Cartier is a leader in the jewelry and watch industry, and as such, we have the responsibility of leading by example and creating and reinventing ourselves every day. In the spirit of corporate responsibility, it's crucial that Cartier be involved with different projects to help the industry. Cartier is a co-founder of the Council for Responsible Jewelry Practices [CRJP], which has been developed to improve practices in the world of jewelry. Second, Cartier is in contact with the leaders of the world, and many of our clients have their own foundations or their own way of giving back to the community. So when they ask us to help them in their foundations, we do.

Do your philanthropic projects align with your business? Many of your employees and clients are women. With that in mind, was sponsoring the Women's Initiative Awards a natural progression for Cartier?

We care for women. Sixty-five percent of our staff are women, 65 to 70 percent of our clients are women. Cartier was the first watchmaker for women in the world. We are

constantly in contact with women. We took the lead on the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards to give women entrepreneurs around the world a chance to propose their business ideas. We elect 15 women, and five of them – one per continent – receive the Cartier Women's Initiative Award. Cartier will provide the winner with a \$20,000 grant towards their business, a subscription to INSEAD's newsletter for entrepreneurship, and one year of personalized coaching to help the person create and structure her project. As a

worldwide initiative, each continent then has its own responsibility to drive the coaching of all of these entrepreneurial women.

What specific philanthropic projects does Cartier support in North America?

One initiative is the Love Charity Project, which initially consisted of identifying eight charitable causes and eight celebrity ambassadors who are really committed to helping those causes. We created a Charity Love bracelet, a mini Love bracelet on a silk cord, available in an array of colors each representing a different charitable organization and their cause. Each time we sell a Charity Love bracelet for \$475, \$100 will go to the charity. The project started in 2006 in North America and has now been rolled out worldwide. Today, in North America we have a total of 16 charities and in June we will introduce another group of eight organizations and ambassadors for a total of 24 charities and ambassadors. Every year, we celebrate Cartier Love Day, to introduce the new charities and encourage others to commit to a cause. On Love Day, all of Cartier's worldwide subsidiaries give back to the communities by donating a percentage of sales from the entire Love collection to local charities. In North America alone, we have donated more than \$2.4 million with the Love Project.

Do the young people who come to work for Cartier appreciate your commitment to giving back to the community?

The generosity inside the brand has had such an impact, and people certainly consider it when joining the company. You cannot work for Cartier if you are not totally passionate. You breathe Cartier. You sleep Cartier. You love Cartier. People with great passions often have great values. Our management tries to do the maximum in giving back to the community, and so do our people.

Many people might not make a connection between a high-end luxury brand like Cartier and poverty or world issues. How do you increase the public's awareness of your efforts in these areas?

The Love Project is not only about raising funds but raising awareness for the organizations – the celebrity ambassadors are closely involved with each organization they represent, their dedication and influence is a powerful tool in helping to increase the awareness of all of these amazing organizations and their missions. So in this case, Cartier is a bridge – we help to spread the word. We surely want to create awareness of the fact that the elite of the world are not only great actors, singers, and professionals, but also people truly committed to doing some good. Our celebrity ambassadors appreciate what we've done on behalf of their cause – and even better is the thanks we receive from the founders of the charitable organizations.

How do you measure the success of Cartier's corporate social responsibility initiatives?

We receive testimonials from our clients, thanking us for helping their foundations, and from our celebrity ambassadors and the charitable organizations, thanking us for our beautiful jewels and the beautiful gesture of giving back to the community. We started giving back to the community in 1984, when we created the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art. It was groundbreaking, at the time, to create a foundation that gives young artists support and the opportunity to emerge.

With so many areas of need, is it frustrating to sometimes have to say no?

You cannot be everything to everybody. I receive requests every day. But it is beautiful to be in a position where you can give back to the community concretely.

You have a very upbeat, optimistic way about you, even in challenging times. Is that just a part of your nature?

It's part of my nature and Cartier's DNA. The essence of this brand keeps you up and running and thinking outside of the box. The brand has been around for 160 years and has suffered through world crises, but it has always reinforced itself through the crises. So it's a very strong brand. ●

Julianne Moore (far left) and Rachel Weisz (far right) wearing Cartier bracelets as a symbol of their donations to USA Harvest