

A woman with dark skin and hair is shown in profile, looking out of a window. She is wearing a white, strapless dress. The window has a prominent geometric pattern of white lines forming a grid of squares and diamonds. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a sophisticated and elegant atmosphere.

Golf Connaisseur

The Essence of Luxury

Contents



12 Publisher's Page

22 Royal Scene

Business World

32 **Glory & the Grandeur**
Louis Vuitton Champs Elysees Promenade

42 **Whiff of Wang**
Vera Wang

48 **Sheer Luxury**
Wolff Heinrichsdorff

52 **Plane Viewing**
Yves de Pooter

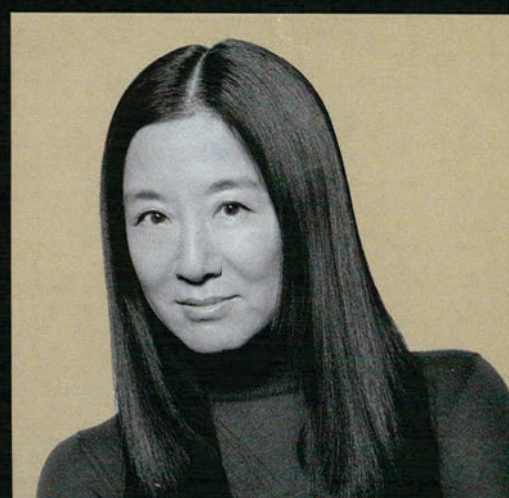
56 **Very Ferre**
Sandro Magnani

60 **Unique Indeed**
Vertu

64 **Adding Sparkle**
Gabriel S. Tolkovsky



Business World



Louis Vuitton

Montblanc

Bell & Ross

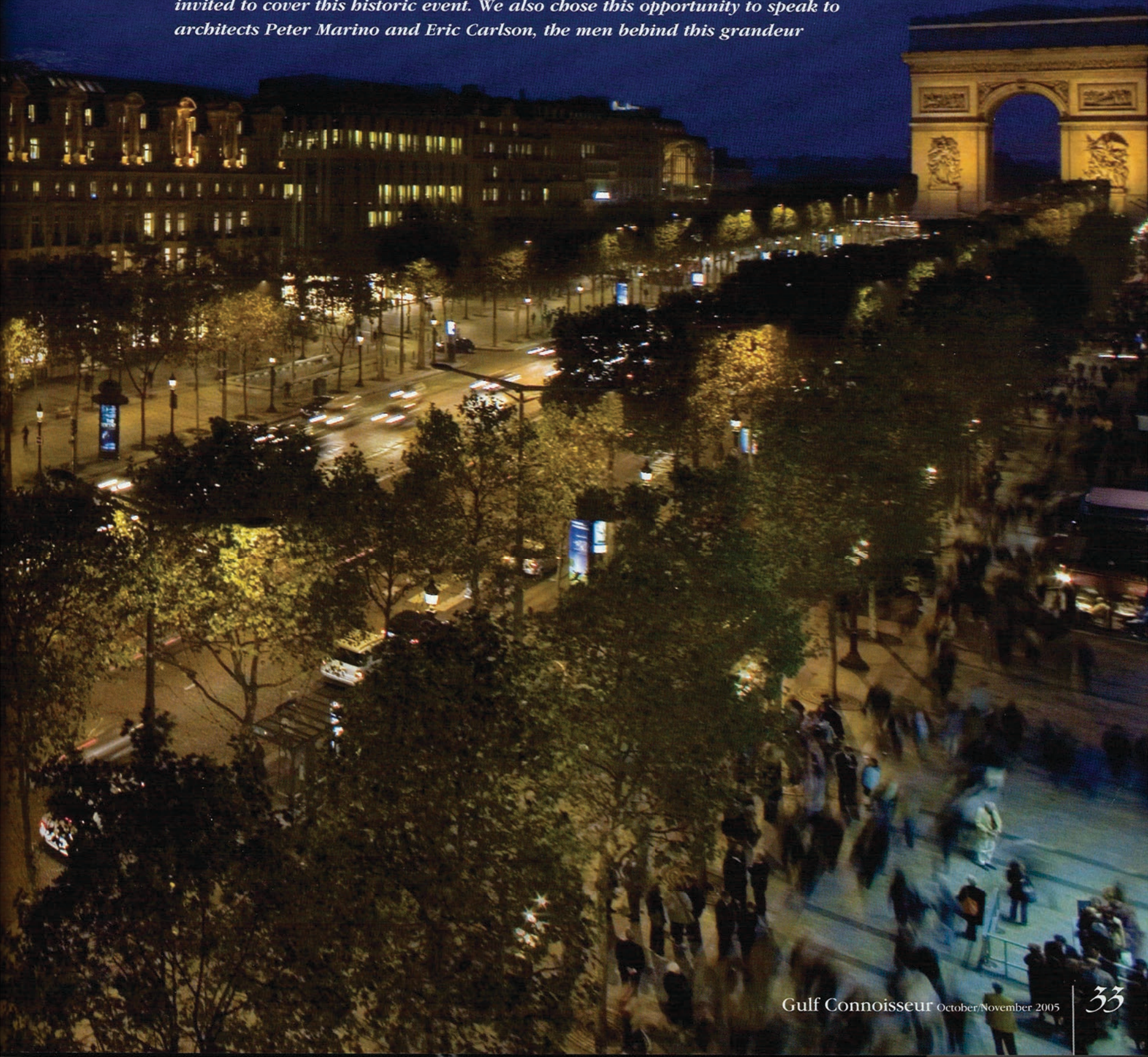
Vera Wang



Glory & the Grandeur

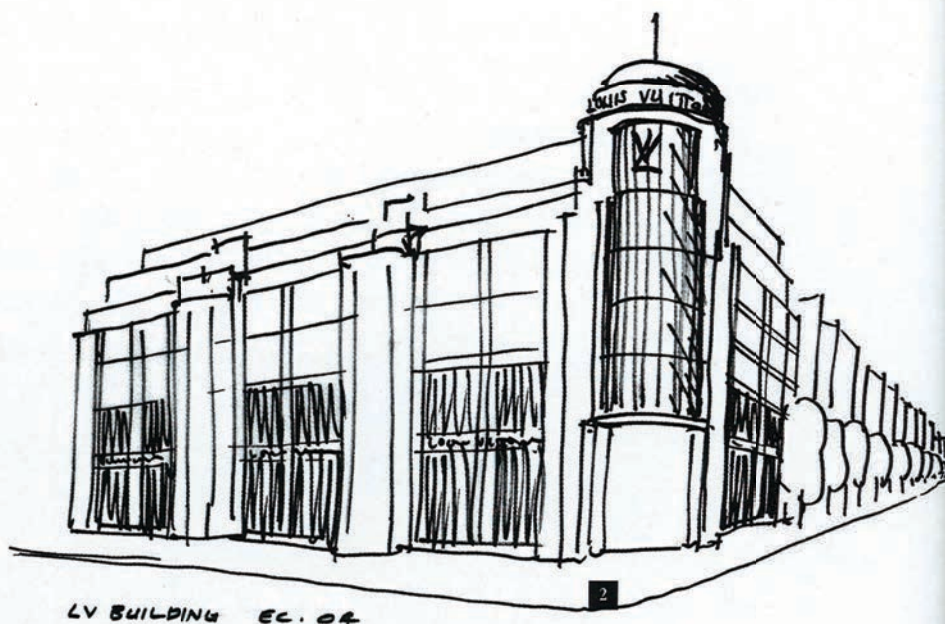
By Meena Narayan

Hidden from view for so long by a spectacular display of gigantic trunks, Louis Vuitton Champs-Élysées Promenade reopened its doors with a party for celebrities, designers, clients and select media across the globe. Gulf Connoisseur had the privilege of being the only press from the UAE to be invited to cover this historic event. We also chose this opportunity to speak to architects Peter Marino and Eric Carlson, the men behind this grandeur





Louis Vuitton Champs-Élysées Promenade



It's not everyday that you get to witness an event of such stature where the top stars from around the world rubbed shoulders with leading designers, musicians and media. Everything from the beautiful invitation card that glittered with Swarovski crystals to the cocktail and fashion show at the Petit Palais in Paris reflected luxe, elegance and opulence, as the new Louis Vuitton House paid homage to the cultural and historical importance of the Champs-Élysées with its concept of the promenade.

As you enter the house you see a graceful promenade spirals around a succession of terraces, each offering visitors a captivating vista. Revolutionary design and astonishing detail evoke the most emblematic facets of Parisian architecture and over 150 years of Louis Vuitton heritage. The windows are lined with the Monogram metallic skin, an organic structure through which light filters as through the surrounding trees. Just as the stylised pattern of the skin evokes the botanical motifs of the wrought-iron guardrails that traditionally ornament Parisian façades, so throughout the house, rich detailing alludes to characteristic features of the city's architecture and the Champs-Élysées. It's the result of a daring

integration of art and architecture and the latest developments, jointly designed by architects Eric Carlson and Peter Marino in consultation with the Louis Vuitton Architecture Department headed by David McNully.

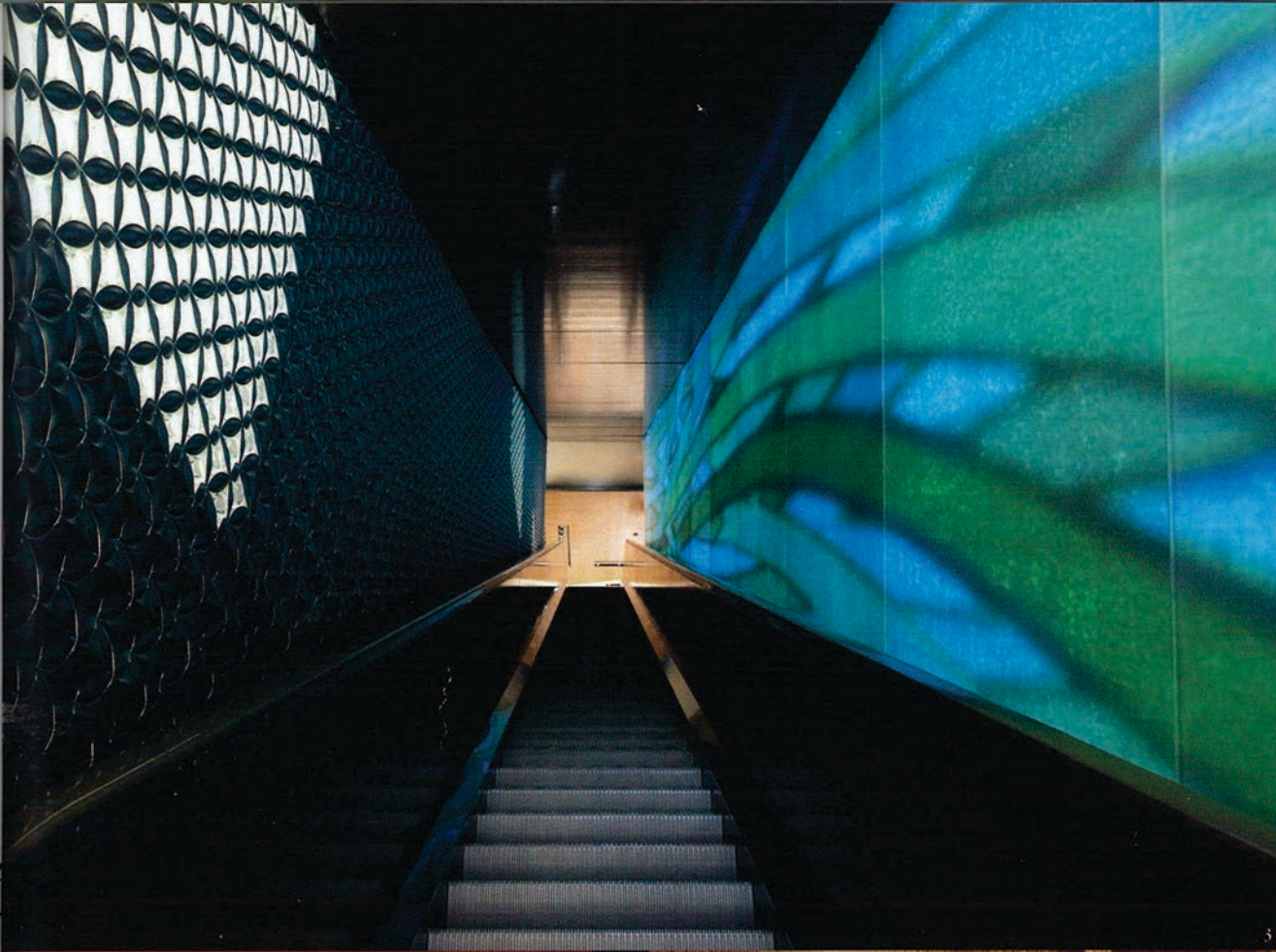
Particular challenges were presented by the Champs-Élysées flagship, with its listed 1930s façade. Says Eleanore de Boysson, Louis Vuitton Store Network Director, "In Paris, we obviously do not enjoy the same architectural freedom as in Japan or even in New York. Since we could do virtually nothing to the outside of the Champs-Élysées building we decided we had to be more innovative than ever inside."

And most importantly Louis Vuitton House celebrates the historical and cultural importance of the Champs-Élysées with an entirely new concept – 'the promenade'.

Just as the Champs-Élysées was traditionally the world's most stylish place to take a stroll, so Louis Vuitton was inspired to continue that celebrated promenade into the house, revisiting the concept with elegance and modernity, not to mention a substantial element of surprise.

We meet firstly with Eric Carlson, a tall friendly American architect, who carved out

1. Architects Eric Carlson 2. Peter Marino 3. The escalator, displays the art of Tim White-Soboteski,
4. The 20m high atrium, composed of 1900 stainless steel rods 5. The walkway with a tinted ambience
6. The fitting rooms





1. The Jewellery & Watches lounges, 2. The Monogram metallic skin along the escalator



the volumes of the existing structure to create a unique multilevel circulation system promoting fluidity of movement. The interior flooring echoes elegant shades of brown and beige limestone, the paving pattern on the street outside, while the atrium, a six-storey high space in the centre of the building, diffracts rays of light off slender steel rods inspired by the glistening domes of water from the avenue's famous Lalique's fountains. Eric, a graduate from Kansas State University School of Architecture, has designed the Louis Vuitton building in Tokyo and Seoul for which he received a Seoul metropolitan Government Architecture award. This tall man leads us through the house to show us the different facets of the building. Says Eric, "Our brief was to rethink the existing house over four levels. However, the problem with space over two levels is getting people to go upstairs. We therefore had the idea of creating a four level space of one floor. To do this we designed a circulation system, which eliminated the classic notion of floor levels and replaced it with a succession of terraces in a spiral manner. Each terrace is a small scale boutique

and we never have to walk up the stairs."

And it's true, as you walk down gently, there is enough space for people to move freely without a feeling of being crowded. It allows people to browse leisurely and take their time before deciding what to buy.

However, not many changes were made to the original 1930s façade, according to Eric. "But you will notice a series of very large glazed areas that step up the façade. We, therefore, used the monogram metallic skin, which has become a signature element of Louis Vuitton architecture worldwide. Using intricate craftsmanship, the skin can be transparent, or made of crystal, leather, titanium or precious stones. The skin has the Louis Vuitton monogram which you find in its bags. When the skin covers the façade it wraps the building in a monogram. And the skin depending on the material can create feminine or masculine areas. As a result the exterior and interior is unified and clearly identified as a Louis Vuitton building."

And if you are left wondering about the role of natural light, Eric says, "The Champs-Élysées represent the latest innovation of the skin,