

J.W. COOPER

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EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

“You need confidence to carry off our buckles,” says Todd Rauchwerger, owner of J.W. Cooper—one of the country’s most eclectic, luxury niche-market retailers. “They’re just not for everyone. They’re for someone who’s looking for something different.”



And different they are. Calling upon master artists and utilizing the most exotic and unconventional materials, J.W. Cooper has contributed to the revival of the buckle as embellishment and reinvented it as an art form.

Crafted for the consumer whose taste has surpassed mass-affluent luxury and longs for a fresh medium in which to make his or her own creative statement, the buckles of J.W. Cooper supply just this. “The people who purchase our buckles for the first time or are regular collectors want something that no one else has, no matter the cost,” Rauchwerger elaborates. “That’s what I bring them.”

Expanding his 28-year-old Bal Harbour, Florida-based business four years ago to include a cozy boutique at The Shops at Columbus Circle, Rauchwerger has earned critical acclaim from luxury-industry leaders for his original concept and ability to take it to the top. An icon in this specialized market, Rauchwerger has acquired a cult-like following from the world’s wealthiest consumers, with the buckles being the sizzle of the business.

“The artistry of the buckles is simply hot! Their uniqueness, quality, unbelievable hand-carved detail, wild motifs, and use of amazing materials and gemstones are what set them apart from all others. There’s no one else doing what we’re doing,” stresses Rauchwerger. “I want to consistently offer something different, special, and collectible to those who have done and seen it all. Being surprised is what keeps people intrigued and feeling alive.”

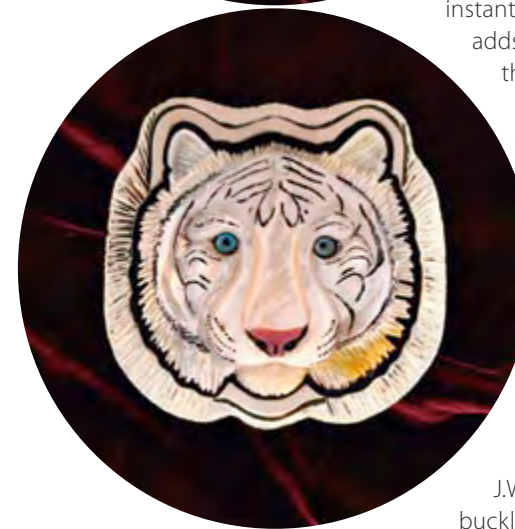
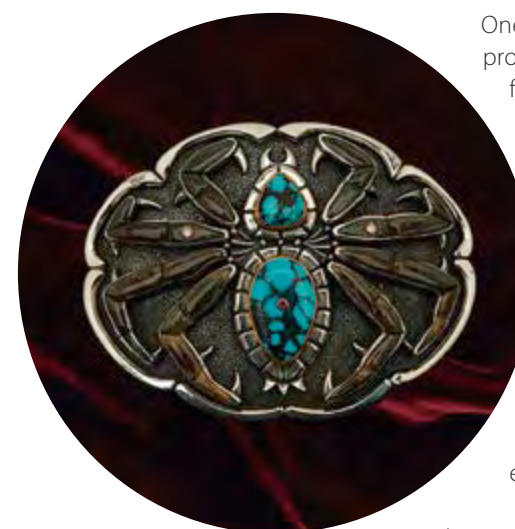
Whether visiting J.W. Cooper’s New York City or Bal Harbour Shops space, guests will find one-of-a-kind handcrafted buckles. Appealing to men and women alike, buckles sculpted from precious metals, like eighteen-karat gold, as well as from sterling silver, are eagerly presented. These materials are often engraved, filigreed, and adorned with stone inlay, such as diamonds, rubies, sapphires, turquoise, jasper, and tiger eye, to name a few. As well,

buckles may be hand-carved from Picasso marble, mother of pearl, or ten thousand-year-old mammoth ivory, one of the highest quality ivories available for carving. In addition to this prehistoric material, the buckles may showcase 250 million-year-old fossils. Although these materials are magnificent in their own right, it is the expert hand and imaginative vision of J.W. Cooper’s select artists that magically bring these materials—and consequently the buckles—to life.

For years, J.W. Cooper has been revered for its selection of distinctive buckle motifs, including: ominous and playful skulls, crosses, running horses, longhorns, reptiles, Native American chiefs, and the American bald eagle. Like a great painting or sculpture, these eye-catching works have never failed to spark conversation. And, J.W. Cooper’s recent one-of-a-kind collection of trophy buckles proves to be no different.

Lifelike to the eye and organic to the touch, lions and tigers leap forward, spiders scatter, butterflies take flight, and flowers bloom in natural brilliance. Imagine if what you wore at your waist actually conjured colorful tales in the minds of those who took a glance.

To some, the Picasso-marble prehistoric saber-tooth tiger or the Kingman Arizona Turquoise eagle might appear as a protector, while the mother-of-pearl white tiger, with its brilliant blue topaz eyes, may symbolize the strong but sensitive side of its wearer. Crafted from this same iridescent shell are roses and orchids blossoming in an array of colors; when the light hits them just right, hues of shimmering blues, yellows, and pinks abound in delicate glory. Sculpted from ten-thousand-year-old mammoth ivory are the elusive spider and butterfly. The spider, mysterious in nature, pops with touches of turquoise, while the butterfly—as delicate as its natural counterpart—sparkles with touches of twenty-two-karat gold, sapphires, and opals. The personal and creative touches do not end there.



One of J.W. Cooper’s most requested artists always provides a memorable story on the backs of his buckles for their newfound owners to cherish. For instance, from the mother-of-pearl tiger, he writes: *“Moon Shadow Two—I watched from the cliff above as the big cat pounced in the moonlight snow, nose deep with the rabbit sitting at the end of his tail.”* From a turquoise eagle buckle, he composes: *“Proud American—I watch eagles here by my home most every month. They remind me that life is precious and we should be happy that we live in this beautiful country.”*

For the extra adventurous, commissioning a custom-designed buckle is an option worth exploring. At J.W. Cooper, the sky is the limit.

“Once a person purchases one of our buckles, they instantly acquire a sense of ownership over their new piece,” adds Rauchwerger. “They get really excited about it. From the first purchase, a collector is born!”

Paired with a strap handmade from sumptuous skins like stingray, ostrich, lizard, calf, or three styles of alligator from different areas of the hide, and the belt and buckle set is no longer just about function. It’s now about self-expression. With these trophy buckles, it’s about having a strong appreciation for the original, trusting your taste, and having the confidence to wear them front and center. Maybe it’s this captivating sense of “ruling your own universe” that should be considered the new status symbol.

Now, if classic styling is more to your liking, J.W. Cooper also offers an array of elegant belts and buckles that can go from the boardroom to cocktail hour

to weekends away. Whether it’s an eighteen-karat yellow and white gold buckle embellished with princess-cut diamonds, or a streamlined sterling silver buckle set on an alligator strap, no matter your preference, J.W. Cooper’s creations are simply enveloping.

“My belief is that while you’re taking the time and effort to shop for the finest clothing, shoes, and jewelry, don’t forget the belt and buckle, for it’s equally important and presents yet another way to step up your appearance,” concludes Rauchwerger. “Plus, wearing a high-quality belt and buckle just feels really good.”

In addition to its one-of-a-kind buckles and luxurious belt straps, J.W. Cooper is praised for its vast selection of benchmark boots, eclectic, handmade jewelry, Swiss timepieces, and breathtaking pieces of art and collectibles. From the island of Bali to the mountains of New Mexico, the Jura region to the southeastern seaboard of the U.S., the highest quality of original goods from around the globe can be admired, collected, and worn with confidence at J.W. Cooper. ■



Enjoy what awaits you at J.W. Cooper at The Shops at Columbus Circle, 10 Columbus Circle—212.823.9380/www.jwcooper.com.