



JEWEL NOTES FROM MARY ANN

HUNTING FOR DATING CLUES IN “MEMOIRS OF A FASHION JEWELRY MANUFACTURER”

I have read Frank DeLizza’s incredible book, “Memoirs of a Fashion Jewelry Manufacturer” cover-to-cover about six times now. As many of you know, the book is about the history of DeLizza and Elster Inc., with the story beginning in 1947 and ending in 1990. At some point, I had this brilliant idea of using the information in the book as a general guide for dating vintage costume jewelry, listing things such as rhinestone colors, types of materials, design themes, etc. Well, the idea *seemed* brilliant until I actually tried to put all of the info and clues together. Yes, there is a reason why my July Jewel Notes is coming a few days late. Many, many, countless hours later, with my eyesight badly failing, I have finally organized the material and this article is the result.

Before we get down to the nitty-gritty details, I think it wise to point out that this info was gleaned from the production history of a single, albeit major, manufacturer. Were all costume jewelry companies making the same stuff during the same time periods? Well, no, but DeLizza and Elster was a company that followed trends and responded quickly to what was and was not selling during the years that they were in business. Of course, there were some manufacturing techniques that they did not use to any large extent, so dating clues for some things simply aren’t going to show up on our list. The good news is that clues for dating D&E jewelry abound. So you’ll see some extra info specifically about D&E.

I know that you’re going to miss my usual amusing and witty banter, but I believe that the year-to-year trends are better presented in an easily-read list. Do not despair, as my commentary will resume after the sparsely-worded and very dry list presentation.

1947 – 1949

- Buttons
- Duette pins and clips
- Light and simple soldered settings and rhinestone chain
- Rhodium plating becomes popular
- Nearly all crystal rhinestones and silver-tone metal

1950 – 1952

- Black diamond (grey) rhinestones
- Adding touches of rhinestone color
- Highly-polished un-plated brass

- Figurals such as butterflies, horses, rabbits, bugs, dogs, musical instruments
- Swedged construction
- Barrettes and combs
- More stone shapes such as baguettes, octagons, squares, pears, keystones
- Larger chatons such as 6 ½, 8 ½, and 11 mm
- Ear wraps and chignon earrings
- Big crystal pins
- D&E solder 2 ½ and 3 ½ mm chatons to brass wire
- D&E mix 6 ½ mm chatons with 14/10 and 18/13 unfoiled ovals

1953 – 1956

- Earrings sell more than pins
- Open back set German stones in colors for 14/7 and 10/5 navettes
- Austria for foiled smaller stones
- Drop settings with beads added
- Long thin earrings
- Hoop earrings (rhinestones and round drops)
- Headbands and pony-tail barrettes
- Large coat pins
- Chignon earrings
- Women's cuff links
- Front-and-back earrings
- Chandelier earrings
- Mixing AB stones in settings
- D&E pre-made 2 and 3 stone settings for 2 ½ mm chatons – first figure-8 puddling
- D&E first five-link chain settings for bracelets and necklaces

1957-1963

- More use of color and larger stones; 8 ½ and 10 ½ mm
- Pins and earring sets popular
- Some necklace, bracelet, pin, earring sets
- Cuff and hinged bracelets
- Turquoise and tourmaline 15/7 navettes and 10/5 navettes on pin edges
- Hexagon shapes and buff-top cabochons
- Shoulder-duster earrings
- Link beads on top of settings; 8, 10 and 12 mm AB glass beads
- Large navettes and ovals, kites, arrows, octagons and 18 mm chatons
- Crystal pin and earrings sets and large coat pins
- Bibs and collars
- Jet black-colored beads
- Colors red azalea, green opaline, heliotrope
- Multiple chain necklaces and chains as drops
- Long stem flower pins
- Pin/pendants with curb and snake chains
- Filigree balls
- Flawed emerald, rubinte, hematite, AB chalk white, watermelon stones
- Brass leaves and flowers and petals used as overlay
- Tassel necklaces

- Hoop earrings
- Imitation pearls and baroque pearls
- Rivoli and large 18 mm oval stones
- Glass and black/white cameos
- Large beads in interesting shapes and mixes
- Cast snake chain elements
- Dogtooth settings
- Filigree scrolls
- Chalk white stones with floral decals
- Givre flat beads and stones
- Cuff bracelets
- D&E birthday cake stones and jet with gold dot stippled stones
- D&E gold fluss cabochons
- D&E stippled and striped navettes
- D&E oval iris, triangles, diamond-shapes, 15/4 navettes
- D&E pearl bibs and sets
- D&E Nefertiti 24/18 ovals and coral-gold stones
- D&E first really huge bib necklaces

1964 – 1966

- Mostly colored rather than crystal rhinestones
- Belts; rhinestone, mesh, stretch cobra, cord and fabric
- Figurals; musical instruments, bugs, flowers, birds, donkey
- Opaque colors; turquoise, rose, coral
- Large filigree leaves and petal findings
- Small rhinestone chaton set into top of cabochons and large rhinestones
- Door knocker earrings with removable drops
- Big crystal and AB bibs
- D&E Juliana branding with tags and cards
- D&E Juliana for Frank's mom, Julia, and brother Tony's mother-in-law, Anna
- D&E Christmas pins
- D&E jet with rose cameo

1967 – 1969

- Heart-shaped scrolls
- Belts
- Shoe clips and boot chains
- Margarita stones
- Large domed plastic cabochons
- Arm bands and slave bracelets
- Vests made from chain and rhinestone bras
- Bolo necklaces

1970

- Belts
- Hippie-look and more casual style
- Mesh chain necklaces
- 8 ½ mm channel settings as drops
- Eastern Indian-look and matrix stones

- Outlining stone settings with rhinestone chain
- Faux pearls and fringe-look on large collars and earrings
- Dog collar necklaces
- Crosses
- Heraldic design pin/ pendants; crowns, daggers, battle axes, shields, Maltese cross
- Barrettes
- Large pendant necklaces
- Ball chain for necklaces
- Large 18 mm cabochons
- Carved jade stones
- Velour ribbon dog collars
- Rhinestone neckties
- Chalk white and turquoise cabochons
- D&E doing more castings, especially large pendant necklaces
- D&E two-part cast pendants, fish, owl, butterfly
- D&E first uses engraved (rather than plain) hinged cuff

1971 – 1973

- 2 ½ mm “baby” rhinestone chain necklaces and bracelets
- Belts and belt buckles, twist-front cobra
- Dog collars with balls and crystal drops
- Tiny pendants; anchors, hearts, ovals, keys
- Unusual opaque cabochons and stones
- Small creature pins
- Patriotic motifs, donkey, elephant, liberty bell, scale of justice, stars, eagles
- Bras in rhinestone and chain
- Bell-shaped rhinestone
- Cast necklace charms; octopus, bear, circus themes, toy soldier, cowboy, mermaid
- Neck rings with small ornament
- Button earrings
- White wash on gold-tone castings
- Coins
- Wood
- Butterflies with large cabochons
- “Big Apple” jewelry
- Wire hoop and slim drop earrings
- Upper arm bracelets
- D&E intaglio rose with iris background

1974 – 1977

- Colored large rhinestones no longer popular
- Cobra, cord and fabric belts
- Simple rhinestone necklaces; “need me”, “help me”, “love me”, “princess”, “stop”
- Rhinestone arrows, boats, bicycles, phones, cars, airplanes, dog faces, owls
- Liquid silver tube beads
- Turquoise, coral, bone, wood
- Nugget stone beads in natural stone
- Plastic fruit, leaves, flowers
- Bangles with fabric and metal outline edges

- Simple 40/30 oval cabochon pendant necklaces
- Stretch bracelets
- 70 mm flat back square faceted stone with chain surround
- Big necklaces, bibs with opaque coral, lapis, turquoise, jade, carnelian, chrisophase
- Ball chain and curb chain
- Now seeing Korean and Taiwan imports in large numbers
- D&E stringing bead necklaces

1978 – 1979

- Beads
- Riding and hunting motifs
- Cobra belts
- “Dynasty” TV show brings new interest in large rhinestone jewelry

1980 – 1984

- Earrings in every color
- Necklaces, earrings and pins with unusual center stones; 40/30 octagon
- Big pendants, butterfly, ship wheel, flowers, owl
- Chinese themes, black tassels, carved beads
- Multi-chain plain bibs
- Western-look turquoise with silver-tone
- Ball chain necklaces
- Military medals
- Mesh collar with large cast charms; shells, starfish, sea horse

1985 – 1990

- Ball-chain necklaces and collars
- Single-row narrow belts
- Caged stones
- Big fluted-bead necklaces
- Large 3” dangle earrings
- Riding and horse themes
- Korean and Chinese cast pieces dominating costume jewelry market

Whew, that’s my list of clues from Frank DeLizza’s book, and I think that there are some real gems of information here to assist with dating. That said, there are tons and tons of things that are not mentioned such as charm bracelets, enameling, plastics...lots and lots of stuff. Fortunately, there are many great books that specifically discuss dating antique and vintage jewelry and you can use them to fill-in the blanks. Some of my favorites are “Collecting Costume Jewelry 202” by Julia C. Carroll, and Roseann Ettinger’s “Popular Jewelry 1840 – 1940”, “40s and 50s Popular Jewelry” and “Popular Jewelry of the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s”. Those books concentrate on costume jewelry. Two great general jewelry references that give dating info are “Warman’s Jewelry” by Christie Romero and C. Jeanenne Bell’s “Answers to Questions About Old Jewelry”. The patents issued for Coro and Trifari designs are also a great dating resource, as there are tons of pieces to review for each year. This would be a good time for me to say “tag, you’re it” to anyone who’d like to venture further with completing a dating clues list!

I do want to be sure to mention that the lists above are not MY lists compiled from MY research, but, instead, were compiled from information contained in Mr. DeLizza's book. So, if you disagree with any of the timeframe references, please do not shoot the messenger! Maybe I could elaborate on the point to also say: Please do not shoot Mr. DeLizza; he deserves our heartfelt gratitude for writing his fascinating memoirs. So instead, let's share some lively discussion on Jewelry Ring about jewelry dating information.

And, at this point, you are surely saying to yourself "Wow, this is great stuff, but where are all of the pretty pictures?" Well, I'm sorry, but the list is way too long to illustrate with individual photos. But if you'd like to use the list specifically with regard to dating DeLizza and Elster jewelry, you won't find better info (or prettier pictures, for that matter) than in Ann Pitman's book "Juliana Jewelry Reference".

In closing, I hope that I've given you a new resource to assist with dating vintage costume jewelry. And, I have to ask if I am the only person who sees Jewelry Ring email posts with subjects such as "Dating a necklace" and immediate thinks of pick-up lines like "Hey, nice rhinestones you have there!" and "You can wrap your chains around me anytime, Sweetheart."? Okay, maybe it is just me...

Wishing everyone successful and happy dating!

Sparkles to All,
Mary Ann

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