

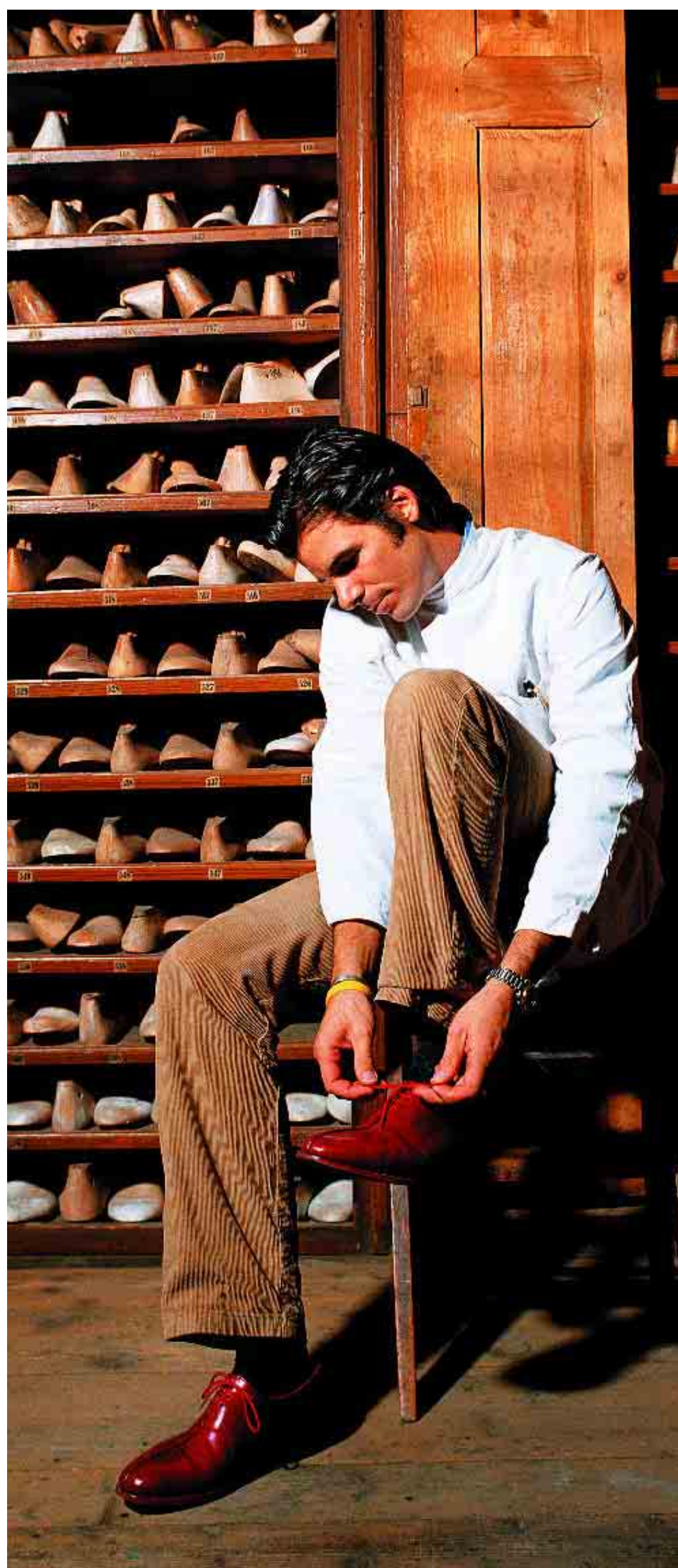
STORY DANIEL SCHEFFLER

REGAL ACTION

Brands that cater to kings and queens are now offering superluxury goods for those who seek the finest quality and craftsmanship

A deep and satisfying fascination with royalty isn't new. The first king in the history of the world dates back to 2500 BC: attested directly from archaeology is the King of Kish, Enmebaragesi. His name was inscribed on an alabaster vase and found at the Sumerian city of Nippur – unearthed in today's Iraq. Since then, monarchies have been revered, hated, exulted and abolished. One of the remaining intrigues is the ancillary world that is executed around royalty – from royally appointed craftsmen to imperial court suppliers.

With the wedding of British Prince William and Catherine Middleton, the monarchy has a new generation of royal watchers across the world. "Everyone needs a dream, a fantasy – what better fantasy than to believe in princes and princesses and happily ever after," says Alicia Carroll, the owner of Everything Royal, a dealer specialising in royal family commemoratives and memorabilia. According to Carroll, the British royal wedding has spurred new energy in the elite brands that carry royal warrants and purveyors to royalty. And with 26 active sovereign monarchies in the world – ranging from kings, queens, sultans, emperors to emirs – reigning in more than 43 countries, there are a number of utterly exclusive craftsmen producing such splendour.





LEFT
 Markus Scheer, the seventh generation of Rudolf Scheer & Söhne, hand-carves all the wooden lasts.

RIGHT
 Köchert was awarded the coveted 'Jeweller to the Imperial Court' title in 1831.

BELOW
 Lobmeyr's detailed engraving. The brand has hand-engraved all its work since 1823.



CUSTOMERS ARE LOOKING FOR PRODUCTS TO ACCOMPANY THEM FOR A LIFETIME **LEONID RATH OF LOBMEYR**



PHOTOS: PETER RIGAUD, GEORG MAYER

"The first district of Vienna houses most of the city's Imperial buildings and this is where the purveyors to the Imperial Court (*kaiserlicher und königlicher Hoflieferant*) are also located even today," says Verena Hable, the spokeswoman from Vienna's Tourist Board. An imperial court supplier, in the days of Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, was controlled by an imperial privilege and had a special permit to supply goods and services of the finest quality to the royals – today these products are available to the seekers of finery.

Vienna, a city of extreme beauty and value for history, has respectfully maintained and celebrated the regal craftsman in the inner city. With the city's "Golden Quarter" of late within the first district, the old is now merging with the new. Signa Group, Austria's prime real estate group, under the monumental protection act has restored and embellished the area to the original →

「DIVERSIONS」



> style

LEFT
The London collection from Skultuna is designed by renowned jewellery designer Lara Bobinc.

BELOW
Köchert was entrusted with the care of the imperial treasury in 1849. Some of these items are now catalogued and seen only in Vienna's museums.

RIGHT
Anderson & Sheppard requires three fittings for first-timers.



PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES, PETER SCHWEIGER

WITH BESPOKE SUITS, THE 100 YEARS OF EXPERTISE AND ROYAL BOND IS WHAT YOU'RE PAYING FOR



dating back 100 years. By adding an array of new luxury retailers, a luxury Park Hyatt hotel and living opportunities within the first district, a new regal exclusivity has been created. "We now have a prestigious shopping zone in downtown Vienna – also called the Golden U – by extending the existing precinct and high-end shopping area" says Marion Holbe, Signa Group's event executive.

The first district today is romanced with royal craftsmen. Renowned jewellers to the Imperial and Royal Court, Köchert opened in 1814 on Vienna's Neuer Markt and continues to create exclusive works of art. Köchert famously created hair jewellery for the Empress Elisabeth of Austria – in particular the 27-diamond emblazoned "Sisi stars" for her auburn hair. Just down the road on Bräunerstrasse is the more than 200-year-old Rudolf Scheer & Söhne, a seventh-generation imperial court purveyor of the

finest leather shoes. The oldest shoe manufacturer in Europe today still creates all the classic shoe choices – from wingtips to ankle boots – with prices starting at HK\$50,000 for a pair of handsome handmade shoes. "The manufacture of each single pair requires at least 60 hours – we are convinced that to be good to one's feet is to be good to oneself," says Markus Scheer, the generation running the company.

Also in the locale, on Kärntner Strasse, are the crystal makers Lobmeyr. Founded in 1823 by Josef Lobmeyr Snr, the family business created select and unrepeatable crystal chandeliers, vases and decorative pieces for the royal family as the official purveyors. Ludwig, the next generation, was talented in design and forged a close relationship with the creative movement in Vienna at the time.

"Rudolph, the son of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, wrote a letter to his brother-in-law saying that he went to some trouble finding a suitable gift for the Belgian king's 50th – and that Lobmeyr crystal would be most suitable", tells Leonid Rath, the managing partner at Lobmeyr. And this is the Lobmeyr allure as Rath says: "Customers are looking for real quality and exclusive fine" →

LEFT

For around 200 years, Scheer and Söhne has made high-quality bespoke footwear. Now they are modernising.

RIGHT

Anderson & Sheppard's training school is at Fouberts Place in the city of Westminster, London.

BOTTOM RIGHT

Some radical designs by Lobmeyr have become part of important design collections hosted by institutions like MOMA in New York.



SVENSKT TENN CREATE CONTEMPORARY PRODUCTS FOR A MARKET INTERESTED IN A REGAL CONNECTION



Köchert made a number of diamond stars for Austrian royalty, including 10 pointed stars with pearls at the centre.



crafted and well-designed products, accompanying them for a lifetime.”

In Sweden, the Royal Warrants of Appointment, granted by the king and queen, extend to 130 purveyors and work differently from Austria. These royal appointees are entitled to display the royal coat of arms with the motto “*Kunglig Hovleverantör*” underneath. Although utilising the old world techniques and skills, they have modernised their offering, opening up to a contemporary audience. Skultuna, founded in 1607 by King Karl IX, has done exactly that with their brass legacy. After looking for a location for a brass foundry, the king appointed Skultuna as the official brass chandelier makers to the royal family and later to the sharpened-taste public. And so the legacy of monarchy continues. The last porcelain factory in Sweden and carrier of the royal coat of arms, Gustavsbergs Porslinsfabrik, was established in 1825. “We delivered our refined chinaware to the royal family at the Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel’s wedding. And we are also proud to say that Prince Carl Philip is collaborating with the design team on a number of projects,” says Christina Strandberg, CEO of Gustavsbergs Porslinsfabrik.

Then there is the décor brand Svenskt Tenn, nearly a century old, that proudly carries the royal coat of arms yet today create contemporary products for a market interested in a regal connection but not only in traditional handmade crafts.



WHERE TO GO

SHOP FOR WORTHY AND IMPRESSIVE GOODS WITH EXCLUSIVE ROYAL WARRANTS:

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

The city's first district, with recent addition of the luxury Golden Quarter, has a collection of the finest court purveyors and the latest in luxury brands. Stay at the new Park Hyatt Vienna within walking distance to all these stores.

vienna.park.hyatt.com

LONDON, BRITAIN

In and around the famed Mayfair Burlington Arcade are some of the most famed royal appointed brands. From suits to the finest jewellers, the area caters for all things regal. Spend the night at Mayfair's Brown's Hotel with its royal appointee exclusive guide from its head concierge.

roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/browns-hotel

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

In the Norrmalm area of the city is where many of the reputable brands with royal warranty are located. Sleep on one of the islands at Hotel Skeppsholmen and use the hotel's bikes on a private royal shopping trip around the inner city.

hotelskeppsholmen.se

In Britain, the Royal Warrants of Appointment are issued for the last few centuries to those supplying goods to the royal court and royal personages – accompanied by the official prestigious seal. On Savile Row in London is where Anderson & Sheppard has since 1906 been dressing the finest men under the seal of the Prince of Wales. With their bespoke suits starting at HK\$30,000, the 100 years of expertise and royal bond is what you're paying for.

"The trends were all towards better quality and personalisation, archives had begun to become fashionable again, and groups like LVMH, Richemont and Kering had started to communicate on their brands' heritage and savoir faire", says Anda Rowland, owner of Anderson & Sheppard.

Nearby on Albemarle Street is the famed English jeweller Garrard, with more than 275 years of carrying royal heirloom love stories – starting in 1840 when Prince Albert commissioned the house to create a wedding brooch for his future wife, Queen Victoria of England. The House of Garrard is also where the Prince of Wales selected the ring worn by Lady Diana and, most recently, worn by Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, upon her engagement. And so regal trumps the high street any day. [T](#)



PHOTOS: PETER RIGAUD, CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES, MARTIN STÖBICH