

## DESIGNERPROFILE

### Roberto Coin

combines creative passion with a sportsman's strive for excellence.

By Lorraine DePasque

# AN ARTIST'S SOUL, AN ATHLETE'S HEART

**D**ashingly dressed, meticulously groomed and exuding a matter-of-fact machismo, Roberto Coin is one of those lucky guys who likely could do well in life simply based on his looks and demeanor alone. Such a notion appalls him.

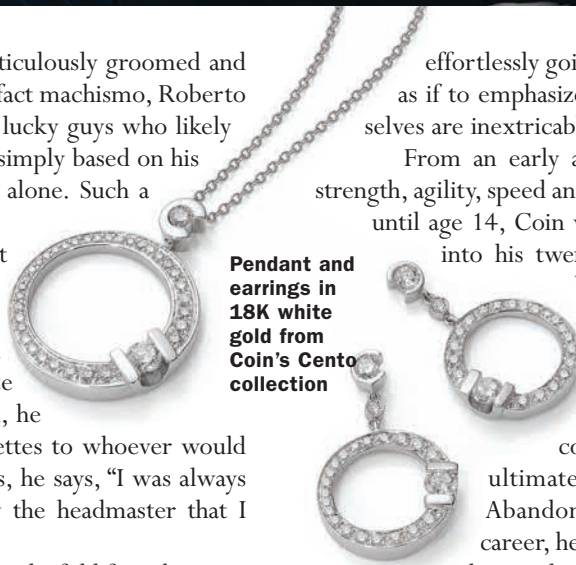
The fact is that this internationally acclaimed master jeweler has been working since he was a teenager. As a youngster in European boarding schools, although not quite employed in the true sense of the word, he was quite entrepreneurial, selling cigarettes to whoever would buy them. Recalling those boyhood days, he says, "I was always so nervous that I would get caught by the headmaster that I started smoking myself!"

Coin often jokes as he speaks of his colorful life and career,

effortlessly going back and forth between the two, as if to emphasize that his personal and professional selves are inextricably intertwined.

From an early age, he displayed physical skills of strength, agility, speed and endurance. From pre-adolescence until age 14, Coin was a competitive runner; from 15 into his twenties, a formidable fencer; and in between, an accomplished gymnast who competed at the Youth Olympic Games in Rome.

Yet marathons, fencing tournaments and gymnastic competitions were not what fate ultimately had in store for Coin. Abandoning the possibility of a sports career, he began to seek out the challenges of the jewelry arena.



Pendant and earrings in 18K white gold from Coin's Cento collection

A surprising choice? Roberto Coin doesn't think so. Flashing that trademark deep-from-within grin, he says, "Even though I never fenced after the age of 23, I liked the elegance of it and the way it challenged my mind"—two characteristics that speak to the allure of making quality jewelry. Today, as one of the leading luxury Italian brands—with 10 boutiques worldwide and merchandise sold in hundreds of fine jewelry stores—he's recognized for fashioning metals, gems and other beautiful materials into creative designs that appeal to the wearer's sense of elegance and style as well as her emotions.

His signature Appassionato collection put him on the map in the U.S., alluring women with its tactile woven gold textures. "Appassionato is so classic that it will continue for many years to come," he says, "especially this year, when such traditional design will be very important, particularly in long chains and earrings."

Throughout 2010, there will be many long chains and earrings added to the Cento collection, based on the jeweler's proprietary Cento cut: a round brilliant diamond with 100 facets, nearly double the number found in most round brilliant diamonds. The Cento diamond also takes twice as long to cut and polish by hand than a traditional round brilliant stone.

While classics such as Appassionato and Cento excite him and continue to allure customers, Coin really lights up when discussing his newest collection, by far the edgiest of the three: Capri Plus. With stone shades inspired by the beautiful sunsets of Italy's legendary island of Capri, the collection includes bold pastel-hued semiprecious gems, colored sapphires, white and brown diamonds and different colors of 18K gold, including pink and peach. Most recently, Coin has introduced pieces in ebony wood and blackened sterling silver. Combining materials is just the beginning, he says, because this year, the fashion trend is all about mixing and matching. "It's the art of combining

different designs together to create a unique style. So there are a lot of new rings and earrings that mix well together." In typical Italian style, Capri Plus bangles, pendants, rings and earrings exhibit fashion without flash.

On the topic of fashion, supermodel Christy Turlington Burns continues as the face of the Roberto Coin brand, not only because of her status in the fashion world, but also because her own activism is in sync with Coin's view on giving back. The A-list celebrity is featured in the company's cause marketing campaign that supports CARE, a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty.

In our current popular culture, when many publicity seekers are pulling questionable stunts to grab their 15 minutes of fame, Roberto Coin is on the opposite end of the spectrum. He's proof that real fame is based on a lifetime of hard work, talent, achievement and giving. Roberto Coin—the man and the jewelry—grabs your attention now and will hold it for years to come. ♦



**Roberto Coin with brand ambassador Christy Turlington Burns and Peter Webster, president and co-founder of Roberto Coin USA**



**Bangles from the Capri Plus collection in 18K yellow, white or peach gold, ebony wood, diamonds, precious and semiprecious gems**