



SALON 94



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WHAT A REAL GEM



Clockwise, from top left: Sidney Garber working at his store in Chicago, 1963; Brooke Neidich in her store on Madison Avenue, with a work by David Benjamin Sherry; a Sidney Garber gold and diamond Harlequin bracelet.

HEART OF GOLD

Brooke Neidich is turning her father's jewelry company into a gold mine—and giving away the profits. *Alix Browne* reports.

LAST NOVEMBER, AT A GALA DINNER at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York, the woman seated to my left and the one seated to my right were both wearing feathery drop earrings from the Chicago jeweler Sidney Garber. Coincidence? Hardly. And no doubt there were several more pairs just like them glittering among the other 800 guests who had gathered to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Child Mind Institute, an organization committed to treating childhood psychiatric and learning disorders. "Brooke gave me some pieces to wear during Fashion Week," Alina Cho, a former CNN correspondent, told me. Cho couldn't bear to give the earrings back—so she bought them.

"Brooke" is Brooke Garber Neidich, who cofounded the Child Mind Institute with the psychiatrist Harold S. Koplewicz and who that night was presenting an award to her close friend Hillary Rodham Clinton. Though unassuming in every way, save the amount of jewelry she tends to have on her person at any given moment, Neidich is a powerhouse in New York cultural, political, and philanthropic circles (she is also the co-chair of the Whitney Museum board). She grew up working in her father's Michigan Avenue jewelry store, where her responsibilities included windowing the display cases. When Garber died in 2008, Neidich had the choice to close the business or make a go of it. Not having the heart to lay off the staff, she chose the latter. "I also thought, If I close this business, where am I going to get jewelry?" she says, only half-joking.

These days, Neidich doesn't even have to fly to Chicago to get her fix: Last fall, she redoubled her commitment to the company her father founded in 1946 when she opened a Sidney Garber store on New York's Madison Avenue. She is the first to admit she had no idea what she was getting herself into. "I knew what I didn't know, and what I didn't know was how to run a business," she says. As a teenager, she often traveled with her father to Europe on buying trips and, when he was older, staged a few successful trunk shows, but her apprenticeship pretty much stopped there. Neidich's husband, Daniel, a real estate investor, refrained from getting involved. "When I tried to talk to him about it, he'd say, 'Oh, please,