

WATCHPRO

BRITAIN'S MOST INFLUENTIAL WATCH TITLE

MY TOP 10 WATCHES:

Author and journalist
Michael Clerizo on his
favourite timekeepers



THE BIG INTERVIEW

Paul Sheeran of Paul
Sheeran Jewellers
on Dublin's changing
watch scene

MASTER OF MATERIALS

Rado's Captain Cook High-Tech Ceramic Skeleton



SWISS + MADE

The new Bear Grylls 3730 Mountain Series from Luminox!

On May 26th, 1998, at 07:22am Bear Grylls reached the peak of Mount Everest, becoming one of the youngest climbers to step foot on the roof of the world. Luminox is celebrating 25 years of its brand ambassador's earliest, great achievement which serves as **the perfect inspiration to launch the new 3730 Mountain Series in collaboration with the man himself.**

With 4 new watches, one of which is a limited edition, **the new Bear Grylls 3730 Mountain Series is designed to withstand a climb to the top of Earth's highest peak or a dive to 200m below sea level.** Crafted with Luminox's cutting-edge lighting system, they all incorporate Luminox Light Technology (LLT), to ensure every timepiece is visible in any light condition for up to 25 years.



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The Luminox Bear Grylls 3730 Mountain Series has the following special features:

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Bear Grylls' signature is inscribed on the case back and his motto 'Never Give Up' adorns the inner ring **to be a permanent source of motivation!**

The watch face is sapphire crystal with an anti-reflective coating, for an extremely robust and instantly readable watch



Bear Grylls 3730 Mountain Series **Limited Edition**

The limited-edition version boasts a striking white dial, deep blue strap, and a red crown to represent the colours of the Nepalese flag. The case back is decorated with Mount Everest in relief and the outer ring is marked with "8848M" – the altitude of Mt Everest.

But that's not all. The Bear Grylls' limited edition **includes a removable bull bar**, designed to further protect the crystal, perfect for the rugged adventurer. The bull bar will also be **available to purchase separately** as an accessory for any other watch in the collection.

Luminox will launch **800 pieces worldwide of the Bear Grylls Limited Edition Mountain Timepiece.**



RRP. £559



E&OE.

For further information about Luminox collections, please contact:
Burton McCall | Email: sales@bml-watches.com | Tel: **0116 234 4656**



BUSINESS AS USUAL?

Rolex's announcement on 24 August about the brand buying Bucherer was certainly a watch-world-shattering moment, but mainly because – like everything the Crown does – it came without any hints, warnings, or fanfare. A simple statement in an unassuming email from Geneva HQ stated the bare facts in a typical fuss-free, 'move on, nothing to see here' fashion.

As the email came at 4.25pm UK time, there was barely an hour to discuss the news with colleagues before home time, and trying to explain how monumental the move was to my family and friends simply fell on deaf ears. Was Rolex going to carry on making watches? Yes. Would they still be all but impossible to buy? Yes. And would the 'Exhibition Only' models still be available to visit at myriad high-street outlets? Yes. The stock response to my 'biggest story in a decade'? 'Meh!'

And, in the cold light of day, perhaps the meh! reaction is the right one. Is becoming a retailer not simply the next – possibly the final – step in the process of verticalisation that began in the 1990s and Noughties when CEO Patrick Heiniger consolidated Rolex's entire business from 27 sites into four cutting-edge facilities? At this time, Mr Heiniger initiated an investment programme that saw the brand rationalise its supplier network and bring production in-house. All located in Switzerland, this led to impressive cost efficiencies and played a pivotal role in elevating the quality of contemporary Rolex watches.

The Rolex shopping spree involved the brand buying case makers Genex and bracelet makers Gay Frères in 1998, followed by dial maker Beyeler, crown supplier Boninchi, and case and bracelet finishers Virex et Joli Poli. And, in 2004, the House of Wilsdorf became the proud owner of a movement maker once owned by the Borel family. Sister brand Tudor has followed suit, with a company spokesman telling the *Telegraph* at the opening of its Kenissi manufacture that the majority of its suppliers are based in Le Locle and are today 100% owned by the brand.

But despite the potential horological domination by Rolex and Tudor, has consumer choice really suffered? We seem to have a greater array of interesting watches at all price points today than ever before – particularly from independents and microbrands. The range of bracelets and dials on offer is more exciting and accessible now than at any time in the past and the challenge to design new calibres is at its strongest in decades. Perhaps if we notice Rolex's involvement in frontline retail at all moving forward, it will simply be to maintain standards and to encourage others to do likewise?



Tracey Llewellyn
EDITOR, WATCHPRO

COVER PROMOTION COURTESY OF RADO

One of horology's most recognisable and loved diving watch families, the Rado Captain Cook takes on a new guise with the High-Tech Ceramic Skeleton. Read all about the new model on page 12.

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Some of the best timepieces launched in July.

BRITAIN'S TOURIST TAX FORCES VISITORS TO CUT SPENDING

A report from the New West End Company, which represents around 600 businesses in London, has found that spending in the capital by tourists this summer is falling as awareness grows that they cannot reclaim VAT on their purchases.

Despite an increase for incoming tourists from the United States of 17% in the three months to June, spending by American visitors in the West End was down by 1% compared to 2019. The picture is even worse for visitors from the Arab states where tourism rose by 7% in the second quarter, but spending dropped by 17% from the same period in 2019.

UK retailers including Watches of Switzerland, Berry's, Harrods and Selfridges have been lobbying the government to reinstate VAT rebates, which were withdrawn as part of the Brexit agreement that came into force in February 2020. Retailers argue that tourists, and even British customers, are diverting their spending to Continental Europe.

According to the report, spending by Americans in France is up by 183% in Q2 2023 compared to 2019 levels, and up by 174% in Spain. Similarly, spend from GCC visitors is up by 118% in France and by 112% in Italy.

"It's plain to see that more tourists are becoming aware of the tax-free shopping issue and choosing to



77%

Percentage of visitors to the West End who would spend more if they could claim back VAT.

spend their money in European cities other than London. While it's reassuring that our capital city hasn't lost its appeal when it comes to attracting overseas visitors, the widening gap between footfall and spend in Q2 should set alarm bells ringing in Westminster," says Dee Corsi, CEO of New West End Company. "We're hopeful that the Treasury will make the right decision after hearing the evidence from businesses directly impacted by this 'tourist tax'."

A separate survey by the New West End Company reveals that consumer sentiment on tax-free shopping is crystallising with 77% of international visitors to the West End saying they would spend more if they were able to claim back the VAT on their shopping. Almost three-quarters said they would be more likely to return to the UK if VAT-free shopping was reintroduced.

"The Government continues to insist that scrapping the tourist tax will cost the UK money but that's simply not the case. All the evidence indicates that, far from a cost to the Exchequer, reintroducing tax-free shopping would have a net positive receipt to the Treasury of at least £350 million," Ms Corsi concludes.

DAYTONA VALUES UP BY 10,000%

According to independent research by Tim Harrison, co-founder and watch expert at watch retailer Watch Pilot, the five vintage watches with the largest increase in value since the year they were launched are the Rolex Daytona (increase of 9,639%), Rolex Submariner (increase of 3,586%), Audemars Piguet Royal Oak (increase of 2,456%), Patek Philippe Nautilus (increase of 1,901%) and Heuer Autavia (increase of 1,521%).

GAL GADOT HAS BEEN SPOTTED WEARING A HUBLOT BIG BANG E GEN3 BLACK MAGIC WATCH IN NETFLIX MOVIE HEART OF STONE.



TISSOT'S PRX GOES DISCO
 Tissot has added a new model to its fabulous PRX range in the form of a gold-PVD 35mm Powermatic 80. Powerful, robust and unashamedly Seventies in outlook, the stunning automatic watch is on sale now, priced at £745.



TOM BRADY ❤️'S BIRMINGHAM CITY FC

Seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady jetted into the UK in August to watch Birmingham City – the football club he has invested in – win their first game of the season. He was wearing one of the first Rolex Day-Date Emoji watches to be seen in the wild.



“A COLLECTOR WANTS TO LOOK AT AND COMPARE DIFFERENT WATCHES. THAT’S WHY THEY LIKE – AND THAT’S WHY I LIKE – MULTIBRAND STORES.”

**GUIDO TERRENI,
 PARMIGIANI CEO**



£2.3 billion

Harrods sales shot up by 47% to £2.3 billion in its first full year with doors open following the pandemic. In the financial year ended January 28, 2023, the Knightsbridge institution’s gross transaction value hit record levels. Turnover rose by 43% to £832 million. Operating profit almost trebled in the financial year from £55.5 million in FY22 to £158 million in FY23. Harrods stated: “The increase in turnover reflected the store opening for the full year... and a strong recovery in trade as the impact of the pandemic subsided.”

EBAY'S COLLECTION OF ANNIVERSARY WATCHES

This year is a particularly rich one for watch anniversaries. Omega's Seamaster is 75, the Rolex Submariner and Explorer are both 70 years, while the Daytona is 60, as is the Heuer Carrera.

In honour of the impact these timepieces continue to have, eBay has curated a special Quinquennial Collection featuring watches celebrating their 50th, 60th, 70th, and 75th anniversaries.

"The enduring charm of classic designs and heritage pieces from titans like Omega, Rolex, and Heuer continue to draw both seasoned collectors and budding enthusiasts alike, and their milestone anniversaries are a perfect moment to celebrate their rich history," says Keith Metcalfe, director of luxury for Europe at eBay.

"Over the past year, we have noticed an increasing number of individuals turning to eBay to look for these pre-loved timepieces so our Quinquennial Collection is a tribute to these icons that continue to remain popular in their golden years," he adds.

All of the watches in eBay's celebratory Quinquennial Collection are backed by eBay's Authenticity Guarantee programme. Anniversary



- watches featured in the curated collection include:
- * An Omega Seamaster 300 Limited Edition James Bond Casino Royale
 - * A Rolex Submariner 16613 Steel and Gold
 - * A Rolex Explorer Black 214270 39mm
 - * A TAG Heuer Carrera CBN2A1B 44mm Black

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PRESTONS JOINS THE ROLEX CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED PROGRAMME

Prestons has become the first family-owned independent in the UK to join the Rolex CPO programme through its showrooms in Guildford, Surrey, and Wilmslow, Cheshire. Rolex unveiled its official programme in December 2022, with Bucherer its first partner in Europe and the US. Watches of Switzerland joined the programme with select stores in America in July this year and its UK network of Rolex doors will start CPO in the autumn.

“As an authorised Rolex retailer, we are delighted to offer the new Rolex Certified Pre-Owned programme through our stores and via our website at prestonsdiamonds.co.uk. Our buying team, has been carefully selecting Rolex watches from our customers who have looked to sell or part exchange their watch at Prestons. Now we are ready to offer this collection with all the benefits you would expect and complete assurance as to provenance and condition,” says Prestons’ managing director Karl Massey.



WATCHES OF SWITZERLAND GROUP SALES DROP BY 8%

Watches of Switzerland Group has reported an 8% drop in sales in the UK and Europe. The fall, over 13 weeks to July 30, was a year-on-year comparison with the same quarter last year, when the company had access to a higher allocation of watches compared to this year.

CFO Anders Romberg said average transaction values rose by around 9% in the quarter. He suggested that 3% of that rise was down to price rises by the brands, and the remaining 6% was due to customers buying more expensive models. Group CEO Brian Duffy said customer demand remains strong on both sides of the Atlantic.

The report showed that Group revenue came in at £382 million for the quarter to the end of July, which was down 1% at constant currency and down 2% at reported rates. Watch sales dipped by 2% to £336 million, representing 88% of revenue. Jewellery sales dropped by 15% year-on-year and ecommerce sales were down by 2%.

The US market outperformed the UK and Europe, with 10% growth at constant currency delivering revenue of £163 million in the quarter.

Looking ahead, the group is continuing its rollout of monobrand watch showrooms in Europe and the US with an additional 20 boutiques in the pipeline.

A. LANGE & SÖHNE AND HARRODS BRING A TASTE OF GENEVA’S WATCHES AND WONDERS 2023 TO LONDON

Until September 24, Harrods is hosting a showcase of A. Lange & Söhne’s new 2023 watches that will include a selection of rarely-seen masterpieces such as the latest Odysseus Chronograph, which launched at Watches and Wonders in March.

Visitors to the stores Fine Watches department will see a giant replica of the watch, smaller than the five metre high version seen in Geneva, but a great way to see the details of the dial and exhibition caseback that exposes the automatic L156.1 movement. Other models from the Oysseus steel sports watch family are also on show

along with a new Zeitwerk reference, the second generation of a timekeeper A. Lange & Söhne describes as a digital watch with a mechanical heart. And fans of the Lange 1 will not be disappointed with a chance to see the recently redesigned model.

“As a watch manufacture always striving for excellence and perfection, we are proud to present our masterpieces with Harrods,” says Lange CEO Wilhelm Schmid. “This exclusive exhibition marks yet another significant milestone in our long-standing partnership and highlights our joint commitment to the highest watchmaking art.”



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BRITISH WATCHMAKING FINDS ITS TIME



The Alliance of British Watch and Clock Makers has announced its first showcase for member artisans and manufacturers. Aptly named British Watchmakers' Day, the event will be – as its name suggests – for one day only on Saturday 9 March 2024 at Lindley Hall (Royal Horticultural Halls) in Westminster, London.

Among the British brands showcasing their wares are: Accurist, Alkin, Arken, Backes & Strauss, Beaucroft, Brooklands, Christopher Ward, Clemence, Duckworth Prestex, Elliot Brown, Escudo, Farer, Fears, Great British Watch Company, Helicon, IOTA, Isotope, MHD, Mr. Jones, Nomadic, Omologato, Pinion, Pompeak, Roger W. Smith, Schofield, Shoreham, Sidereus, Studio Underdog, Tesouro, Vertex, William Wood and Zero West.

A highlight of the event will be the Special Edition watches created by exhibiting brands. The collectors' issues will be available to buy exclusively at British Watchmakers' Day. With most exhibitors already committed to creating Special Editions, organisers say that there will be something "perfect for every wrist and wallet size – a demonstration of just how far the British watch sector has come along in recent years."

Roger Smith, whose Pocket Watch Number Two sold at Phillips New York for \$4.9m this June, is one of the watchmakers that will be taking part and has agreed to make a Series One watch for the event. Speaking of the event Mr Smith, who is chairman of the Alliance says: "My hope is that British Watchmakers' Day will become an annual event as we try to raise awareness of our sector around the world.

"I wanted to make clear just how much this event means to me and that's why I've committed to build one of my own watches especially for the event".

HKTDC'S HONG KONG CLOCK & WATCH FAIR RETURNS 5-9 SEPTEMBER

HKTDC's Hong Kong Clock & Watch Fair will return to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center to stake its claim as Asia's go-to destination for watch and clock enthusiasts and industry professionals.



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RADO'S MATERIAL WORLD

One of horology's most recognisable and loved diving watch families, Rado's Captain Cook takes on a new guise this year with the High-Tech Ceramic Skeleton, showcasing the pure artistry of Calibre R808.

There is no question that Rado's Captain Cook watches are some of the most identifiable timepieces in the world today. One of the most comprehensive and sought-after collections that the brand offers, the watch debuted in 1962 and was made through to 1968. Then, for almost 50 years, it disappeared from Rado's catalogue, remaining a collectors' favourite until 2017 when the company introduced a reproduction of the legendary 37mm steel dive watch, complete with revolving anchor emblem at 12 o'clock and red numerals on the date wheel.

While Rado has become well-known for its development and use of ceramic and other ground-breaking materials, the reissue of the Captain Cook took the watch industry by storm

and the model became one of the biggest hits of the year. But Rado being Rado there was no resting on laurels and, instead of basking in the glory of the reissue, work began on subsequent iterations of the watch – each proving to be as successful as the first.

Six years on and the latest version – the Captain Cook High-Tech Ceramic Skeleton – has shown itself to be another huge hit. Larger than 2017’s timepiece, the monobloc-design watch is 43mm in diameter and forgoes a date function in order to fully showcase the most recent addition to Rado’s line-up of mechanical movements: the Calibre R808. A stylish addition to the Captain Cook series, the R808 is part of Rado’s “Art of Skeletonisation” collection and has been produced with a variety of finishes, each one slightly different to the others.


Pegged as an accessory for those with an adventurous spirit, the Captain Cook High-Tech Ceramic Skeleton has a plasma high-tech ceramic casing and matching bracelet with the strength and durability that Rado is known for. In fact, plasma high-tech ceramic is five times harder than stainless steel and differs from other high-tech ceramics in that it is subjected to 20,000 degree Celsius heat – four times greater than the surface of the sun – causing its colour to change to a deep anthracite metallic shade, which contrasts with the bracelet’s middle links that are a much lighter shade.

Taking the tech look to new heights, the watch face has been cut away to reveal the inner workings, while the high-tech ceramic bezel surrounding the dial opening takes on the same matte grey

“THIS CAPTAIN COOK IS AT ONCE FAMILIAR BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, BRINGS A HOST OF TWISTS AND FRESH MATERIALS THAT TURN THE WATCH INTO A NEW BEAST.”

appearance as the bracelet’s outer links. In stark contrast to this are the fiery rose-gold-coloured markings on the brushed bezel insert, a colour repeated under the smoky, grey-tinted, box sapphire-crystal on the timepiece’s chapter ring, Super-LumiNova-treated hands and indices and winding crown. The only additional adornments dial-side are the Rado logo and water-resistance indication (300 metres), plus the signature oscillating anchor set against a deep crimson background.

Leaving no hiding place for the construction and finishing of the mechanical movement, the titanium caseback of the watch is equipped with a clear sapphire-crystal insert that offers a full view of the self-winding, tone-on-tone R808 skeleton calibre including the minute-wheel bridge.

Stylish and contemporary, Rado’s latest Captain Cook is at once strongly familiar but, at the same time, brings a host of twists and fresh materials that turn a utilitarian tool watch into a completely different beast that will be sure to attract a whole new audience to the 60-year-old timepiece. Available now, the watch is priced at £4,150. 



Left:
The Captain Cook’s signature anchor.
Above:
The elegant profile of the Captain Cook.

WHY DID ROLEX BUY BUCHERER AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

With the watch world still reeling from the news that Rolex is about to become a retail operator, Rob Corder ponders the two questions on every industry insider's lips.

Early evening in Europe on Thursday 24 August, an email dropped into inboxes around the world from Rolex HQ – something of a surprise on its own, but the message within rocked the industry as the Crown announced that, because of a long and shared history and to ensure continued Swiss ownership, Rolex was buying Bucherer. The press release was clear that the watch retailer will keep its name and continue to operate independently, but it raised two simple questions that had every Rolex retailer across the globe shuddering at the thought of what will come next.

First, the why. Rolex says that it bought Bucherer because its owner, Jörg Bucherer, having no direct descendants to pass it down to, had decided to sell. That is not a complete surprise to industry insiders. But why Rolex? “To preserve the long-standing partnership between the two companies and perpetuate their shared history,” we are told.

Why not sell to another retail group with the financial muscle of, say, Watches of Switzerland Group (currently valued at £1.7 billion, and with deep ties into financial markets if additional capital ever needed to be raised)? Huge Asian retail groups

like The Hour Glass in Singapore or Chow Tai Fook in Hong Kong would have been options, or Ahmed Seddiqi out of Dubai. All three could surely have met any asking price?

LVMH bought Tiffany for \$16 billion. Was Bucherer next on the habitually acquisitive empire's shopping list? Private equity firms like Apollo Global Management, once owner of Watches of Switzerland Group, or CVC Capital Partners, current owner of Breitling, may have been interested. I suspect more than one of these would have attempted to make this deal.

Bucherer, however, is still one of the biggest luxury watch retailers in the world with 15 showrooms in Switzerland, over 30 stores in the United States, five in Germany, five in the UK and some of the most prestigious properties in France, Austria and Denmark. In total, Bucherer has over 100 points of sale worldwide, half of which sell Rolex and 48 have Tudor.

However, Rolex should be taken at its word. Its relationship with Bucherer through their shared 90 years of history together as Swiss-based organisations who unquestioningly trust each other is likely to have been the deciding factor. This is a negotiation

that had to be contained within a very small group of individuals.

The second question has to be, what next? This is where the secrecy not only around this deal, but around Rolex itself, the privately-owned Bucherer, and the Swiss in general, makes it impossible to know. We can only speculate.

“Bucherer will keep its name and continue to independently run its business. The Group’s management team will remain unchanged,” Rolex states. It would be naive to imagine this will be entirely true. Of course Bucherer will have its biggest strategic decisions parsed by Rolex, which is now in the business of retailing for the first time, aside from one store in Geneva.

Moving forward, the watch world continue to spin on its axis. Every Bucherer store will continue to open as usual, offering watches from Patek Philippe, Cartier, Omega, Breitling, TAG Heuer and myriad other brands that are direct rivals to Rolex and Tudor. Likewise, every authorised dealer of Rolex and Tudor will be trading as usual. Over time, however, there is potential for this deal to be earth-shattering for the industry.

The apocalyptic version of the future would see Rolex slowly transition its entire global sales into Bucherer, effectively selling direct to consumers and cutting hundreds of authorised dealers world-wide out of the Rolex market.

The big news broke five minutes before the closing bell of the London Stock Exchange, but the following day saw the share price of Watches of Switzerland Group fall by 20%. Of course, this has now recovered, but for a night or two almost every luxury watch retailer in the world that carries Rolex and Tudor must have been losing sleep.

Rolex mentioned that the deal has to be approved by competition authorities; presumably COMCO in Switzerland since this is an entirely private transaction that won’t be scrutinised by any financial market regulator. Keeping Bucherer’s ownership in Swiss hands will surely make this a rubber-stamping exercise.

A statement from Watches of Switzerland Group issued to the London Stock Exchange the day after the announcement gave the news that every Rolex authorised dealer around the world wanted to hear when it said: “This is not a strategic move into retail by Rolex. There will be no operational involvement by Rolex in the Bucherer business.”



“THE WATCH WORLD WILL CONTINUE TO SPIN ON ITS AXIS. EVERY BUCHERER STORE WILL CONTINUE TO OPEN. AND EVERY ROLEX AND TUDOR AD WILL BE TRADING AS USUAL.”

As a publicly-traded company, Watches of Switzerland has to choose its words carefully and not overstate what it knows, but in this instance, it went so far as to say its statement was “reviewed and confirmed by the highest level of Rolex management at Rolex HQ in Geneva and locally in the UK and US”.

Ultimately, Rolex can do what it likes with Bucherer, but it is in no position to replace hundreds of ADs across the world, certainly not in the near term. Might it favour Bucherer with better allocations of watches? Again, unlikely, because this would be open to legal challenge since there are contracts between Rolex and its retail partners. My hunch is that, once the coming weeks of hysteria have died down, very little will change.

The problem is that it could very well change in the years to come, but that is a risk everybody that has supped with Rolex has been running for decades. ●



SPORT AUTO 40

For Genevan watchmaking house Laurent Ferrier, there is an element of *verité* establishing a matchless connection to the sporting theme of its latest watch.

All watch brands crave authenticity, ensuring that their diving watches are collaborations with genuine submariners or their pilots' watches were created with real aviators.

For Laurent Ferrier, the eponymous co-founder is a master watchmaker who, with co-founder François Servanin, competed in the 24 Hours of Le Mans – motorsport's most gruelling challenge. The Sport Auto 40 watch is thus a true blueblood.

Placing third in the overall rankings in the 47th edition of the race held in 1979, in the legendary Porsche 935 Turbo, the team achieved exceptional results for a complement of amateur drivers – among 60 cars on the starting line. Regarding provenance, then,

Above:
The Porsche 935 Turbo that Laurent Ferrier and François Servanin competed in.

Right:
The stunning Sport Auto 40 that pays tribute to the great adventure.

there can be no greater example of *pur sang* than that which defines the limited-edition Série Atelier collection, the essence of the brand's history. Laurent Ferrier has embodied this passion for motor racing in the newest edition of the Sport Auto 40.

Its dial will speak to motorsport fans, as each detail makes reference to the race and the vehicle that inspired this tribute. Its intention is to provide the wearer with the sensation of reliving the unique atmosphere of the greatest motor race in the world.

A prime example of the sport/dress genre which has dominated wearable *haute horlogerie* for a half-century, the Sport Auto is able to move from rigorous activity to formality, from pleasure to business, with equal aplomb. Laurent Ferrier upped the

ante by employing titanium rather than steel in its construction, increasing the watch's durability while lowering its weight.

For the new edition of the Sport Auto, Laurent Ferrier looked to the Porsche 935 Turbo No. 40, using the colours of this legendary racing car to provide the character of the dial. The team's Porsche 935 had been entered in the 1979 event to allow drivers Ferrier, Servanin and François Trisconi to "have fun", simply by placing as high as possible. To the delight (and surprise) of all, the trio not only placed third, they also won second place in Group V, while Servanin was named the best French driver.

As is the signature look, of the Laurent Ferrier Sport Auto collection, Sport Auto 40 is curvaceous, reflecting the aerodynamic lines of racing cars and reinforced by its domed sapphire crystal. Beneath it are the bold colours of the 1979 Porsche No. 40, a gradient viridian green dial with opaline finish and semi-glossy lacquer.

Accenting the green is a fine-line fuchsia cross in the middle, which also surrounds the chamfered date window at 3 o'clock. The minute track is coloured in a complementary green to match the dial's centre, while orange Super-LumiNova on the white gold indices and hands complete the homage to the vehicle. The eagle-eyed will appreciate the tone-on-tone raised "40" on the white small seconds dial at 6 o'clock, recalling the numbered sticker on the racing car.

Its case and integral bracelet that ensures the fit and comfort of the Sport Auto 40's rounded,



tonneau-shaped 41.5mm diameter case, water resistant to 120 metres, are both made of grade 5 titanium. Further contrasts to delight the wearer are provided by the soft, circular satin-brushed bezel juxtaposed with the mirror-polished sides and vertical satin-brushed middle. This continues in the three-link bracelet, which features vertical satin-brushed surfaces highlighted by mirror-polished angled sides.

Powering the Sport Auto 40 is a worthy engine, the LF270.01 calibre – the brand's second self-winding movement with calendar. It features a micro-rotor self-winding system with oscillating weight in platinum, able to provide more than 72-hours of power reserve. This movement has been entirely designed, decorated, assembled and adjusted in Laurent Ferrier's workshops. The movement is revealed through the sapphire crystal case back, allowing the owner to savour the hand-finished bridges.

Priced at CHF51,000 (excluding tax), this newest Série Atelier model is limited to 40 numbered pieces, available exclusively on the www.laurentferrier.ch website.



MY TOP 10 WATCHES

MICHAEL CLERIZO

London-based American writer and journalist Michael Clerizo is the author of two books, *Masters of Contemporary Watchmaking* and *George Daniels: A Master Watchmaker and His Art*. From 2010 to 2023 he was a contributing editor at *The Wall Street Journal Magazine*. For three years he wrote a monthly column on watches for *WSJ's* 'Off-Duty' section. He has also written for numerous specialist watch magazines and websites. Here he picks his ten favourite timepieces and explains why he loves them so much.



“I tend to favour independent watchmakers because when you buy a watch from an independent you can reach out and actually touch the maker. You can talk to him or her and find out why they did things in a certain way. With big brands – and I mean this with respect as I love Rolex, Omega and Patek Philippe – you can’t sit and talk to someone like you can when you buy a watch from an independent.

George Daniels, Stephen Forsey, Roger Smith and everyone mentioned here would be able to tell you immediately why things were done and explain all the little quirks and unique touches. The other thing I love to see in a timepiece is a maker’s personal journey – especially ones that have chosen to do it their own way, no matter what tradition dictates.”

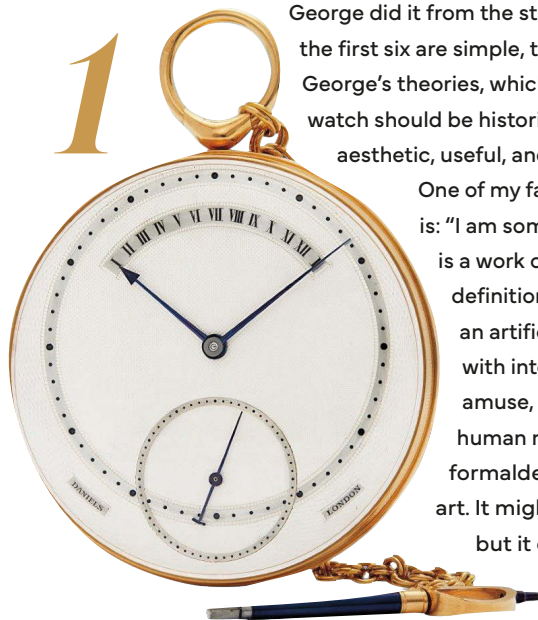
GEORGE DANIELS 'EDWARD HORNBY' TOURBILLON POCKET WATCH

While the Space Traveller is one of the pinnacles of George Daniels’ watch journey, the Edward Hornby, like all of his first six watches, represents the start of the journey – the most important watchmaking journey of the 20th century and one that has still not been equalled in the 21st century. It all started with a man deciding to make his own watches and ending up inventing a new escapement. That is remarkable and I don’t think it’s happened at any other point in watchmaking history since Breguet died in 1823.

The dial of the watch is simple and perfectly proportioned and I love the retrograde function. If you look at the movement, it is geometrically perfect. It’s just beautifully done and I think that level of simplicity and harmony is rarely achieved in horology but

George did it from the start. Although all of the first six are simple, they also prove one of George’s theories, which is that the mechanical watch should be historic, intellectual, technical, aesthetic, useful, and amusing.

One of my favourite quotes from him is: “I am sometimes asked if a watch is a work of art. It depends on your definition. To me a work of art is an artificially constructed object with integrity and the ability to amuse, intrigue and educate the human mind. Putting a cow in formaldehyde is not a work of art. It might intrigue and amuse, but it doesn’t educate.”



PHILIPPE DUFOUR DUALITY

Most collectors will talk about the Simplicity and the Grande Sonnerie when they come to Dufour, but for me it is always the Duality. What I love about this piece is that the inspiration for it was a 1930s' school watch from the Vallée de Joux. While everyone at the time was making tourbillons, Dufour had a desire to do something different and, based on the school watch, came up with the idea of using a differential.

When he was making the watch, he would regularly go to flea markets and buy old watchmaking tools. Often, he had no idea what they did but he would experiment and work it out or visit old watchmakers in the Vallée and ask them what the tools were used for.

He was born in the Vallée and is very much steeped in the culture of the place. When I asked him once where he would most like to go on vacation, he said there wasn't a place that he wanted to travel to but a time. He would love to go back to the Vallée in the middle of the 19th century and talk to the watchmakers and see how they did things. With the Duality, he did just that – he recreated a watch using old tools from the 1930s. And he did it by the sweat of his own brow. That shows an enormous amount of dedication and love for the craft and for mechanical watches. It's just extraordinary what he achieved.



3



VACHERON CONSTANTIN TOLEDO 'CIOCCOLATONE'

The Toledo was introduced in the 1950s and had a unique curved square case, which quickly earned it the nickname 'Cioccolatone' from Italian collectors. I come from a big Italian family and the name takes me back to the candy that was around during my childhood – particularly at Christmas.

The case seems to ooze from the centre of the dial and gives the impression of being soft and fluid. I like the combination of metal that looks like liquid and appears to be moving – almost like melting chocolate that could spread across your wrist. Like all good design, it defies time and is always in fashion.

4

GREUBEL FORSEY ARCHITECTURE 2022

Architecture is one of the key components of Greubel Forsey movements – in the best way, they have depth and they have dimension – you almost feel you could walk around them if they were at a larger scale. And this watch seems to me to be the pinnacle of Greubel Forsey architecture.

It looks like a city if you're gazing down on it. You see streets, street furniture and buildings. And it has all of the perfect Greubel Forsey finishing – the curved bridges look like real bridges, connecting parts of the city, like those that cross the Hudson River in New York or the canals in Venice, but on a much smaller scale.

If we go back to George and what he said about watches being historic, intellectual, technical, aesthetic, useful and amusing, it's all there in Greubel Forsey's Architecture.



KONSTANTIN CHAYKIN CINEMA WATCH

The Cinema watch is inspired by Eadweard Muybridge's 1878 animation *The Horse in Motion*. On the watch, the horse appears to gallop within an aperture at 6 o'clock using 12 black and white images on a disc that rotates in under a second when activated by a pusher. It is an incredible technical achievement, in addition to being an excellent timepiece.

I love it when a watch links to popular culture. So many claim to have a connection to film with a superficial 'oh look, we put a superhero on the dial', but this is really linked to the Genesis of moving pictures. I don't think anyone else has ever done it so well. This was one of his first watches, yet it was a real blockbuster to announce his arrival and to say, 'look what I am capable of doing'.



6



VIANNEY HALTER ANTIQUA

Vianney is a genius who describes himself as a "crazy French watchmaker". Evidence of that can be found in how he taught himself English – he watched every episode of *Star Trek* in French seven or eight times until he knew the lines by heart. When he knew the French dialogue he would switch to watching the English versions.

About 10 years ago, he told me he had read 800 science fiction novels – I didn't even know there were 800! When I asked him about the Antiqua, he said: "Travelling through time like in HG Wells *The Time Machine*, is a very difficult journey, so you would need a very tough watch." So that's how this watch came about.

For someone so involved with science fiction to be able to take that love and turn it into a watch, going against all the established rules, is remarkable. Like all of his work, it's highly personal. He may be a crazy French watchmaker, but he is one who creates incredible timepieces.

ROGER W. SMITH SERIES ONE

Here I am referring to the round Series One, not the rectangular version that he created very early on in his career. For me, these watches exhibit craftsmanship on a par with that of George Daniels and represent Roger proving that there is a future for British watchmaking that can exist at the same level as George.

If you look at Roger's watch hands, they're different to George's but they are just as elegant and just as beautiful with that very slim, tapered shape. And then there is the engine turning on the dial.

Now, Roger won't like me saying this, but I think he's a better engine turner than George and, in fact, George once told me that he thought Roger was better. Of course, we have to remember that Roger learned the skill from the master himself.

Again, the achievement of simplicity and elegance of look in this watch is supreme and all achieved with a great deal of complexity and multiple steps that give a depth. That's real fine luxury watchmaking. The movement is architectural with flat bevelling on the bridges, polishing and exceptional engraving. It's just a superb piece of work.

7



ITAY NOY PART TIME

Something I admire enormously is that Itay is, in large-part, self-taught. He's an original thinker and he comes up with very unusual designs, which you have to admire. And, one of the things I like about him the most, is he has a philosophical approach to time and he wants to get that into his watches – something I think he does very well with Part Time.

As you're looking at it, one half of the dial works in the daytime and the other half works in the night time, which first of all is quite an achievement mechanically speaking – it's as if there's two watches there – and then there's the philosophical idea that we experience and think about time differently, depending on whether it's day or night. This is something that we all experience but there aren't any watches that acknowledge and express that apart from his.

He has the artistic and intellectual ability to deliver and he does it all the time, not just with this one watch. But I think this is where he does it the best.



SVEND ANDERSEN KAMAR

Svend is a very creative watchmaker. Kamar – a version of the Arabic word *qamar*, meaning moon – is an homage to ancient cultures. The moon is not so important to us these days, but there was a time when it meant a lot to people and that's why he has made the moonphase display so big. There's always an enormous contrast between the colours of the dial and the moonphase, which is very dramatic.

On the jade dial version shown here (sold by Antiquorum in 2013), the 2 and the 10 are both smaller than the 6, giving the dial even more drama and dynamism – even to the parts of the dial that don't need it – and I think that's very impressive. And also the hands, as is often the case with Svend, they are his name, his signature and I like the way he marks the watch.

Svend is trying to reposition the moon and its importance in our lives as it was hundreds of years ago in many different cultures. I like all of the versions of this watch, but I love the simplicity and legibility of this model.



GARRICK NORFOLK

This is a deceptively simple watch with a large sub-seconds at 9 o'clock balanced by the brand logo between 3 and 6.

We've established that I love simplicity, and I like it even more when there is an interesting twist. This watch does it with the anchor-style counterweight on all three hands that draws you in and, at 12 o'clock, the hour and minute hands become one before gradually separating.

And the movement is fascinating. The bridges have a grid that resembles one on a globe, and feature straight lines, which we are not used to seeing. There's beautiful snailing on the barrel cover – a little touch that shows great skill. And of course, it's another British watch!

If you ask me to do this column again I'll name a few American pieces – there are great watches coming out of the US today.



JS

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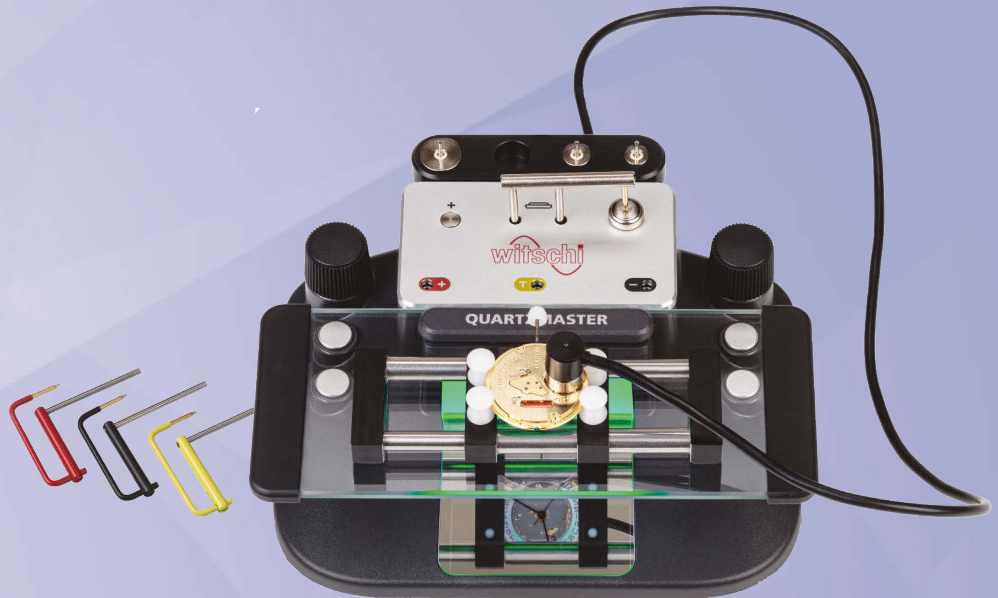
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PAUL SHEERAN'S BRANDED SUPERSTORE

Paul Sheeran aims to become Dublin's number one watch retailer after the recent opening of eight connected branded boutiques.



WP: Before we come to talk about the spectacular new showrooms we are meeting in today, take me back to how things began for you here in Dublin.

PS: I started as a retail jeweller in 1990, moved into Dublin city centre in 1994 and took on my first brands in 2000, which was a challenge. It was very hard to break into the watch business and the very first brand we took on was Maurice Lacroix.

No disrespect to any of my early brands, but they tended to be ones that had no representation in Ireland and were not well-known or in demand.

In Ireland you would see the same brands in every store, so we wanted to be different. Demand was not nearly as strong as it is today, so we would see customers go from store to store trying to negotiate discounts.

WP: If we think the UK has been up and down over the past decade, that is nothing compared to Ireland.

PS: It really has been a rollercoaster. When people talk about the Celtic Tiger from the 1990s to the end of the 2020s, we experienced crazy growth. The watch industry was funny at the time with sales flying out for the likes of Jacob & Co models and Zenith Defys; all the watches were oversized and made to be noticed.

In 2009, Ireland hit a wall with the international banking crisis. But the people are strong, and we had solid politicians who were not shy about the pain we would need to go through to get to the other

side, and showed us how to get it done. There were no protests, people just got their heads down and worked hard. Because of that, we now have a better Ireland. We have evolved.

WP: How difficult did it get for your business?

PS: Very tough; I was lucky to survive. Sales dropped by around 60%, which was a phenomenal hit. Everybody dropped, but parts of the market got hit harder than others. There are dead cert brands in our industry. We all know who they are, and aside from those brands, nothing was selling. Jacob & Co disappeared. Franck Muller disappeared. There were a lot of brands that sold really well in the boom years but fell by the wayside.

The financial crisis went around the world, but Ireland was one of the first into it, and also one of the first out of it because of the way we responded.

Uncertainty leading up to the Brexit vote and after it helped our recovery because we had a lot of international financial institutions moving head offices to Ireland. Other industries like pharmaceuticals have also come in.

WP: How about today? Is the economy facing the same headwinds as we have in the UK with rising inflation and a cost of living squeeze?

PS: It is tough again now. We are mindful of interest rate hikes and other issues. But being through difficulties before has taught us that we need to be working with the most in-demand brands because they will keep selling. To build a business you need to be working with strong brands that have a chance to sell even when everybody wants to buy one of the top two or three brands.

It is not the same top brands in every category. You might say everybody in the market for a pilot watch will want IWC, for example. Jaeger-LeCoultre makes the most iconic Reverso. What we have tried to do is work with brands that have the best watches in as many categories as possible.

WP: How has competition changed around you, not only from other jewellers and watch retailers, but in general retail and consumer spending?

PS: Traditionally, we have had one street: Grafton Street. But Grafton Street is very difficult to do business on. There are some beautiful shops there, but nowadays there are also a lot that are not so great, and it is very expensive.

Dublin is changing. As it becomes more prosperous, the authorities are trying to expand and improve the retail scene not only around Grafton



Left: Paul Sheeran, owner of Paul Sheeran Jewellers.
Above: Paul Sheeran's parade of branded watch boutiques on Chatham Street, Dublin.

Street, but into other parts of the city. To let the blood flow throughout the city, as they say.

WP: You are only just off Grafton Street, but from what you are saying, this location on Chatham Street is much more viable today.

PS: We have opened all of our new boutiques off Grafton Street, including the Montblanc store on Johnson's Court. It would have been impossible for us to create branded boutiques like this on Grafton Street because we could not have secured the properties that the brands would have liked. They want the right adjacencies, so they would not have wanted to have been scattered along Grafton.

Coming to Chatham Street has allowed us to build a parade of branded boutiques together, which solves the adjacency issue. We have six great brands side-by-side so each one complements the other.

That has effectively turned this into a beautiful street in the heart of Dublin, and it is continuing to improve around us. The new European Parliament offices are being built right across from us. That is beside The Westbury, the top five-star hotel in Dublin. It is all getting better and better and what we have built here could not have been done on Grafton Street.

WP: How much is the changing face of Dublin being managed by the authorities, and how much is it simply the private sector evolving?

PS: I chose this position because I knew what it could become. One of my inspirations was Sloane Street in London, where they are widening the pavements and improving the whole environment to make it a nicer place to spend time and shop. I can see how they are joining up Knightsbridge and Sloane Square and into Kings Road in Chelsea. It is evolving all the time and is quite different to Bond Street and Oxford Street in the West End.

WP: For those that do not know Dublin, there is a challenge in telling the story of just how exceptional this parade of boutiques is, and how it came about in a part of the city that has been dominated by Wear's with its vast store with almost every brand, including Rolex and Patek Philippe, for decades. You have come from a backstreet alley off Grafton to build this spectacular showroom with a fantastic line up of brands.

PS: Our biggest challenge was getting the brands. My attitude is that we will perform for any brand better than any competitor could. I am driven to deliver that and will always find a way. That is not ego, it is simply that I have to make it work.

If any of my brands is not performing, I will work out how to turn it around. It is no good to me or my brands if I have watches gathering dust.

WP: What brands were you selling out of your old store?

PS: If I go back to the boom years of the 2000s, I had around 16 brands, but when the recession hit I had to make survival decisions over what was going to help me get through, and what was not. In around 2010, when we had two stores, one in Dundrum and the other in Johnson's Court. We decided to close Dundrum and cut back the brand line up to IWC, TAG Heuer, Breitling, Longines and Jaeger-LeCoultre,

which worked for us because it helped us to focus and do well for each of the remaining brands and enabled us to add Tudor in 2018. Taking on Tudor taught us a lot and was another stepping stone to what you see here today.

WP: It looks to me like what you learned was to give the best possible customer experience for each of the brands you represent, and your conclusion led you to opening the boutiques we see here today, where you have effectively built your own Bond Street.

PS: Yes, and I would also say that if I had not done this, somebody else would have; not necessarily right here and in the way I have, but this is something Dublin needs and the brands wanted boutiques.



WP: OK, we are almost up to the present day with this story. Give us the full brand line up here.

PS: IWC, Breitling, Longines, Jaeger-LeCoultre and TAG Heuer we had before. Longines is still in Johnson's Court but here we have added Panerai, Cartier and Hublot. Plus we have Montblanc in Anne Street. We have been very focused on the brands we wanted to bring here and move forward with. We consider all of them winners in their fields

that contribute to our business and are well-known to our customers. Take Cartier, for example, every woman wants a Cartier, so that is a great brand for us to do well with.

We felt Dublin was under-served for a long time because a city needs more than just one major player. It needs competition. We push each other and complement each other. We feel we have done a great job here, and I know Weir's are investing in major refurbishments as well. The customers win.

WP: It is a funny thing about the luxury industry that it does not sustain itself, you have to work at it, even if you are Rolex or Patek Philippe. I remember something Jean-Claude Biver once said to me that we are in the business of creating

PANERAI

Cartier



B BREITLING



irrational desire because ultimately nobody needs what we are selling.

PS: I make this point to my team consistently. We are creating an environment and offering a level of service and hospitality where people want to come in and treat themselves. We see people turning it into a special occasion, they dress up to come here. They come at special times like a birthday or anniversary. You get that in the heart of Dublin, but not in out-of-town shopping centres. The bars around us here are what I call white collar bars, not the hen party spots. It is a really nice area and, as you said earlier, a bit like our own Bond Street and everybody is discovering it and spreading the words.

WP: This is a brand-new building. What was here before?

PS: This was a three-storey building of apartments with a couple of bookies and a hairdresser. Covid played into our hands a little because business was good for us and redevelopment of this building was

delayed. That gave us time to persuade a couple of key brands to come on board with us.

Had it been finished as planned a few years ago, we would have missed out. Anthropologie was supposed to be coming in to take half the building but the delay allowed me to persuade the landlord to listen to my proposal.

It is not just us opening boutiques, a lot of fashion brands that have been hesitant to move out of Brown Thomas [Dublin's historic department store], are now creating their own stores. These brands are realising that Dublin can support boutiques, and these are raising standards in this part of the city, which in turn brings in different customers.

WP: How have you gone from effectively one store to building this enormous emporium of boutiques? How have you raised the capital?

PS: We own our place at Chatham Court, and it has made good money, and we get more bang for our buck here off Grafton Street and are paying the rent. I don't own this building.

Plus a lot of the brands have contributed to making this happen, as they do.

WP: They don't always. If it was Rolex and Patek Philippe you would have been paying them.

PS: I would be very happy to do that [laughs]. At the end of the day this is a good business. We had to borrow a little bit to get it done but it's nothing we can't handle. The answer to your question of how we got to this is essentially through hard work,

Left:
Paul Sheeran runs a new Montblanc boutique on Anne Street.
Above:
Store fronts for Panerai, Breitling and Cartier are lined up with TAG Heuer, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Tudor, Hublot and IWC.

vision, blood, sweat and tears; people who believe in us. I have proved myself with the brands rather than just talking myself up. There is no brand here that is not delighted by what we have achieved. It has not been risk-free, but we had the vision to see the opportunity.

I could not have done it without great people around me, including my partner who has to listen to me at night agonising over how I can make a brand work better. I have people who have been with me for 20 years in the stores who share my vision.

WP: Are any of these boutiques joint ventures? Do the brands have any skin in the game?

PS: No, but they have one common goal, which is to see their brands succeed. They know that boutiques work, which is why they have been pushing to see something like this in Dublin.

It is such a new concept that the brands and other retailers have been flying in from other countries to visit us and learn about what we have done.

The brands are invested in our success and have given us phenomenal support, but not financially. They do not have any kind of stake in the business like a joint venture. It is 100% Paul Sheeran.

What we are seeing is competition between brands to do well. This project is talked about in Switzerland among the brands. That puts pressure on us, but I like that because I know I am in their thoughts and being talked about at the highest level.

Being part of those conversations allows me to think about how to do the best I can do and to use that to get better allocations and other support. I have not finished here. I want to keep growing my business in Ireland, so I need to keep raising my game.

WP: I know it is a balancing act, but you have the potential here to offer the best of both worlds: a

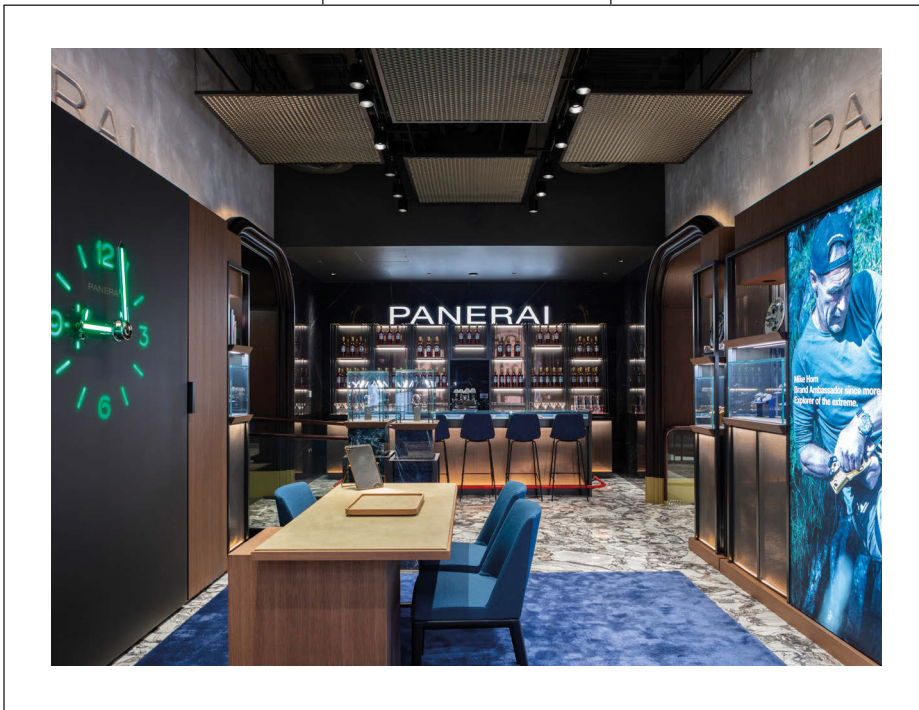
branded, immersive experience for your customers, but with you as a family jeweller embedded in your community in control.

PS: That is such an important point. I am an Irish guy in an Irish business, and people here love that. We support each other. We bring people here for tours every day. If you spend any time here, you will see that all of my team know everybody coming in.

WP: You appear to have created a business that will be there for the important moments in people's lives. That might start with an engagement ring at your jewellery store. They might start their journey into watches with a TAG Heuer, Breitling or Tudor

and then move — through their lives and through your linked boutiques and shop in shops — to Cartier, Hublot, Panerai, IWC or Jaeger-LeCoultre.

PS: That is working very well for us. We have TAG Heuer at one end of the building and Jaeger-LeCoultre at the other end. It is a journey, and the brands complement each other, all the while the customer



is in control. We will do our best to get you the watches you want whether your budget is £1,000 or £100,000.

WP: We are seeing a direction of travel for many companies, particularly Richemont brands, wanting to sell directly to customers through their own boutiques or online. Do you have concerns that your investment here is paving the way for them to come in at some point in the future and cut you out of the deal?

PS: I would be mad not to have concerns, and I see the same thing you are describing. But I have seen companies change directions so many times over the years, what I do is control what I can control and do the best I can do. There is nothing wrong with brands running their own boutiques, particularly in the biggest global cities like London and New York, but I am not so sure it will work in Dublin or Manchester. It would be hard for these brands to make it work without a partner like us.

We have seen brands try and fail to manage boutiques outside the biggest cities, and it has not worked the way they have liked, and they end up back with local business people like me. It may look more profitable if they keep all the revenue from the sale of a watch, but the cost of building and maintaining a store, its staff and all the overheads make it a lot harder to be profitable.

We spread the risk, particularly in a set up like this. Some brands are hot one year and cooler the next. We can manage that because we have eight brands here, and they will all have collections that are really popular at one time and others that are harder to sell.

WP: I think this line of conversation is particularly important here because, while the likes of Tudor, TAG Heuer and Breitling are predominately wholesale operations, Richemont is on the record saying it wants to go direct, and four of your brands here are from that group. In addition, Richemont has a multibrand retail concept, TimeVallée, which is expanding from Asia into Europe and sells the same brands you do.

PS: They can go for it. I cannot stop them. But I do not think it will work in every location.

WP: If it is dependent on location, you might just be proving to Richemont that it could work in Dublin.

PS: I cannot think that way. I have to simply focus on doing the very best job I can do and the future will




Above:
Inside the connected watch boutiques and shop-in-shops of Paul Sheeran.

take care of itself. I will never be complacent, and we constantly put pressure on ourselves to improve.

TimeVallée could have done what I have done here. Other retailers that are far bigger than us wanted to come here and do something like this. But we got it done. I am not convinced that the big multi-nationals always win. This is our community, we care about it, we support each other.

WP: Are you willing to share any financial details of the impact this new showroom will have?

PS: Our accounts are public, so you can see we were doing around €5-6 million. I certainly expect we will do at least three times that if we do our job right.

It has not been an easy journey over the past 35 years to get here, but sitting here today it all feels worthwhile. I have wanted to be the best in this country, regardless of what my competitors do, and that is still what I want. If I am the number one for the brands I represent, then we will see what other opportunities come along. 

MEMORY LANE

If you want to know what the watch world will look like in 30 years' time, Robin Swithinbank suggests that you dust off your Britpop CDs and read on.

One of the most frequent questions I'm asked as a watch person is how many watches I own. You might think – as clearly inquisitors do – that as someone who likes a watch, I'd know. But I don't.

It's not that I have too many to count. Instead, it's that I'm not sure WHAT to count. The odds and sods I inherited from my grandfather 30 years ago? What about that Swatch I bought when I was 12? Do I include that?

I probably should. Not because they're worth anything, at least, not in hard cash terms. The less sentimental would have chucked them years ago. But because like chart songs of the 1980s and 1990s and photographs of the full head of hair I once had, they are portkeys to a time in my life when everything I experienced felt incredibly important.

To give it a name, this slightly sickly value measure is linked to what psychologists often call the reminiscence bump. This is the period of our lives between around 10 and 30 years old during which much of our self-identity is formed, and when what happened to us felt – and still feels – of utmost importance.

Music is a particularly formidable trigger of this feeling, which would explain why my recent encounter with Kylie Minogue – did I mention I met Kylie? – stirred such excitement, the pint-sized pop princess being a highly influential character in my adolescent experience. And I wonder whether watches are, too. Clearly, they are for me and will be for many of you, but I find myself asking if the same will be true for my children and their peers. What will shape their reminiscence bumps, reviewed in 30 years' time?

My daughter, a tween, has little interest in watches of any denomination, and future portals to her adolescence will likely be in music, TV, fashion and beauty. Which is normal. My teenage son, by contrast, is far more concerned for what's on his wrist. Having inherited one of my not-so-old Swatches and lobbied successfully to pilfer an old Apple Watch from me ('for my workouts, Dad'), he recently invested his own money in a Tissot PRX, which, he assures me, is 'cold'.

And he's right, it is. But, and without wanting to accord myself undue hero status, I can't ignore the fact I might have swayed his opinion. Tissot sent me one on loan shortly after it was launched and I waxed about it at home, lecturing my children on the merits of 1970s stainless-steel sports watch design over fish fingers and chips. Appears he may have been listening.

Such a domestic picture won't be, I suppose, typical up and down the land. The number of us wearing traditional watches is not exactly on the up, and I can't imagine many devotee supper-talk to the subject either, not while most defer the role of timekeeper to a phone – or smartwatch. And this brings me to the heart of my point, which is that the reminiscence bumps of the future will be shaped not by Swatches and such, but by smartwatches. And that could spell danger. Because if buyers of the future don't associate traditionally styled watches with the most important season of their lives, they'll stop wanting them.

Think about it. We all know the smartwatch tidal

wave has hit land. According to Fortune Business Insights, the global smartwatch market last year had a value of almost \$26 billion, making it larger than the entire Swiss watch industry, and that's before you think about volumes. It's forecast to out-grow it at pace, too, reaching \$77 billion by 2030.

Is it possible that a smartwatch could hold the same power over people in 30 years' time as my Swatch does over me today? Instinct might tell us not: smartwatches are ugly and obsolescence will devalue them. But instinct is wrong. Because it's not the quality of the product that determines whether it's included in a reminiscence bump, but the time of life when it was used, worn and loved.

As things stand, smartwatches are winning the battle for hearts and minds. Sales of low-value and mid-market analogue watches are enduring a well-documented collapse in popularity. Moon-Swatch may have given the category a boost, and Swatch Group's rescue mission could yet become a fillip for the industry and not just one brand. But I doubt it. No, if the industry is to recover at this level and to shape the future reminiscences of today's young consumers, it needs rapid re-structuring and significant investment.

The current model clearly isn't working.

What to do instead? The accessible model carved out by Hans 'Rolex' Wilsdorf's Tudor in the 1940s has never been replicated by others, despite its success. Why not a sister brand at a much lower price point for IWC, TAG Heuer or Breitling? Or a third tier in the Rolex-Tudor empire? Why not leverage the talents, resources and experience of these great brands to fire up a dying category - for the long-term good? The answer is smartwatches, no matter how you look at it.

The irony is that the one group pushing that model is suffering as much as any from dwindling exports. Swatch Group doesn't break down its performance by brand, but independent accounts indicate that while Omega props the business up, its lower-end dial names are victims of the mid-market squeeze. Some may say that's evidence enough to abandon the category. But is it?

Isn't this just a management issue? Imagine what might happen if the group were to sacrifice a low-volume, resource-intensive brand or two in order to re-energise Hamilton, Certina and Mido. Would the industry's long-term health be better for another 100,000 Hamilton watches or a further 100 from Jaquet Droz? A difficult decision to make,



IMAGE: DANIELE LEVIS PELUSI ON UNSPLASH

“THE FUTURE AS WE SEE IT NOW WILL BE SHAPED BY MEMORIES OF SMARTWATCHES.”

sure, but that's what C-suite execs are for. Mothballing is an option: see Jean Richard.

Elitists will argue the decline of the lower end of the market doesn't matter. The premiumisation of traditional watchmaking is driven by market forces, and today the bottom line looks good: Switzerland's revenues are at an all-time high, hitting CHF24.8 billion last year and climbing in 2023. Where's the problem?

It's in the reminiscence bumps of tomorrow. In a business almost entirely reliant on summoning consumers' emotions, most charged by reminiscence, the future as we see it now will be shaped by memories of smartwatches and not their traditional counterparts. And what will people buy to replicate that same feeling of importance...?

Don't believe me? Listen to the music of your teens and tell me it doesn't have more power over you than the stuff they're putting out now. Do you feel it? And therein lies the lesson. ●

WITH GREAT POWER: THE HONORIS I



Stéphane von Gunten with the 3 metre spring that powers the Honoris I.

Geneva Watch Days 2023 was the chosen event for the unveiling of a new watch from a new company. Haute-Rive's pioneering Honoris I, is the inaugural timepiece from Stéphane von Gunten and boasts a record-breaking 1,000-hour power reserve, setting a world record for autonomy.

A third consecutive generation watchmaker, Stéphane von Gunten's route into his career was via an engineering degree in micro techniques, for both the electronics and watchmaking industries. After graduating he worked at Patek Philippe where he was involved in research for micro technology focusing on the use of silicon fabrication. "This was in 2005 and silicon was a big research topic in the watchmaking industry looking at its use for small components and the hairspring," he says. "My background in micro engineering and watchmaking was the right mix for Patek at that time."

Despite his involvement in horology's 'silicon revolution', Mr von Gunten is clear that he is not interested in change for change sake. "It is not always a case of there being a problem to solve," he says. "It is more about looking to improve what we already have through new techniques and new technologies. I always try to respect the old traditions of watchmaking - I'm sure 18th-century watchmakers were looking to improve timekeeping. There is no point in change if it does not make things better."

In 2007, Mr von Gunten moved to Ulysse Nardin where work was well underway on the silicon skunkworks project, The Freak. While it seems logical that Ulysse Nardin may have come knocking on his door, Mr von Gunten says that this was not the case. "The move was for purely personal reasons," he says. "My wife had qualified as a midwife and there was no work for her in Geneva. We are both from La Chaux-de-Fonds so we decided to move closer to home and I looked for a job in the watchmaking industry there.

"It was a good time to move though. At the time Ulysse Nardin was looking for new suppliers and new ways to develop escapements because the Swatch Group was no longer providing components to the rest of the industry. I could bring some useful experience in silicon and the chance to work with pioneers like Rolf Schnyder and Pierre Gygax, who were super-motivated to find new techniques and alternatives to the Swatch Group supply, was amazing."

Although the idea of making a watch from scratch was always in the back of his mind, it was - as for so many people - covid and lockdown that finally brought about the chance to put the plans into action. "I was at home and I read an article about a watch that my great-great-grandfather Irénée Aubry had made, the Hebdomas. I remember thinking, 'That's really



The front and back of the Honoris I.



nice. I should do that again.' And this is when I started to think about creating my own brand."

The brand is named Haute-Rive (High Bank) after Irénée Aubry's workshop, situated by Lake Neuchâtel. The first watch from the company is the Honoris I, which marks a deeply personal phase in Mr von Gunten's watchmaking journey, crafting unique timepieces that unite traditional design and production with innovation and independence. The inspiration was Aubry's eight-day pocket watch *Hebdomas* – a timepiece known to the von Gunten family as 'The Pope's Watch'.

"My great-great-grandfather was a very interesting watch developer and he created a watch for the Pope in 1888," explains Mr von Gunten. "Technically it was special because it had more than 40 days of power reserve – probably the only watch at that time to have such autonomy. This was the starting point. Of course, the original was a pocket watch and I wanted to see if I could make this more contemporary and incorporate it into a wristwatch."

Mr von Gunten has built on his ancestor's innovations, creating the first wearable and slim (less than 12mm) wristwatch with a 1,000-hour power reserve from a single winding barrel. Honoris I epitomises Mr von Gunten's dedication to uniting form and function and features a polished gold case, unique 60-facet bezel, and a grand feu enamel dial.

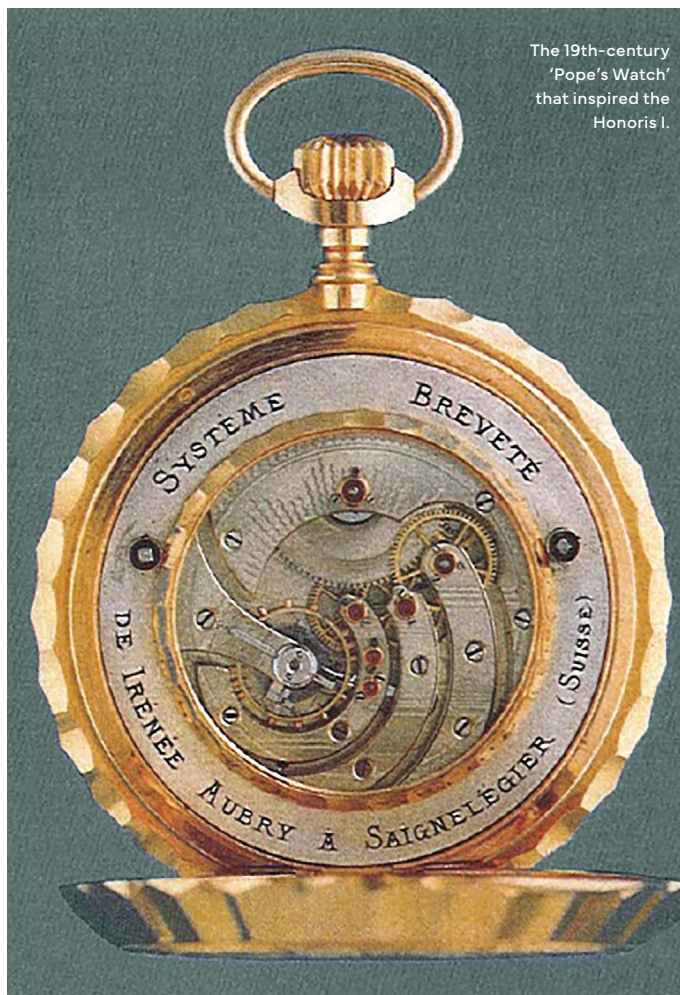
Mr von Gunten's ambition to extend the power reserve led

“IT IS ABOUT LOOKING TO IMPROVE WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE THROUGH NEW TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGIES.”

to the development of the HR01 calibre, featuring a single barrel with a three-metre-long mainspring. The watch has definite echoes of *The Freak*, not least in that it is wound via the bezel, something that Mr von Gunten says is a mix between his background at Ulysse Nardin and technical necessities that mean it is more practical to wind it via the bezel rather than a crown.

"The mainspring is about three metres long and, when fully wound, is 35mm in diameter. There is just one spring rather than a series as it is more efficient that way. Multiple barrels mean wasted space within the movement," he says. "We have to rewind the spring, so the barrel has to move in two directions – one to run the watch, and one to rewind – and this required a differential system to reload the mainspring.

"This is the work that you see at 12 o'clock on the dial – the differential plus the big wheel that we call the 'wheel of time', the first wheel of the gear train. A normal winding crown would



The 19th-century 'Pope's Watch' that inspired the Honoris I.

have proved problematic to link to the barrel shaft in the middle of the watch, so it was easier to use a differential and link it to the bezel.”

To indicate the state of winding, there is a huge power reserve indicator on the reverse. “At the beginning I wanted it to be on the dial,” says Mr von Gunten. “But it would have needed to be much smaller and by placing it on the back we had more space so legibility is greatly improved.”

On the dial-side is a tourbillon with a different look.



The Honoris I in yellow gold with white enamel dial.

Because the energy comes from a pinion below the dial, the impression is that the flying tourbillon really comes from nowhere. At the launch, there are two versions of the Honoris I – one in white gold with a black enamel dial and one in yellow gold with a white enamel dial.

For reasons of authenticity and sustainability, all of the components come from local makers. “I tried to work with local suppliers,” says Mr von Gunten. “I am a native of La Chaux-de-Fonds, so wanted to use suppliers based there. In fact, the only supplier not in Switzerland is Groupe SIS in France, which we used for the straps as they are a very high-quality maker.”

The project is backed by a group of investors, including industry stalwarts Patrick Hoffman and Suzanne Hurni, who Mr von Gunten has known since his early days at Ulysse Nardin. Initial sales will be direct to consumer, but select retail partners are already lined up. In 2023, only three to five watches are expected to be made, with a maximum of 10 per year being produced thereafter. And going forward, Mr von Gunten says, “Watch this space”.

“I have some ideas for new projects. One is already growing in my mind but not developed yet. Let’s launch this one first. But whatever I do, it will be complex and extremely limited.”

The Haute-Rive Honoris I will cost CHF148,000 + VAT. For more information visit www.haute-rive-watches.ch



SPINNAKER

BRADNER BASCOM

There is a lively market developing for sub-£500 self-winding timepieces, mostly using high quality Japanese movements in on-trend sports watches with integrated bracelets. Spinnaker — whose watches are made by Hong Kong-based Solar Time and distributed by Dartmouth Brands — is one company developing an attractive commercial catalogue of automatics.

The brand's latest addition is a trio of limited-edition dive watches that use the names of scientists Willard Bascom and

Hugh Bradner, the men credited with developing the first Neoprene wetsuits in the 1950s. The pieces use forged carbon to create interest for the dials of the three-handers with date. They come in a choice of raw steel for the 42mm case and bracelet; or with gold or black treated steel. Only 200 of each will be made.

Powered by a Seiko NH35, which is visible via an exhibition caseback, the watches are made water resistant thanks to a compressor-style case and caseback construction, and a screw-in crown. The steel piece is on sale now for £377. The gold or black treatment increases the prices to £415.



LUMINOX

NAVY SEAL 3000 EVO SERIES

Luminox has extended its Original Navy SEAL 3000 EVO Series with three military-inspired models in sand, green and black and white colourways. The watches have been worn by America's Navy SEALs since 1992 thanks to their reliability and ruggedness meeting the elite unit's standards. All Original Navy SEAL 3000 EVO watches are officially licensed by, and created in collaboration with, the US Navy.

The timepieces come in 43mm carbon cases, are water resistant to 200 metres, and are powered by precise Swiss-made quartz movements. Worn on rubber straps matching their dial colours, the new EVOs use Luminox's Light Technology, which ensure they are visible in any light condition for up to 25 years. They are on sale now for £435.

2023 NOVELTIES

WatchPro casts an eye over the latest releases from the world's leading volume and luxury watchmakers



ZODIAC

SEA-CHRON

Zodiac has re-entered the watch market like a tornado: picking up retail partners and reconnecting with customers who appreciate its modern takes on historic watches in a range of seasonal colours. The brand, owned by the mighty Fossil Group where quartz and smart watches usually dominate, has been given free-rein to trade off its 141 years of Swiss ancestry with a slew of automatics priced in the £1,000 to £1,500 range.

This year, the brand is making its second back-to-back appearance at WatchPro Salon, presenting its latest Sea-Chron chronographs to press, retailers and collectors. The two watches, which are reissues of a 1960s reference, are 42mm steel-on-steel models, one with a black dial and white counters, the other in dark blue with black snailed subdials.

DUCKWORTH PRESTEX
RIVINGTON GMT

British microbrand Duckworth Prestex has unveiled its first dual-time watch, the Rivington GMT, in a choice of four new dial colours. The cushion-shaped 42mm watch has a waffle-style textured dial. Powering them is a Miyota 9075 movement protected by a closed steel caseback. The watches are equipped with a steel bracelet, rubber or leather strap in black, green, blue and brown. The pieces will be shown for the first time publicly at WatchPro's London Salon in November.

"The GMT watch is a classic genre that is more and more relevant in an increasingly connected world," says Neil Duckworth, who relaunched his grandfather's watch company in 2021. "We've taken the most distinctive elements of our design language and transplanted them into a state-of-the-art GMT, ready to become a lifetime companion for travellers and everyday watch enthusiasts." Prices start at £795 and pre-orders will be taken from September, with delivery likely to begin in November.



MANCHERONT
PACER

Australia is rarely considered a hotbed of growing watch businesses, but a former architect and entrepreneur, Dillon Wong, is hoping to put that right with the launch of Mancheront, a brand that debuted on Kickstarter in 2021 and now has two variations of its Pacer watch collection.

The Pacer bezels have teeth like a circular saw, carry a pulsometer scale to measure heart rates and frame a black or white dial with a prominent power reserve indicator at the top, a second time zone at 6 o'clock and a date at 3. Powered by a Miyota 9132 automatic movement, the 41mm watch features a closed caseback decorated with petals.

Mr Wong says he chose to give the Pacer a pulsometer bezel instead of a rarely used diver's bezel as, "we would like to see the pulsometer function in a different perspective; rethinking it as a fitness or athlete's watch since we live in a very health orientated world now." Pacer watches are for sale online now for £487.

PERRELET
TURBINE FULL LUM

Perrelet is returning to WatchPro Salon in November with a focus on timepieces using its in-house automatic movements, which are 100% made in Switzerland's Jura Valley, and power its flagship collections today. Perrelet is best-known for its animated dials, which are found in its signature Double Rotor, Turbine and Lab Peripheral collections.

Perrelet's most distinctive and best-known collection is the Turbine, which has been extended with a Full Lum limited edition of 50 pieces. Since its launch in 2009, the Turbine has been an opportunity for Perrelet's designers to build on the brand's signature spinning turbine dial, and this year's 44mm Full Lum continues that tradition.

Powered by the in-house Perrelet P-331-MH automatic calibre, the watch's lower-dial and the turbine blades are coated with Super-LumiNova that emits a bright green glow. With each twist of the wrist, the rotation of the Turbine generates a mesmerising glowing animation. The watch is priced at CHF4,750.





KING SEIKO

KSK

The King Seiko sub-brand was originally produced between 1961 and 1975, when it was seen as a stepping stone between the high-end Grand Seiko and the more accessible Seiko. It then disappeared into the annals of history, before being revived in 2020 to great acclaim.

The latest ultra-slim, limited-edition King Seiko takes inspiration from the 1960s and pays homage to a time-honoured symbol of Japan: the chrysanthemum, which is an emblem of both rebirth and long life. The flowers are arranged in a pattern of precisely intersecting lines.

The 38.6mm steel watch features a self-winding movement, an intricately patterned dial, angular casing and faceted hands and is equipped with both a bracelet and a grey leather strap. As with the original 1960s model, the caseback is engraved with the words "King Seiko" and a shield logo. Only 600 examples of the watch will be made and they will be available at selected Seiko Boutiques and retailers from early October, priced at £3,000.



ZEITWINKEL

273° SAPHIR BLEU

Zeitwinkel is an independent Swiss watchmaker that is building a community of collectors who appreciate the sophistication of its in-house calibres and the precision of its finishing. In November 2023, the atelier that was founded in 2006, will be appearing at WatchPro Salon for the second consecutive year.

New for 2023 is the 273° Saphir Bleu with a translucent sapphire dial, which means the movement can be seen from above and below, and a large date display at 11 o'clock. Due to the difficulty of creating the dials, only a few of the blue sapphire watches can be made per year, and they will be seen for the first time in the UK at WatchPro Salon. Company co-founder, Professor Ivica "Maks" Maksimovic, says: "A small tilt of the wrist reveals beautiful bright blue tones and the details of the movement are brightly lit." Retail price for the Zeitwinkel 273° Saphir Bleu is CHF15,500.



ATOWAK TARANTULA

The first 100 Tarantula watches from Atowak sold out in just three minutes, the company has revealed. Customers were given a 20% discount for jumping quickly on the limited-edition watch, which has its production number capped at 500 pieces.

Hong Kong-based Atowak was founded in 2010, but made white-label mechanical watches for other microbrands rather than marketing any of its creations under its own name. All that changed in 2020, however, with the launch of its first Atowak branded collection: the Ettore series of wandering hour watches. Tarantula, Windows and Cobra collections have followed, all driven by Atowak's desire to make watches with truly original designs and ways of displaying the time.

The Atowak Tarantula watches have a satellite wandering hour wheel spinning like a spider over a cobweb-style dial. Despite its sophistication and innovative design, Atowak has contained the mechanism in a slim and elegant hand-polished steel case. There are three colourways, red, blue and green, each with matching coloured rubber straps.

The watches can be pre-ordered now at www.atowak.com and are priced at £1,775.11.

A NEW FRONTIER FOR WATCH INSURANCE

Zing's insurance solution is optimised for both watch collectors and the specialist trading companies they deal with.



For too long the watch market and watch collectors have suffered a dysfunctional relationship with the insurance industry. In recent years the watch industry has been adapting to a more pronounced pace of change in trends and valuations, the speed of online innovation, the relationship between primary and pre-owned markets and simply changes in the demographic of collectors.

Meanwhile the UK specialist watch insurance industry hasn't seen a genuinely new or innovative market entrant in decades and the legacy insurers were sticking to conventional, static insurance products, claims processes which were increasingly misaligned with the market

and a response to the rise in thefts which failed to see the value of collaboration with watch market participants.

In response to this, Zing Cover was founded by a team of insurance and technology experts with decades of watch market experience and has rapidly become the leading specialist embedded insurer for the UK luxury goods market.

Most collectors first encounter Zing when adding to their collections with Zing partner watch dealers, where they see the company's specialist cover available with a single click at the e-commerce checkout, in-store on Zing tablets or through a range of post-purchase delivery channels.

Then, having become a customer, they can start to manage their collection through their single Zing account with the watches in their collection automatically linked to the originating watch dealer. For its watch market partners, Zing is far more than an additional revenue stream, facilitating greater post-purchase customer engagement and driving up brand affinity.

Certified pre-owned watch specialist Subdial, put insurance at the centre of a recent relaunch of its Clubhouse concept, which encourages collectors to buy and sell to each other while improving knowledge of their own collections within a trusted community.

"Clubhouse, collectors and enthusiasts can manage their watches in one place, digitally, tracking live prices and trading effortlessly. We know that insurance is important to collectors, and in Zing we found a specialist insurer with the products, technology and imagination to create insurance backed by Subdial's live market data and which can be purchased and managed seamlessly from within the Subdial Clubhouse. We think the Clubhouse is game changing for watch collecting and trading, and we are delighted that our partnership with Zing is equally

game changing for specialist watch insurance," says Christy Davis, co-founder of Subdial.

Zing's insurance offer is fully integrated into the system of a trading platform like Subdial's, with its technology experts taking the strain. "Because Zing is a technology-led business, its partner watch dealers do not have to be technology experts themselves," says Rob Korzinek, CEO of Zing.

Every watch collector has experienced the pain of having to insure pieces that can rise and fall in value. The bigger the collection, particularly those with watches that have seen volatility in prices, or vintage pieces that are hard to value.

Rob Korzinek,
CEO of Zing.



Zing aims to make insurance simpler and more transparent, which takes the hassle out of trading and managing a watch collection. In turn,

this can improve the relationship between trading businesses and their customers. “We have found Zing super easy to use, the staff are extremely helpful with everything. Best of all the feedback we get from our customers who we lead to Zing is always positive. We couldn’t ask for more from our business partner and look forward to a king partnership,” say Sam and Joe, co-founder of City of London trading specialist Kettle Club.

Use of technology is accelerating fast in the watch industry and creating new ways to engage with and trade with collectors and Zing is at the forefront of matching its services to the sales channels and engagement tools deployed by its partner watch dealers.

Zing has the flexibility to work with traders with a variety of technological routes to market, including WhatsApp, which can have insurance integrated into a sales and marketing tool.

“We are increasingly seeing WhatsApp synchronised with watch businesses’ inventory management, invoicing and CRM systems. For these businesses Zing offers tools through which customers can receive personalised quotes and the ability to instantly insure their new purchases straight to their WhatsApp with the watch and associated insurance seamlessly added to their Zing account and automatically associated with the originating seller,” Mr Korzinek explains.

Luxury Watch Company, another Zing customer, says it has been impressed with the simplicity and speed of implementation with the service. “The whole process is incredibly efficient and

streamlined so that customers receive their quotes in no time at all. This in turn ensures they have a very positive experience with us in the boutique,”

the team says. “The in-store tablet is incredibly easy to use, which helps greatly when getting live quotes for the customer there and then with a follow up email from Zing almost instantly. Such a great service, I would highly recommend Zing,” they add.

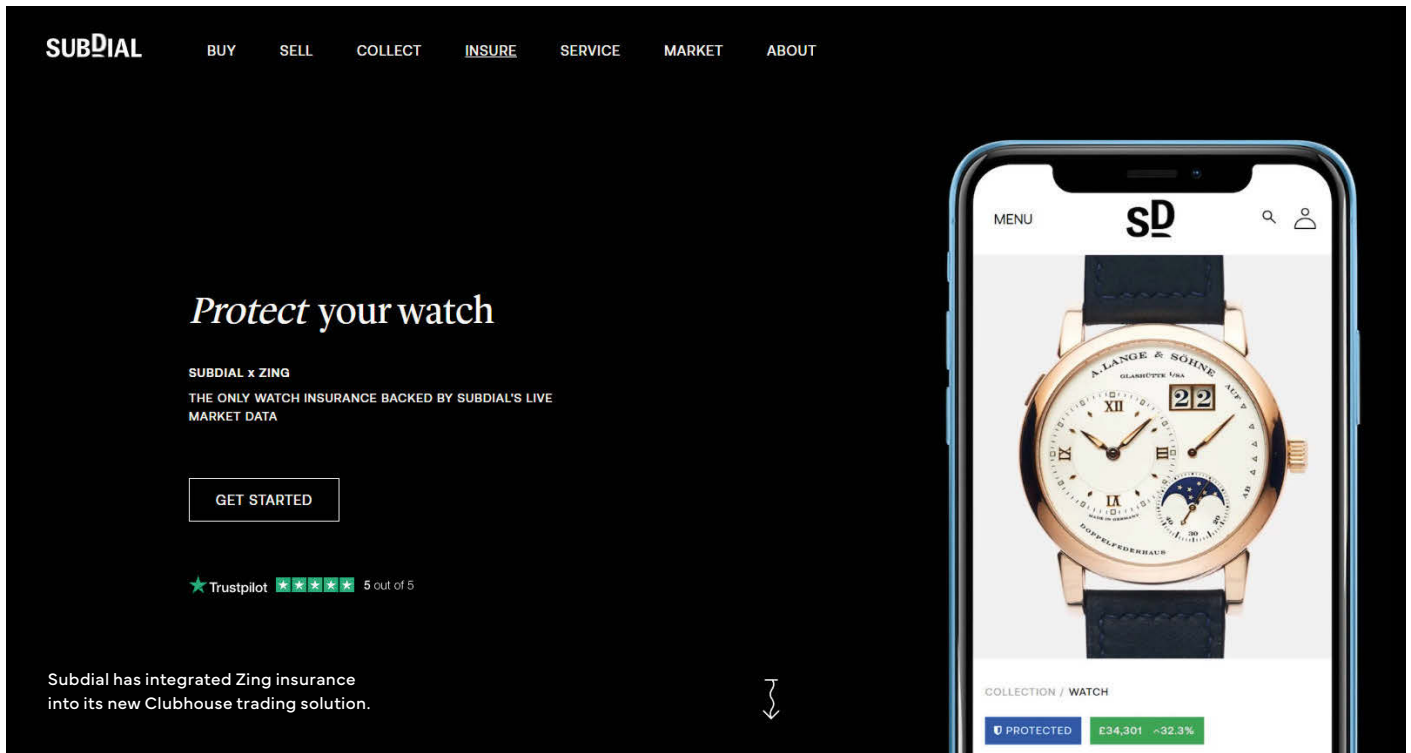
Regular insurers struggle to value watches correctly, which is why household insurance, even with itemised cover, can misprice a valuable collection and find it particularly hard to keep track of assets over time. This is despite the increasing transparency players like Watchcharts, Subdial and Chrono24 bring to price evolution for prestigious watches. Collectors become frustrated when insurers fail to recognize the true value of their treasures, which is why Zing’s more dynamic insurance model is proving so popular.

“The dramatic rise in the availability, variety and usability of valuation data is also changing the way the industry interacts with its customers, and the way collectors view and manage their collections,” Mr Korzinek says. “Few collectors are able to tune out from the media noise of fluctuations in watch markets. Zing believes in harnessing market data and the expertise of its watch market partners to keep its customers’ insurance values up-to-date with the vicissitudes of this often fast moving market, putting them in the best place to secure a suitable replacement in the case of a claim,” he adds.

Where Zing further elevates the claims experience is by working directly with its partner watch dealers, combining a specialist

“EVERY COLLECTOR HAS EXPERIENCED THE PAIN OF HAVING TO INSURE PIECES THAT CAN RISE AND FALL IN VALUE.”

“ZING BELIEVES IN HARNESSING MARKET DATA AND THE EXPERTISE OF ITS WATCH MARKET PARTNERS TO KEEP ITS CUSTOMERS’ INSURANCE VALUES UP-TO-DATE.”




claims service with its partners’ expertise and access to the market, even for the scarcest models. Zing’s customers have the assurance of knowing that if it comes to a claim, they will be dealing with genuine watch market specialists who will work with them to formulate a strategy for sourcing a suitable replacement for their lost, damaged or stolen watch.

Of course insurance could not be a hotter topic right now among collectors and traders because of a rise in reporting of watch thefts. “It is a serious problem, and Zing is working discreetly with its partner watch dealers to drive up standards, detect and diminish the trade in illicit watches and ensure its partners and customers are informed without being alarmed. The volume and

severity of watch theft is a problem that requires cool heads and sensible collaborations, not sensationalism and hyperbole,” Mr Korzinek suggests.

Zing believes it is this combination of expertise, innovation and market collaborations that leads its customers to insure their collections with them rather than on a traditional household insurance policy.

A typical Zing customer is financially literate and knows their options when it comes to insurance. It’s by working with and within the watch market, and learning from and listening to the market, that Zing has seen witnessed such rapid market adoption in so short a space of time. 

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HUBLLOT IN GSTAAD

In August, the 26th edition of Europe's highest altitude polo competition was held in Gstaad, 1,050 metres above sea level. Four teams of four riders, faced off in a fast-paced game of four seven-minute chukkers played over three days. All 168 minutes of play were timed by Hublot, the competition's official timekeeper since 2008. Victory in 2023 was eventually claimed by Team Gstaad.

Hublot CEO Ricardo Guadalupe said of the weekend: "Since 2008, we've never missed a single edition of this unique event. It's a story inspired by our own personal experiences. The friendship that unites us with the director of Gstaad Polo and the Hublot Polo Gold Cup, Pierre Genecand, this incomparable venue, the precision and synchronisation of the movements of the riders and their horses [and] the tradition on which they rely to develop an ever more exciting future."



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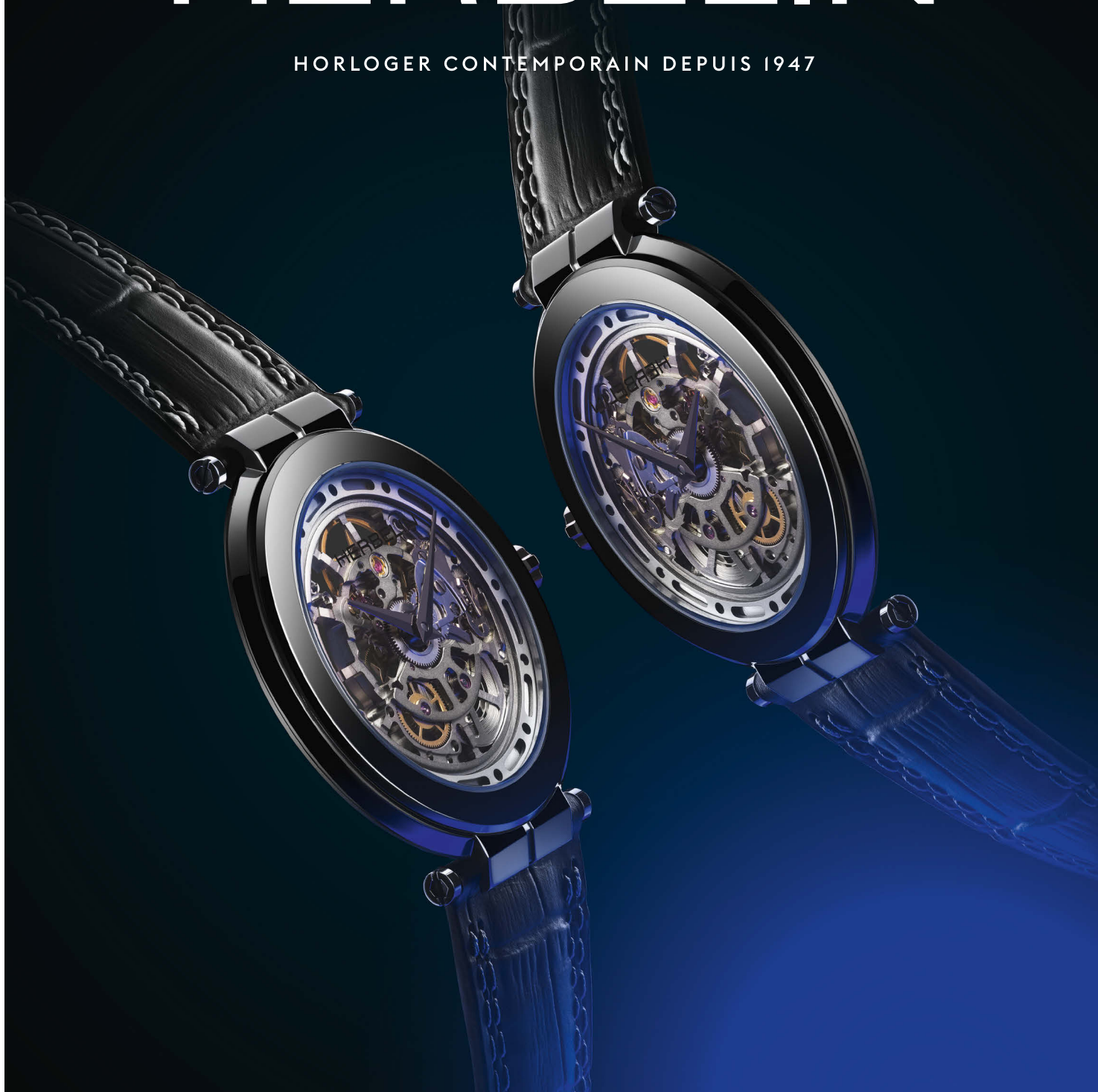
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