



new york minute

Unlike the rapid way we move through our day, it can take years to build a well-curated watch collection that stands the test of time.

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THE INNOVATOR

For the individual who enjoys standing out in a crowd, these timepieces from independent watchmakers offer high-tech movements and cases—toys of ultimate distinction.

Richard Mille Automatic RM029 (\$70,000): Made of titanium with a titanium rotor, base plate, bridges and balance cock, and an oversize date. The skeletonization process of the caliber took more than 10 months to finalize. *Cellini, 509 Madison Ave., 212-888-0505; cellinijewelers.com*

Hautlence HLTi 1 (\$44,300): A 43.5mm titanium-case watch with a honeycomb skeleton dial. It houses a hand-wound Manufacture caliber with jumping hours and retrograde minutes via an extraordinary patented system. Limited edition of just 28 pieces. *Tourneau, 510 Madison Ave., 212-758-5830; tourneau.com*

Devon Tread 1 (\$17,500): Crafted in stainless steel and featuring a patent-pending system of interwoven Time Belts that displays the hours, minutes and seconds. Four compact microstep motors drive the four belts via a lubricant-free pulley system. *Tourneau, 510 Madison Ave., 212-758-5830; tourneau.com*

MB&F Horological Machine 2 (\$80,000): Crafted in 18k white gold, it is the first instantaneous jumping-hour watch with concentric retrograde minutes (right dial), retrograde date, bi-hemisphere moon phase (left dial) and automatic winding. The movement consists of 349 components, including 44 jewels. *Manfredi Jewels, 121 Greenwich Ave., Greenwich, CT, 203-622-1414; manfredijewels.com*



IT'S COMPLICATED

A complicated piece is one that houses some of watchmaking's greatest achievements: minute repeaters, perpetual calendars and more. Tourbillons are among the most coveted complications. These whirlwinds feature a constantly moving escapement designed to compensate for errors in timekeeping caused by the effects of gravity when the watch is in certain positions.

A Lange & Söhne Lange 1 Tourbillon "Homage to F.A. Lange" (\$171,800): Crafted in Lange's own 18k honey-colored gold, just 150 of these pieces were made. The 381-part calibre L961.2 manually wound movement has a one-minute tourbillon with patented stop seconds and an outside date. *Cellini*, 509 Madison Ave., 212-888-0505; cellinijewelers.com

Jacob & Co. Limited Edition Crystal Tourbillon (\$900,000): A 47mm 18k white-gold case set with 17.48 carats of baguette diamonds on the case and

another 1.6 carats around the dial. The movement is the Jacob & Co. calibre 7 skeleton manual-winding tourbillon. 48 E. 57th St., 212-719-5887; jacobandco.com

Piaget Polo Tourbillon Relatif (\$316,000): Features the patented Piaget 608P mechanical hand-wound flying tourbillon movement. The escapement is suspended from the minute hand and rotates once per minute on its own axis; it completes one revolution around the dial per hour. Limited edition of 20 numbered pieces. 730 Fifth Ave., 212-246-5555; piaget.com

Girard-Perregaux Tourbillon with Three Gold Bridges (\$195,040): Its 18k pink-gold exterior houses the GP9600C automatic movement with 30 jewels. It offers tourbillon, hour, minute and small seconds indication on the tourbillon. Limited edition of 50 pieces. 701 Madison Ave., 646-495-9915; girard-perregaux.ch



CASUAL FRIDAY

Retro appeal is important in a watch wardrobe—it offers a vintage look without the price tag of an actual vintage watch. These pieces are all about a casual, comfortable fit for the weekend.

Baume & Mercier Hampton Men's (\$3,450): Crafted in stainless steel with sub-seconds at six o'clock and date indication. *Saks Fifth Avenue, 611 Fifth Ave., 212-753-4000; saks.com*

TechnoMarine Cruise Original Star 45mm (\$550): A chronograph in a rose-gold PVD case and bezel with a transparent case cover and chocolate-brown silicone strap. *Tourneau TimeMachine, 12 E. 57th St., 212-758-7300; tourneau.com*

TW Steel CEO Tonneau (\$897): Stainless steel and rose-gold-plated chronograph with an OS25 movement accurate up to 1/20th of a second. *Manhattan Jewelers, 1372 Broadway, 212-764-1814*

Invicta S1 Touring Chrono (\$995): Crafted in stainless steel with a carbon fiber dial, date display and Tritnite luminous hands. Water resistant to 100 meters. *Tourneau TimeMachine, 12 E. 57th St., 212-758-7300; tourneau.com*

Hamilton Jazzmaster Tonneau Chrono (\$795): With a quartz caliber, this piece is made of stainless steel and has a brown leather strap. *Tourneau, 510 Madison Ave., 212-758-5830; tourneau.com*

"Not only are watches a portable form of self-expression, but also potential heirlooms with a life within them that's ever more fascinating in today's electronic world."—RUEDIGER ALBERS, PRESIDENT, WEMPE US

THE CLASSIC

Certain watch brands are sound investments whose regular appearances at auctions validate their status as icons. These pieces will never lose their value.

Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean 45.5mm (\$7,600): Crafted in grade-5 titanium with ceramic and Liquidmetal bezel, and water-resistant to 600 meters. It houses the Omega Co-Axial calibre 8500, a self-winding COSC-certified chronometer with a silicon balance spring. 711 Fifth Ave., 212-207-3333; omegawatches.com

Vacheron Constantin Overseas Chronograph Perpetual Calendar Boutique New York (\$62,000): Created to celebrate the brand's first boutique in the US, it houses the Calibre 1136 QP movement and features the colors of the American flag. 729 Madison Ave., 212-317-8964; vacheron-constantin.com

Patek Philippe Nautilus Ref. 5711/1A (\$25,400): Forged from steel with an in-house mechanical movement, powered by an extra-heavy 21k gold central rotor. Tiffany & Co., 727 Fifth Ave., 212-755-8000; tiffany.com

Audemars Piguet Royal Oak (\$14,000): Self-winding watch crafted in stainless steel case with bracelet. 65 E. 57th St., 212-758-8400; audemarspiguet.com

Rolex Oyster Perpetual Submariner Date (\$8,000): A COSC-certified chronometer that is made of steel and is pressure-proof and water-resistant up to 1,000 feet. Wempe, 700 Fifth Ave., 212-397-9000; wempe.com



CLOSING THE BILLION-DOLLAR DEAL

There is nothing quite like a power-player watch, a sophisticated statement maker that does certain jobs for you—and subtly says you have arrived.

IWC Portuguese Chronograph (\$15,600): Mechanical chronograph self-winding movement with 44 hours of power reserve, in 18k rose gold with black alligator strap. Stopwatch function with minutes and seconds, and a small hacking seconds. *Wempe, 700 Fifth Ave., 212-397-9000; wempe.com*

Harry Winston Midnight Big Date (\$30,700): In rose gold with a silver dial on an alligator strap. Features off-centered hours and minutes, and a twin-aperture date display at six o'clock. *718 Fifth Ave., 212-245-2000; harrywinston.com*

Carl F. Bucherer Patravi ChronoDate Annual Calendar (\$42,000): Chronograph with big date at 12 o'clock, annual calendar, COSC-certified chronometer and 18k rose-gold bracelet. *carl-f-bucherer.com*

Ralph Lauren Sporting World Time (\$26,000): In 18k rose gold on a black alligator strap, with dual time-zone capability; it is made of 305 components with 34 jewels. *867 Madison Ave., 212-606-2100; ralphlaurenwatches.com*

Cartier Calibre de Cartier Multi-Time Zone (\$39,300): An 18k rose-gold piece housing the 287-part Caliber 9909 MC and offering home time, travel time, day/night indications and the difference between the two selected time zones. *653 Fifth Ave., 212-753-0111; cartier.com*

TIME KEEPING

A WARDROBE OF WATCHES CAN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE IN VALUE OVER A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD. BUT BUILDING A MEANINGFUL TIMEPIECE COLLECTION IS MORE A PERSONAL JOURNEY THAN A RACE TO ROI, AS **ROBERTA NAAS** REVEALS.

Just over a year ago, John, a 40-something executive, was passing by a watch store, as he had done countless times before, when he suddenly stopped and went inside. For months he had been eyeing a certain timepiece in the window. Approximately one hour and \$6,000 later, John emerged from the store, his wrist clad in an impressive piece by IWC. That first serious watch acquisition was, he thought at the time, his only one. Today John is the proud owner of more than a dozen important timepieces, each valued at well over that initial \$6,000—and he admits he is nowhere near done.

“I found that I just love watches,” he says. “I love the mechanics of them, the design of them and the personality of them. Each one makes a statement about who I am. They are the only things that I can wear all the time that can become a true conversation piece—and I have had many a conversation about them.”

Indeed, according to another John—John Reardon, senior vice president who oversees watches and clocks at Sotheby’s—most collectors “find watches to be an extremely personal statement. People who are building a watch wardrobe are people who want to wear their watches, so they need to be educated and informed, they need to find a trusted partner or advisor when buying a watch, and they need to tread cautiously.”

In today’s world, timepieces can appreciate in value by as much as 30 percent in the ensuing years, which makes building a watch wardrobe a smart investment. The easiest way to start: Educate yourself, of course. There are numerous books that spotlight the finest watches in the world; every noteworthy brand has a website with a range of photos and an outline of every last specification; and a host of trade publications can direct you to what is best. Additionally, don’t go it alone. Find someone—a retailer, an auction house or even another collector—to help navigate your pursuit of the perfect collection; their expertise will be beneficial. Fluctuations in price, design, styling and technology can befuddle, and purchasing the wrong watch for you can prove a costly regret.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Naturally, design is a consideration to be taken seriously. One person will love a mechanical

marvel that another will easily shrug his shoulders at—even if it will triple or quadruple in value in the next 20 years. Selection is a personal choice, as budgetary concerns like price and the size of your wardrobe will dictate which watches you ultimately hone in on. (On the flip side, perhaps the only concern for a noninvestment buyer is wearability—making the timepieces fit the lifestyle.) Once you have all of this information in place, you still have a few issues to grapple with.

The rule of thumb is to have a target price for each and every watch you plan to buy—and stick to it. A strong watch wardrobe covers all price ranges, with comfortable weekend and sport watches starting at a few hundred dollars, building to the midrange business or boardroom styles in the thousands of dollars, and culminating in heirloom-quality masterpieces, complete with mechanics such as perpetual calendars, that can touch six figures (if you have the wherewithal, of course).

The predominant range for many watch wardrobes lies between \$25,000 and \$75,000. Says Reardon, “A Patek in this price is one of the most understated pieces, but it makes one of the most powerful statements. It says so much about a person’s knowledge of worth and watches, and his fearlessness of price points.”

Note that a good number of the boundary-pushing contemporary designs created by independent watchmakers fall between \$100,000 and a half million dollars. If you have the money, this is the ideal appreciation zone: The brands here offer artistically inspired creations, technological innovations and advanced designs and concepts that are destined to become the next legendary collectors items.

BE A CURATOR

Some people buy a watch based on an affinity for a certain category or brand. One collector told me that of his more than 100 watches, nearly 70 have blue dials or bezels because he loves that color. Another collector purchases only military- and aviation-inspired timepieces because he feels they suit his personality. Yet another buys only the brands considered the *ne plus ultra* of watchmaking—Audemars Piguet, Patek Philippe and Vacheron Constantin, for instance—because they will always retain their value.



An A. Lange & Söhne tourbillon watch

“The concepts in building a watch wardrobe are limitless,” says James Seuss, CEO of Tourneau. “You can buy only chronographs or only vintage; you can buy all complications, or buy across the board and have a watch for every aspect of your lifestyle. Most of our customers already own a chronograph, a vintage watch and a weekend watch. They’re ready to push the needle and go for something daring or complex like a Lange or a Hautlence. No matter what you buy, you want to be sure you will wear it and enjoy it.”

Just as there is no set price at which a watch becomes an absolute necessity, there is no set number of watches to own—although most experts agree that four is an acceptable minimum. For most men, this entails a sport watch, a casual weekend watch, a business watch and a specialty watch, reliable everyday pieces to which they can add as they please. But for the true connoisseur, once that spark is lit, the tally can easily stretch into the double digits.

“I don’t think anyone ever stops buying watches once he has the passion inside him,” says independent watchmaker Richard Mille. “Today’s watch lovers look for innovation and for creative implementation of truly useful functions. I love the idea of people wanting watches, but we must give them a sense of the art of watchmaking. The watch cannot be esoteric; it must be part of their lifestyle, in totally wearable form.” **G**

"A watch collector is a person of substance. He appreciates the finer things in life; he chooses to express his style through a subtle artistic design."

— JERRY BERN, MARSHALL PIERCE & COMPANY



THE BRAUN

Whether it's water sports, aviation, grand prix auto or another sporting category that suits your lifestyle, no watch wardrobe is complete without an accompanying athletic timepiece.

Ulysse Nardin Black Sea (\$9,900): Crafted in steel with matte-black rubber. The 45.8mm case houses the UN-26 self-winding movement and is water-resistant to 200 meters. *Burdeen's Jewelry, 1148 W. Lake Cook Road, Buffalo Grove, 847-459-8980; burdeens.com*

Breitling Chrono-Matic Blacksteel (\$9,130): Created in a limited edition of 2,000 pieces in black steel with a carbon-based treatment and red rubber molded rotating bezel on an Ocean Racer perforated rubber strap. Also features a tachymeter ring. *Marshall Pierce & Company, 335 N. Michigan Ave., 312-782-4403; marshallpierce.com*

Franck Muller Conquistador Grand Prix Chronograph Automatic (\$22,000): Houses the FM 7000 movement with 228 parts. The black titanium and red ergal watch offers chronograph functions, 48 hours of power reserve and is water-resistant to 10 atmospheres (330 feet). *Geneva Seal Fine Jewelry & Timepieces, 112 E. Oak St., 312-944-3100; genevaseal.com*

Officine Panerai Radiomir 8 Days Ceramica 45mm (\$15,500): Made of high-tech ceramic, it houses the hand-wound Panerai P2002/3 caliber with KIF Parechoc antishock device. It offers and eight-day liner power reserve indicator. *Swiss FineTiming Atelier Jewellers, 645 N. Michigan Ave., 312-337-4700; swissfinetiming.com*