

FASCINATIONS GALORE



Splendid and wonderful... these are some of the words that come to mind if one were to visit this year's edition of the world's most prestigious watch exhibition, the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie. There were so many wonderful pieces that it seemed overwhelming at times. Surging past the excitement, here are 16 watches that stood out, and hold great promise as collectibles. These are special for many reasons; some boasted of a new development in an

iconic collection, others of a brilliant complication or a new combination of complications, or an altogether new invention.

Here are some of my favourites.

The **A. Lange & Söhne** Lange 1 Daymatic came across as a truly iconic piece, with its off-centre dial arrangement and the patented outside date display.

The **Audemars Piguet** Royal Oak Equation of Time reinterpreted the equation of time complication, adding another historical chapter in the Royal Oak series.

Baume & Mercier presented the Classima Executives XL Dual Time Chronograph—an elegant display of time and watch-making brilliance.

Cartier's Rotonde de Cartier Astrotourbillon incorporated a tourbillon that rotates around the two-level dial, a revolutionary movement, developed entirely in-house.

Girard-Perregaux's Laureato GP Quartz 40th Anniversary was not only a spectacular presentation, but also a grand tribute to the company's quartz heritage.

Debutant **Greubel Forsey** showed its Double Tourbillon Technique, which offered a spellbinding view of the anti-gravitational complication.

IWC unveiled a new version of the Portuguese, called the Tourbillon Mystère Retrograde. For the first time, a date indicator with a flyback function at the end of the month has been integrated into this exceptional watch.

Jaeger-LeCoultre highlighted a true achievement with its Reverso Squadra Chronograph GMT Palermo Open.

The **Montblanc** TimeWriter 1 Metamorphosis presented a real breakthrough—a watch with two dials and two functions. By moving a slide down or up, this timepiece changes from a wristwatch with an hour, minute, second display to a chronograph and vice versa.

Panerai's Luminor 1950 Equation of Time Tourbillon Titanio – 50 MM L'Astronomo is a tribute to Galileo Galilei. It features a tourbillon with equation of time, sunrise and sunset timings for the city of your choice and a depiction of the night sky of the same city on the back.

Parmigiani revealed the Bugatti Atalante Flyback Chronograph, another creation inspired by the world of automobile design.

Piaget presented the Altiplano 43 mm 'anniversary edition' – Calibre 1200P, which set a new record for slimness, and combined it with superior reliability.

Another debutant **Richard Mille** displayed its watch-making virtuosity with the RM 017 Tourbillon, by developing one of the thinnest tourbillon constructions.

Roger Dubuis made a shining presentation, with its EasyDiver for women. A sumptuous feast of colour and materials, it is evocative of the brand's flair for aesthetics.

Vacheron Constantin presented the limited edition Patrimony Traditionnelle 'Calibre 2253', with a tourbillon escapement, along with a perpetual calendar, the equation of time, and the timings of sunrise and sunset.

Van Cleef & Arpels stunned visitors with its Butterfly Symphony timepiece. Powered by a retrograde movement, two butterflies indicate the passing of minutes and hours.

Evidently, the trend was that of prestige complications. The design and aesthetics on display reconfirm the new paradigm of luxury, which is an increase in consumer demand for classic pieces that can be worn for any occasion. While all these tourbillons were enough to steal one's heart, there was one more innovation in the watch industry. It was the introduction of the Tablet watch. The PC-Tablet is the newest tool to improve the skills of any sales force, without them having to travel to the Swiss Alps or out of their shops. Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie (FHH) has introduced this sales tool for the benefit of the entire watch industry. So that retailers and watch aficionados can have all the information they desire at their fingertips. To know more, log onto hautehorlogerie.org.

Besides attending the 20th edition of the SIHH, our visit to Geneva also witnessed an exclusive *Time 'n Style* photo shoot with Chopard. It was one of the most memorable experiences we've ever had. Our Photo Feature, the product of the shoot, is a preview of the Animal Collection, which Chopard will unveil in Basel to commemorate its 150th anniversary. The entire team did a fabulous job and this is clearly visible through the results, which can be viewed in our Photo Feature (Page #50).

We are now headed to another important and the largest global event in watch-making—BASELWORLD. This is the place where trends are set, new products, creations and innovations are unveiled. Hublot has already caught the world's attention with a sneak peek of their Big Bang watch in red, an expression of undying love.

After a year of negative Swiss watch exports (in 2009, it reached CHF 13.2 billion, down by 22.3 per cent from 2008), encouraging signs of recovery were registered at the end of 2009; November and December recording a single digit drop. It's exciting for all of us to look forward to Basel and bring home the latest news for all you readers out here.

Until then,

Cheers,

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