THE BIG INTERVIEW
Lewis Hamilton on his new collaboration with IWC

BETTER STARTS NOW
The new Citizen Eco-Drive 365
The G-SHOCK Master of G line is developed for professionals working in the harshest environments and come equipped with even tougher functionality. The MUDMASTER GWGB1000 takes this even further with the ability to handle the roughest on-land environments. The comfortably sized GWGB1000 features a robust exterior incorporating a guarding structure built with a metal exterior crafted with high-precision forging techniques and a carbon fiber-reinforced resin case that offers high strength and outstanding durability. Bluetooth® connected, Radio-controlled and solar-powered, the watch is also equipped with a triple sensor that keeps you updated with direction, altitude, barometric pressure, and temperature readings. Double LED lights and sapphire crystal ensure high readability so you always see the time and other readings, no matter what the conditions are like. Use of bio-based resins for the case, some bezel components, and the band make for a watch that demonstrates the MUDMASTER commitment to the environment. Enjoy both fearless adventure and a comfortable fit with this tough and rugged Master of G MUDMASTER flagship timepiece.

PLEASE EMAIL G-SHOCK AT MMILLER@CASIO.COM FOR ANY G-SHOCK INQUIRES

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In the immediate aftermath of Rolex’s proposed acquisition of Bucherer, reaction fell into two broad camps. One group of executives in the watch trade thought they would see little or no change for Rolex, Bucherer, the legions of Rolex official retail partners or consumers, at least in the short- to medium-term; a horizon of around five years.

Another group thought it would only be a matter of time before Rolex and Bucherer expanded as advantages became clear for a fully vertically integrated company from the manufacture of components and finished watches right through to retail and after-sales service.

I wonder whether a third outcome is in play: that Rolex is actually limiting the power of major multiples and nudging its support in the direction of the most successful family-owned independents, particularly multi-generation businesses with solid succession plans for the future.

Rolex has always had its authorised dealers on a tight leash, and has the power to limit or assist with any expansion plans. Acquisitions of any other Rolex retailer (and the same goes for Patek Philippe partners) will almost never go ahead unless the powerful brands have given them the green light.

Investing millions in new or expanded showrooms is equally unlikely to proceed unless these brands give assurances that they will be represented in the stores and promise allocations of watches to justify the cost. So, what message might Rolex be sending with the acquisition of Bucherer?

First, it is clear that two historic Swiss businesses prefer to remain in Swiss ownership. This is one reason why Watches of Switzerland Group would have found it harder to buy Bucherer (for clarity, we do not know whether it was ever in the running), and why a private equity play never had legs. In addition, crucially, Rolex immediatelyacquires the ability to entirely control the size of Bucherer in the future, and maintains its strong influence over Watches of Switzerland Group’s expansion plans.

My hypothesis is that Rolex likes the current size of both major multiples across Europe and the United States, at least as far as their allocations and number of doors are concerned, and likes the current balance between multiples and family-owned independents. If anything, it may feel it wants to signal support for its indies.

Paradoxically, by buying Bucherer, Rolex may be telling family-owned independent jewellers they will always have their backs.

Rob Corder
CO-FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, WATCHPRO

COVER PROMOTION COURTESY OF CITIZEN
This season’s Citizen Eco-Drive 365 series of solar-powered timepieces aren’t just about telling time, they are a commitment to a sustainable tomorrow. Inspired by a 1973 quartz model, the collection is a reflection of timeless elegance reimagined for the modern age.
The price of classic Blancpain Fifty Fathoms watches have leapt by 15% on the secondary market since the brand collaborated with Swatch to launch the Blancpain X Swatch Bioceramic Scuba Fifty Fathoms.

Omega's Speedmaster experienced a similar bounce, according to Subdial, a pre-owned specialist that maintains charts of prices for watches from major brands on the secondary market.

Subdial's research found that the price of a core collection Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe ref. 5000-1110-B52A rose from an average of £6,137 (approx. $7,475) to £6,950 ($8,465) in the month following the Blancpain X Swatch Bioceramic Scuba Fifty Fathoms launch.

Prior to the Swatch launch, the price had been sliding since October of last year, so the bounce, for a watch with relatively low trading volumes, may just be a blip.

Subdial notes that it is too early to say whether the price rise is the start of an upward trend, but describes the 15% hike as striking in the context of a broadly flat market over the summer for the most traded watches from the likes of Rolex, Omega, Patek Philippe and Audemars Piguet.

Thinner trading for watches like the Fifty Fathoms is likely to have magnified a relatively small number of watches being sold at slightly higher prices.

But, what about the impact of the original Moon-Swatch launch on Omega’s Speedmaster, which changes hands on the secondary market far more frequently? Here, the prices have been less volatile.

In the month following the release in March 2022, there was a 6% increase in prices for the Omega Moonwatch but since the summer of last year, prices have been cooling, and now sit at roughly the same level as before the MoonSwatch launch.

It is also important to note that the secondary market prices for both the Blancpain and the Speedmaster are well below retail.

Blancpain’s Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe ref. 5000-1110-B52A costs over $11,000, Omega’s Moonwatch is currently $7,000.

CERAMIC TO STEEL SAVING

A new Zenith El Primero Chronomaster Sport has been launched with a retro steel 1/10th of a second bezel replacing the more modern ceramic version. Generously, Zenith is passing on the cost saving to customers. It went on sale this month for $10,500, slightly less than the original model with a ceramic bezel, which is now selling for $11,000. Another tweak is the creation of a star-shaped oscillating weight, a nod to the star that sits above Zenith’s logo.
Coleman Clark, president of BC Clark, a family-owned and operated business in Oklahoma since 1892, has been elected as chair of Jewelers of America. JA has also elected four new directors for a three-year term.

**JEWELERS OF AMERICA’S NEW CHAIR**

Coleman Clark, president of BC Clark, a family-owned and operated business in Oklahoma since 1892, has been elected as chair of Jewelers of America. JA has also elected four new directors for a three-year term.

**JAY-Z SELLS HIS JACOB & CO.**

A Jacob & Co. Caviar Tourbillon World Timer donated by Jay-Z has sold for $1.5 million at a star-studded charity auction raising money for the Reform Alliance prisoner charity.

**MAURICE DE MAURIAC**

Zurich-based watchmaker is supporting breast cancer awareness charities this month with the release of a special edition of its L3 chronograph in cherry blossom pink.

**AUDEMARS PIGUET IS INCREASING PRODUCTION FROM AROUND 50,000 WATCHES TODAY TO 57,000 IN 2025**

**FRANÇOIS BENNAHMIAS, OUTGOING AP CEO**

Only Watch, the blockbuster bi-annual auction of unique watches that raises money for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy research, is facing increasingly shrill calls to explain where $100 million raised at its auctions since 2005 is being spent, and whether the event’s creator, Luc Pettavino, has been personally profiting. Head to USA.WatchPro.com to follow the money trail that shows half the money, around $50m, is yet to be allocated.
WATCHES OF SWITZERLAND DIRECTORS BUY THEIR OWN SHARES AFTER PRICE SLUMP

Watches of Switzerland board members have loaded up on stock after the group’s share price fell by 25% following the announcement that Rolex will be acquiring WoSG’s rival retailer Bucherer.

Board members Tea Colaianni, Ian Carter, Robert Moorhead and Anders Romberg, all bought significant volumes of WoSG shares. An Annual General Meeting held on August 30 gave the green light for the company to make market purchases of its own shares. The four directors filed a notice with the London Stock Exchange that they had bought shares with a total value of £890,000 at a price per share of around £5.90. That prompted a mini rally in the stock, which opened the following day at 610p, but the bounceback has since run out of steam and started October with the price heading towards 500p.

Watches of Switzerland Group’s share price had been sliding since a 52-week high of around 1000p in May as economic headwinds and continuing supply constraints trimmed growth prospects and even led to a small fall in year-on-year sales in the company’s most recent quarter (largely put down to a bulge in supply in the same quarter last year).

Rolex’s acquisition of Bucherer caused uncertainty among investors that the playing field could become unlevel when it comes to allocations of watches or opportunities to retain or open Rolex stores.

Watches of Switzerland directors buying their own stock will have been seen as a sign of confidence that the Bucherer acquisition will have little or no effect on its relationship with Rolex.

The luxury watch industry, led by the Swiss with competition from prestigious watchmakers in Japan and Germany, is having its best ever year.

Swiss watch exports have risen by almost 10% since the beginning of the year; building on last year’s record of CHF 25 billion.

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GENNA ZIMMER’S SAFE CRACKING

An exciting Safe-Cracker game was one of the big talking points of the WatchPro Awards in New York City, with WOLF providing a huge green watch winder safe and Luxury Bazaar donating an unworn Rolex Explorer as a prize.

It was a simple game with a big prize for the winner. All 200 guests at the WatchPro Awards had a unique six-digit number printed on their dining table’s name place holder. One of the codes would open the safe, with the winner claiming the Rolex, worth around $13,000, as their prize.

At intervals through the evening, the first two numbers of the code were revealed on the big screen, then the third, fourth and fifth. With each digit, the number of people still in the running was whittled down until just three remained.

Clutching their codes, the three finalists came to the stage to try their luck with the WOLF safe. Two codes failed, but the guests were rewarded for their podium position with a bottle of Champagne. The third had the code that cracked the safe.

And that winner was Genna Zimmer, vice-president at REEDS Jewelers, who immediately declared she would gift the watch to one of REEDS Jewelers’ charity partners.

“I’m thinking a silent auction of some sort with proceeds either benefiting Jewelers For Children and/or the Zimmer Cancer Institute,” she said.
New Perspectives

Imagine a finely crafted mechanical timepiece, inspired by Japanese tradition with a modern, fresh touch. That timepiece is here. Presage

Japanese beauty, crafted into a mechanical timepiece.

Presage

SEIKO

SINCE 1881
CITIZEN’S SCORES WITH COLORED AUTOMATICS

Just a few short years ago, color was something that didn’t really belong in the watch world beyond a few freakish niche designs. Black, white and silver dials remained the standard, while navy blue and British racing green were seen as flamboyant and showy alternatives. But the late 2010s brought the rainbow revolution and suddenly horology opened itself up to a bright new world. Unfortunately, many timepieces in the color field come with a large price tag to match, so when a collection of eye-catching wrist candy with an accessible price point appears on the market, it is universally welcomed. And that is exactly the case for Citizen’s NJ015 Automatic ‘Tsuyosa’ range. Citizen unleashed models from sunshine yellow and turquoise to royal blue, forest green and, of course, the staple black. Each dial has a subtle sunray finish and is adorned with simple baton-style indices and a date window at 3 o’clock that features a magnifying lens. Powering the Tsuyosa is an in-house Citizen automatic Cal. 8210 movement with approximately 40 hours of power reserve. The movement can be viewed via the exhibition caseback. Retailers have been reporting difficulties keeping the $450 Tsuyosa watches in stock, such was the demand since they launched in the summer.
A SYMPHONY OF TIME AND SUSTAINABILITY

Making a grand entrance in the Fall/Winter of 2023, the new Eco-Drive 365 series of solar-powered timepieces aren’t just about telling time; rather, they are a commitment to a sustainable tomorrow.

Imagine a watch that captures the essence of time and channels it through the sun’s dance. Such is the promise of Eco-Drive 365, where the revolutionary Caliber E365 Eco-Drive movement powers a seamless 365 days of operation with just a single full charge. This isn’t merely a device for keeping track of time, it is a pledge to intertwine precision with environmental responsibility.

The origins of Citizen’s foray into sustainable timekeeping can be traced back to the early 1970s, a period marked by a global energy crisis. It was then that Citizen first looked to the sun as a non-polluting and renewal form of energy creating the Eco-Drive system and the world’s first light-powered analog watch.

Fast forward to today and Citizen’s Eco-Drive stands as a beacon of innovation, harnessing not just sunlight but the spirit of eco-mindfulness. The watches embody the brand ethos of being “Loved by citizens, working for citizens,” drawing energy from the light that is all around us.

The design narrative of the Eco-Drive 365 series is a journey through time. Inspired by a 1973 quartz model, these watches are a reflection of timeless elegance reimagined for the modern age. The stainless-steel case is a hallmark of Citizen’s legacy and pays homage to the brand’s heritage.

Diving into the technical allure, the BN1015-52E (a stealthy black ion-plated stainless-steel case and bracelet) and BN1014-55E (stainless-steel case and bracelet) aren’t just watches; they are modern marvels. Their dials, reminiscent of a star-studded sky, are a poetic rendition of the beauty of the universe. The intricate interplay of vertical lines and the sleek brass hands transcend mere timekeeping to become a perfect blend of design and functionality.

Meanwhile, the limited-edition BN1010-O5E model, with steel case and Leather Working Group-certified strap, features a dial adorned with lab-grown rubies, not only exuding luxury but also underscoring a commitment to ethical sourcing. Echoes of the Citizen Quartz EFA from 1973 reverberate in a timepiece that goes beyond fleeting trends. The lab-grown gems that act as the cardinal indices are ethically crafted and meticulously set, becoming more than embellishments, acting as a testament to the brand’s unwavering commitment to responsible luxury.

The deeper one looks into the Eco-Drive 365, the more evident it becomes that this is a watch where the meticulous fusion of classic elegance and modern sustainability unite in a celebration of Citizen’s ethos that sees watches not just as accessories but as statements. More than instruments for measuring time, these timepieces are declarations of style, sustainability, and a brighter tomorrow.

Within the case, the Calibre E365 movement doesn’t just promise accuracy but invites wearers on a year-long journey on a single charge. The 10 BAR water resistance ensures these timepieces are ready for any adventures that life throws our way.

In a world where every tick is a moment and every moment is a choice, Eco-Drive 365 beckons us to choose not just the rhythm of time but the melody of sustainability. Citizen’s statement of “Better Starts Now” isn’t just a tagline for the brand, it’s a daily reminder that time, when crafted with purpose, becomes timeless. These watches weave history, innovation, and sustainability into each tick, beckoning customers to embrace a future where time doesn’t just pass, it evolves. In the grand symphony of life, Eco-Drive 365 emerges as a harmonious note, inviting us to join the melody of a more sustainable and elegant existence.

Prices are $550 for BN1015-52E, $495 for BN1014-55E and $895 for BN1010-O5E.
Who walked away with WatchPro’s beautifully carved sustainable trophies at the inaugural WatchPro Awards in New York City?

The inaugural WatchPro Awards in New York City established itself as a must-attend event for the American watch industry last month with 200 leaders from the country’s greatest retailers and watchmakers gathering for the celebration.

It was a night when deeply-rooted American retailers beat off competition from the European giants to pick up prestigious awards on the night.

WatchPro Awards are voted on by the industry, with retailers voting for the watch brands they have admired most over the past year and executives from the watch brands voting for the retailers they have most admired.

Retailers were asked to consider watch brands’ product quality, availability and innovation, marketing support, clear and consistent communication, value for money, profitability and impact on their business.

Watch brand executives were asked to vote based on their experience working with retailers’ owners and executive team, showroom design and locations, e-commerce and online presence, marketing and client events and after sales service and support.

In essence, the methodology aims to uncover the teams that have made an incredible impact to their businesses in the United States, and have less emphasis on the contribution of head offices overseas.

Here we present the winners of the 2023 WatchPro Awards in the order they were revealed.
MULTI-GENERATIONAL WATCH RETAILER OF THE YEAR
The first retailer award of the night recognized the Multi-Generational Watch Retailer of the Year — family-owned businesses with the deepest roots in the American watch industry.

The award was sponsored by Luminox and presented by the company’s marketing manager Francina Hahn.

The finalists for Multi-Generational Watch Retailer of the Year were:
- London Jewelers
- Hamilton Jewelers
- Razny Jewelers
- Oliver Smith Jewelers
- Govberg Jewelers

And the winner is: London Jewelers

JEWELRY WATCH BRAND OF THE YEAR
The next award of the night was for Jewelry Watch Brand of the Year, a category for watch manufacturers with a specialization in highly decorated gem-encrusted timepieces.

The finalists were:
- Cartier
- Bulgari
- Chanel
- Chopard
- Piaget

And the winner is: Chopard

BEST NEW OR REFURBISHED BRANDED STORE OF THE YEAR
This award is for stores that are run directly by brands and aim to give customers a full immersive experience.

The finalists were:
- Panerai in New York City
- TAG Heuer in New York City
- Chopard in New York City
- IWC in Beverly Hills, Tennessee
- Omega in Nashville, Tennessee

And the winner is: Panerai in New York City

MARKETING ACTIVATION OF THE YEAR
Marketing Activation of the Year, or to give the award its full title: Marketing, events, collaboration or partnership activation of the year, recognizes outstanding work in the ever-changing field of marketing across physical and digital media.

Those finalists were:
- Windup Watch Fair, New York City
- Watchtime, New York City
- Rihanna wearing Jacob & Co for her half time Super Bowl performance
- IWC’s Miami Design District basketball challenge with Lewis Hamilton during the Formula 1 weekend
- TAG Heuer’s 60th Anniversary Carrera promotion, “The Chase For Carrera” Movie with Ryan Gosling

And the winner is: TAG Heuer for its Carrera campaign
AFFORDABLE LUXURY WATCH BRAND OF THE YEAR
The next award of the night was for Affordable Luxury Watch Brand of the Year, a fiercely competitive part of the market that is often a gateway into the horological world for new customers. It was open to brands operating predominately in the $1,500 to $5,000 price segment.

The finalists were:
- Longines
- Oris
- Hamilton

And the winner is: Frederique Constant

BEST NEW STORE OF THE YEAR
Panerai had already picked up the gong for Best New Store by a watch brand, but this award is for retailers that have built either a multi-brand store under their own name or a branded boutique.

The finalists for Best New Store of the Year were:
- Ben Bridge, Seattle Design District
- Watches of Switzerland, New Jersey
- Patek Philippe, Fink’s
- Patek Philippe, by Nineteen Sixteen Company, Miami

And the winner is: Patek Philippe by Nineteen Sixteen Company in Miami.

BEST REFURBISHED STORE OF THE YEAR
The next award of the night was for Best Refurbished Store of the Year, a category open only to specialist retailers that have invested in some remarkable upgrades to their showrooms this year.

The finalists were:
- Bucherer for TimeDome in Las Vegas
- Polacheck’s Jewelers in Princeton, New Jersey
- Hamilton Jewelers in Mayors in Dadeland, Florida
- Mayors in Dadeland, Florida

And the winner is: Polacheck’s in California.

PRE-OWNED WATCH RETAILER OF THE YEAR
WatchPro has always considered the secondary and primary parts of the watch industry to be complementary and symbiotic to each other, so we were delighted to welcome so many of America’s biggest players to the Awards.

The finalists for Pre-Owned Retailer of the Year were:
- Audemars Piguet
- Patek Philippe
- Lange & Söhne
- Vacheron Constantin
- Jaeger-LeCoultre

And the winner is: A. Lange & Söhne

Joy Tarbox, managing director for luxury brands at Citizen Watch America, collected the award on behalf of Frederique Constant.

Father and son Stephen and Brent Polacheck.
INDEPENDENT WATCH RETAILER OF THE YEAR

One of the most fiercely contested awards of the night was for Independent Watch Retailer of the Year.

This award is sponsored by Citizen Watch America, and presented by Joy Tarbox, managing director luxury brands for Accutron, Frederique Constant and Alpina.

All of the finalists for this award attended the gala dinner at Cipriani in New York City. Those finalists were:

- Zadok Jewelers
- Material Good
- Manfredi Jewels
- Hing Wa Lee
- Razny Jewelers
- Louis Anthony Jewelers
- Jaeger-LeCoultre
- Remarkably, there was a dead heat in the vote for this award, which meant we had two winners.

Those joint winners are: Razny Jewelers and Zadok Jewelers

LUXURY WATCH BRAND OF THE YEAR

Next we turned to the Luxury Watch Brand of the Year, which is for manufacturers producing watches predominantly priced at over $10,000.

There were some heavyweight contenders among our finalists which were:

- Audemars Piguet
- Patek Philippe
- Vacheron Constantin
- Lange & Söhne
- Jaeger-LeCoultre

And the winner is: A. Lange & Söhne

AMERICAN WATCH BRAND OF THE YEAR

We turned to the domestic watchmaking industry for our next award, which is for American Watch Brand of the Year.

The category is open to brands that are headquartered in the United States, but do not necessarily have to manufacture here.

The finalists were:

- N. Shapiro
- Zodiac
- Wilbur Watch Co.
- Bulova
- Brew Watch Co.

And the winner is: Brew Watch Co.

MULTIPLE WATCH RETAILER OF THE YEAR

That brought us to the final award of the night, for Multiple Watch Retailer of the Year, a category that is open to businesses with more than 10 stores in the United States.

This award was sponsored by WOLF and presented by Alberto Petochi, the watch winder specialist’s sales director.

Again, we were delighted that so many of the finalists attended on the night.

The finalists for Multiple Watch Retailer of the Year were:

- London Jewelers
- REEDS Jewelers
- Bucherer | Tourneau
- Mayors
- Ben Bridge
- And the winner is: REEDS Jewelers

USA WATCHPRO.COM
LEWIS HAMILTON’S JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Lewis Hamilton talks to Tracey Llewellyn about his recent collaboration with IWC Schaffhausen, his passion for watches and his future ambitions.
Late last month, IWC unveiled the Portugieser Tourbillon Rétrograde Chronograph Lewis Hamilton, the brand’s third exclusive watch collaboration with seven-time Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton. The working partnership, which began in 2013, has evolved into a remarkable journey of horological exploration. And, in an interview with WatchPro following qualifying sessions for this year’s Italian Grand Prix, Hamilton shared his insights into the new watch and his personal passion for precision timekeeping.

“I've always loved watches. My first was a Mickey Mouse watch from Disneyland when I was six years old,” he says. “As I grew up I started noticing adults wearing timepieces and then I began seeing them in music videos, and for me they became the ultimate accessory. But I never thought that I would get to work with a brand like IWC.”

After signing with Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team in 2013, Hamilton’s infectious curiosity led to the creation of his inaugural watch with the Swiss brand. “The first thing I did was to ask, ‘Can I do my own watch?’,” he remembers. “It was at such an early phase in our relationship so, we did make a watch but, due to development time, there wasn’t a lot we could do to put my stamp on it.”

However, Hamilton had caught the bug and the desire to go deeper into the world of watchmaking, and to understand the craftsmanship behind these intricate timepieces, led him to visit the IWC manufacture in Schaffhausen. “I went and spent time at the manufacture and I got to see the making process,” he explains. “I love collaborating with people, and getting to work with the watch designers and see some of the things that they had already created was amazing.

“Each time we have collaborated, we have gone a little bit deeper. I don’t think IWC had worked like this with an ambassador before, so it was really a case of testing the water each time, kind of taking an extra step further into the unknown. The dream is to one day have a piece that I have been fully a part of designing.”

The first two watches – the Ingenieur Chronograph Edition Lewis Hamilton Ref. IW379602 that launched in an edition of 250 in 2014, and the 100-piece Big Pilot’s Watch Perpetual Calendar Edition Lewis Hamilton Ref. IW503002 from 2019 – showed a natural progression in terms of personal style and function. And the new Portugieser Tourbillon Rétrograde Chronograph is testament to the decade-long convergence of Hamilton’s vision and IWC’s masterful craftsmanship.

As well as something technical and complex, with this latest collaboration Hamilton aimed to create a watch that matched the elegance of the high-profile fashion events that he increasingly attends. “With this new one, I was thinking about all these beautiful events that I go to, like the Met Ball, and I wanted the watch to be extra special to match occasions as unique as these.”

The result of this creative journey is a watch that exudes luxury and precision and seems to reflect Hamilton’s personality. Due to the technical complexities and precious materials, the watch
“DIAMONDS SHOULD NOT BE JUST FOR WOMEN’S WATCHES AND I THINK THEY REALLY HELP ELEVATE THE LOOK. AND SO I PERSUADED IWC TO ADD THE STONES – I THINK THE RESULT IS GREAT.”

The 43.5mm platinum watch features a teal dial adorned with 12 dazzling diamonds, as well as Lewis Hamilton’s personal logo.

will be made in a limited edition of 44 pieces, its CHF150,000 price tag (it is only priced in Swiss francs) reflecting this. “Since I was eight years old, 44 has been my race number and I think making the watch very exclusive this time round just made it extra special,” Hamilton says explaining the edition number.

The timepiece boasts a platinum case measuring 43.5 millimetres in diameter, framing an opulent teal dial adorned with 12 dazzling diamonds, as well as Hamilton’s logo consisting of a stylised winged figure forming the letter ‘V’, representing victory. The embodiment of precision, the face features slightly recessed subdials for the chronograph totaliser and the retrograde date, resulting in a strong, sculptural finish.

“I wanted to use platinum because it is as high as you can go in terms of material. And the diamonds on the dial were something else that I love,” Hamilton says. “Diamonds should not be just for women’s watches and I think they really help elevate the look. And so, I persuaded IWC to put the stones on – I think they were a little bit nervous about it, but I think the result is great.”

One of the dial’s most captivating features is the flying hacking minute tourbillon at 6 o’clock. Beyond its mesmerising aesthetic, the tourbillon serves as a perpetual, dial-side reminder of the watchmaker’s constant quest for absolute precision – and is symbolic of the race driver’s pursuit of the same. The integrated hacking feature allows the wearer to halt the mechanism, enabling time setting down to the second. Comprising 56 individual components and weighing a mere 0.675 grams, every element of the tourbillon is designed for accuracy and function.

Hamilton’s admiration for the complexity of the component led to his desire to include it in the watch. “I have been fascinated by the tourbillon since I first saw it at Schaffhausen in 2014,” he says. “I was like ‘what is that?’ And they explained it and showed me the movement. It was so special.”

As a Formula One driver, Hamilton understands the significance of timing precision in both racing and watchmaking. “I always want everything to be perfect and, as a driver, I am chasing precision. And the smallest changes can make the biggest difference. We alter the height of the car by one millimetre and you can feel it on the track, but it’s such a small amount and people can’t understand it. Even for me today, it is crazy that a millimetre or even half a millimetre on the front right can make a difference to a lap time.

“When you watch a car being pulled together by a team of skilled engineers and a watch with 500 components, all individually hand-crafted, being
assembled, it is so similar. On the track, I am constantly chasing the clock for that 1,000th of a second and IWC is for sure the most aligned partnership that Team Mercedes can have because time is everything for us. For these reasons, I wanted the most accurate watch that I could have."

The elegance that is so important to Hamilton, continues into the IWC-manufactured Calibre 89900, a chronograph movement that enables elapsed hours and minutes to be displayed on a single counter at 12 o’clock, ensuring ease of use and an uncluttered dial layout.

Both the pallet lever and escape are made in silicon and are coated with a layer of diamonds. Known as Diamond Shell technology, this significantly reduces friction within the movement, enhancing the energy flow and contributing to the substantial power reserve of 68 hours. Other components, including the bridges, are gold-plated – a nod to the legendary Il Destriero Scafusia from 1993 – and can be admired through the sapphire-crystal caseback.

But above the glitz and glamour, when Hamilton talks about IWC, it is obvious that the partnership goes way beyond a simple sponsorship. It is, he stresses, about shared values and making an impact. “It doesn’t fill my spirit or energise me to work with any brand as a pure transaction,” he says. “I just don’t feel excited about that at all. When I work with a brand, I need to know what their values are and that they are aligned with mine, which they are with IWC.

“I need to know that they are always chasing to be better and that they are open-minded to change and open to collaborating because I want to learn from the experience and be able to ask questions. I want to work with the specialists and pull things out of myself that I didn’t know I was capable of doing. Who would ever have thought that I would have a watch that looks this good? And then on top of that sitting down and really building that partnership and looking at the impact.

“I remember speaking to Chris [Grainger-Herr, CEO of IWC] and talking about inclusivity and how we can be more open and more inclusive moving forward when we do events. He was so, so open and we are pushing forward with it. We did a great event in Miami this year [the IWC Chrono Basketball Challenge] where we brought a bunch of kids from the community there who would never normally be invited to an event like that. So, yes, I am very much an IWC man and I am so grateful for the partnership and I’ve been dying to just have this watch so I can just wear it to the track.”
Christoph Grainger-Herr and Lewis Hamilton with Dibia DREAM Foundation during The IWC Chrono Challenge organized by IWC in Miami Design District in May. ©John Parra/Getty Images for IWC
As Hamilton's journey with IWC continues, he envisions a future where he takes an even more hands-on approach to watch design: “Since I was a kid I have always taken things apart – the microwave or the washing machine. My mum would go crazy – especially when I couldn’t put the doors back on. I think I got it from my dad. He was a mechanic and I would watch him take a car apart and put it back together and I always wanted to be like him in that respect. Something I would love to do with him is find a car and for both of us to strip it down and rebuild it. I don’t know when we are going to get the time as I have just signed for another two years so it will have to wait for a little bit longer.”

And these building ambitions continue into the horological world. When I ask if he has had the chance to tear down and re-build a watch movement, Hamilton smiles. “I don’t know how decent I will be at it but I would love that opportunity. It’s something I want to do when I have more time on my hands. I’m definitely interested in what’s happening out there and how the watch market is evolving. I’ve got a nice little collection and I would love to design more. I don’t know what we will do next. I would actually like to have my own range. Not just in watches – I want to have an ‘L Class’ for Mercedes. There’s a lot of different projects we have going, so we’ll see.”

One current project that combines Hamilton’s passion for storytelling and creation is his venture into film production. Known among his friends for his love of movies and as a man who constantly references film moments, he says of his Dawn Apollo Films company: “I’ve spent the past six or seven years realising that I can’t race forever. And I’ve spoken to a lot of athletes who have focused so much on their sport, that they’re not prepared for what comes after. It’s usually a big shock.

“Every athlete misses what they’ve been doing their whole life – and racing IS my life, but there will be a time when it isn’t, so I was trying to discover things that I’m passionate about. I think storytelling is so important and we need more positive stories out there. I want to create something, so I started the production company and with the first movie I went in high casting Brad Pitt. I don’t know where we go from here but I’m reading scripts and working with amazing people. The whole thing is very surreal and something I’m crazy excited about.”

This passion and enthusiasm is something that runs through everything Hamilton does and his enduring journey with IWC is a testament to the power of collaboration, precision and a relentless pursuit of excellence – both on and off the racetrack.

The latest collaboration symbolises the fusion of artistry, craftsmanship, and passion and celebrates the precision that unites the realms of motorsport and horology. With each beat of the Portugieser Tourbillon Rétrograde Chronograph Lewis Hamilton, we are reminded that the pursuit of excellence is an ongoing journey – an odyssey that Lewis Hamilton and IWC Schaffhausen wholeheartedly embrace together.
Long’s Jewelers is expanding in an increasingly competitive luxury watch market as Rob Corder discovered on a visit to its new Rolex showroom in Boston ahead of an opening with Patek Philippe right across the street.

WATCHPRO: We are sitting here in the early Fall sunshine of Boston in your beautiful new Rolex boutique that opened in 2021. Over the road on Newbury Street you have shown me the building site that will become a Long’s fine jewelry and Patek Philippe destination. What can you tell me about that project?

Craig Rottenberg: In time for the holidays, we will be opening a new two storey Long’s directly across from this Rolex showroom that will be our first Patek Philippe store. The ground floor will be entirely dedicated to Patek Philippe and the second floor will be the traditional Long’s offering of fine jewelry, fashion jewelry, pre-owned jewelry and watches.

WP: Forgive me for being obsessed with this, but I understand you have outdoor space on the second floor, a trend that seems to have blown up among retailers in the past couple of years, even those towards the north of the United States where the weather is not always the best.

CR: We do, which in Boston may be used for only a limited part of the year, but we really intend to enjoy it.
hospitals are a draw, so what we have seen in the two and a half years we have had this Rolex store is an incredible number of tourists. That has become stronger and stronger.

WP: Most retailers in university cities tell me they get a bump at the start and end of the academic year as families fly in their precious offspring. Do you see that here with two of the top institutions in the world, Harvard and MIT, in your orbit?
CR: We certainly see a back to school peak, but we also have a consistent level of regular tourism and business travel coming to Boston. This has become a major international city that attracts people from across the United States and overseas.

WP: Is that because customers want to see how their jewelry looks in natural light?
CR: It is part of the shift in recent years towards focusing on customer experience. In our case, we saw that there was a rooftop for the building that was not used, so we are going to make it something special for our clients.

WP: You opened your Rolex showroom on Newbury Street in Boston before there was any real impetus for this becoming a destination for watch lovers, but that appears to have triggered a rush to open luxury watch boutiques.
CR: It is pretty incredible what is happening here in Boston. This has always been a luxury street, but mostly for local businesses. Now it has become a luxury destination. Van Cleef & Arpels, Bulgari, Rolex and Tiffany have been here for some time, and now that is being added to by Richard Mille, Breitling, Omega, Vacheron Constantin, IWC and Panerai. Most of which are expected to be open for this year’s holiday season.

WP: You are heavily invested in Newbury Street with your new Rolex monobrand and the Long’s Jewelry and Patek Philippe showroom across the street. When you see all the construction going on for these other brands opening their showrooms, do you think of that as increased competition or more of a draw to being people to this area for fine jewelry and watches?
CR: More the latter. I have been to the Bond Streets of this world where luxury brands cluster together. New York has that, but it tends to be more spread out. I really enjoy seeing brands come together in one place here in Boston. It feels like this is bringing customers to the area to see something special. We are confident, with our brands, we will stand out against any competition.

WP: The world has a few global cities that attract international customers. You mentioned London’s Bond Street, we could add Dubai, Paris, Hong Kong, 5th Avenue in New York and Rodeo Drive in LA to that list. Do you feel Boston is a city that appeals to tourist shoppers in the same way, or is this more of a domestic play?
CR: Boston has always had a lot of international action, but tourism has picked up recently. People see it as an easy city to get to with plenty of direct flights. The universities are an additional draw, the

WP: Boston is not known as a warm weather tourist destination, but have you seen that change at all as we have experienced summers that are quite uncomfortable in the Southern states?
CR: I don’t know how that is going to play out. Last summer was very hot, this year has been rainy and cooler. In my lifetime here, it feels like the winters are milder with less snow, but it is hard to predict.

WP: The Rolex store we are meeting in opened in 2021. How has business been here?
CR: It has been amazing. Rolex has been an incredible brand for so many years. We could not be happier. It has exceeded our expectations. Customers who come to this store are so positive about the experience.
We think that opening across the street is going to bring even more to Newbury Street. We are excited about the synergy of having Rolex, Patek Philippe and the Long’s offer in one place. Customers look to us for more than just Rolex, so we are excited to broaden our offer here.

**WP:** I know you have other showrooms around the suburbs of Boston, but it must be exciting to be able to take clients on a journey from bridal jewelry and their first fine watches up to the prestigious brands you are now able to offer here in the heart of the city.

**CR:** Exactly. At heart, we are a jeweler, but we have also built some fantastic relationships with watch brands that work together. Our goal, and we train our employees this way, is to be trusted by our clients as if we are part of their inner circle. We are trusted advisers at important times of their lives, whether that is an engagement ring, a promotion or retirement. Sometimes that means advising them on an important piece of jewelry, other times it is a watch. Our strength is being in that position of trust, and then we figure out together what that means when it comes to special occasions and gifts.

**WP:** Is this Rolex boutique your first standalone store for a watch brand? I sometimes find definitions for what is a shop in shop and what is a boutique confusing, but we can all see the direction of travel is for the biggest brands to encourage retailers to build bigger, better and more immersive points of sale.
CR: This is our first monobrand store; our first boutique and our experience with Rolex has been that standards go through the roof when we work together in this way. It has been a joy to be on this street representing Rolex in this way.

WP: As you know I am a forthright advocate for the strength of family-owned retailers embedded in their local communities. I wonder how you would describe those advantages meshing with a brand for customers when all they see here on Newbury Street is Rolex, rather than Long’s Jewelers.

CR: A large proportion of customers understand that this is both Rolex and Long’s. Often buying a watch here might be the start of their journey, but when they need something else – another watch or a piece of jewelry – we will be there as Long’s to help them in one of our other stores.

Other customers come in looking purely for Rolex, as they might in any other Rolex store around the world, and that is OK as well. We make sure we uphold the Rolex standard in that case.

WP: Newbury Street here in Boston is changing dramatically with a number of monobrand watch boutiques being opened and run directly by the brands. Setting Rolex and Patek Philippe aside, if that is possible, do you think you have an additional advantage being a family-owned independent operating branded stores in what will be a highly competitive street for luxury goods?

CR: It is going to be interesting, particularly when we open our jewelry showroom [with Patek Philippe] over the street from this Rolex boutique. We think we have an enormous advantage with that jewelry offering. I have nothing but the greatest respect for Tiffany’s, Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpel, which are all on Newbury Street. They are amazing businesses with incredible jewelry, but I know sometimes customers want choice, flexibility, customization; they want the type of service where a family business can be more personal than the biggest operator. If somebody is looking for a gorgeous sapphire or ruby ring, the global operators may not have a very big selection. They have a very specific procurement and design process that feeds into their stores.

In our case, we will often work directly with our clients to design exactly what they are looking for and source the perfect stones for them or a unique style, that is something more difficult for the big brand jewelers to bring.

WP: When it comes to watchmakers like Rolex and Patek Philippe, we know that demand exceeds supply for many of their collections. How does building boutiques for these brands tip things in your favor when it comes to competing for allocations with other retailers?

CR: It is difficult to answer that, because we are a retailer, not a manufacturer.

Without naming specific brands, certain companies have said: “this is our manufacturing process, this is our quality standard that we will never compromise”. They will not compromise those standards to match supply to excess demand when it happens. They will just stick to their long term strategic goals.

Brands that have been able to resist that temptation to compromise are the ones that are achieving and will continue to achieve long term success. Even though demand may be incredible, they are still focused on producing the best possible product.

WP: What do you think about the acquisition of Bucherer by Rolex? Do you expect it to have an impact?

CR: I think it is a fascinating business transaction. I am excited to see how it plays out. That is all I can say on the subject.
WP: Along with your own jewelry collections and Patek Philippe in the new Newbury Street showroom, I believe you are also going to have a significant pre-owned watch offering. What can you tell me about that? Will it be pre-owned watches from all brands, or will it be devoted to Rolex CPO?

CR: It will be a pre-owned space for all watch brands. As things stand, it will not be a location for official Rolex Certified Pre-Owned. We do hope to be part of that Rolex CPO program within the next six months, but the Newbury Street store will not be offering it.

WP: How much visibility do you have over when and how you will become part of that Rolex CPO program?

CR: We are all excited to work with Rolex and launch as soon as we can. The entire US community of independents is keen to push forward with it quickly.

WP: There do appear to be some significant barriers to entry to the Rolex CPO program, such as having accredited watchmakers and workshops. Are you ready to go on that front?

CR: We feel ready to join. We are fortunate that we have three Rolex-trained watchmakers; we have technicians; we have two watch shops, one in one of our suburban flagships and one in this boutique. We have been in the pre-owned watch business for decades. Even though it has never been a primary part of what we do, we are looking forward to it stepping up.

WP: For most watches, the pre-owned business is like the car business where customers expect second hand to be cheaper than new. That is not the case with Rolex right now. Do you think that will pose challenges when you might be trying to sell new watches at lower prices than pre-owned?

CR: Who knows what the pre-owned business for watches will look like in five years’ time. It was not until the past few years that we have seen pre-owned prices above retail.

It will be interesting to see how it plays out, but I am confident there will be customers that want that official Rolex Certified Pre-Owned standard and the assurance that Rolex stands directly behind it. I do not know whether that will be all customers or a part of the market. We will have to wait and see how it plays out.

WP: From what I have seen so far at early partners like Bucherer, certified pre-owned Rolex watches are being advertised at 25% or more above the prices you see at pre-owned specialists. Do you think that sort of premium will endure?

CR: I believe there will be a premium price for a premium product. How much of a premium we are all watching and waiting to see. I am not in the business of predicting that because I will probably make a lot of bad bets.

WP: Long’s has this Rolex boutique right in the heart of Boston’s luxury district on Newbury street, but you have other showrooms in suburban neighborhoods and shopping malls. How do the economics of each location vary and affect your strategy?

CR: Our strategy has been to always set up stores that make sense for our customers. The suburbs of Boston have always been very affluent and we want to play in those affluent areas. Each community tends to shop in their own part of the city, and not travel north to south or south to north. We love our suburban locations. They have served us really well.
Our more recent focus on the centre of Boston, and particularly here on Newbury Street, is driven by our partnerships with Rolex and Patek Philippe and by our belief that we need to keep elevating our brand. I have been part of building Long’s for almost 20 years and we now feel ready to go toe to toe with the likes of Tiffany’s and Cartier. On the jewelry front, we are going to have designers who are unique to Boston producing jewelry that can rival anything the likes of Tiffany and Cartier can do from a quality standpoint, and with the additional advantage of coming from designers with roots here in Boston. We have curated a list of designers that are either unique to this city, or at least to the northeast of the United States, and we are very excited about presenting them to our customers.

WP: I noticed during my research ahead of this interview that you are holding a closing down sale for one of your stores. What’s happening there? CR: That is a move, not a closure. If you look at the history of Long’s, we used to have a number of mall locations. In the late nineties, we began moving out of malls and into positions on nearby streets. These were typically four times larger and generated much higher sales. We realized we did not need to be in malls to attract customers. We could have our own parking lots, we felt more secure and the economics were much better.

Over time, we took this experience and have moved all our mall stores into freestanding locations. Our last mall store, in a town called Braintree to the south of Boston, is moving out to a large freestanding former Barnes & Noble building. It is 11,000 square feet and will be a Long’s Jewelers with a range of watch brands.

WP: You have plenty in the pipeline with Braintree and the new Long’s Jewelers and Patek Philippe location here on Newbury Street, but can you look beyond those projects and see any other opportunities you are keen to pursue?

CR: We are opportunistic. Whether that is new locations or new product lines, we are always open to ideas. Our online operation has potential to grow, particularly with jewelry. There are a lot of families looking to exit the business, so there may be opportunities for acquisitions. We do not tend to stand still for long.

WP: We see so many branded watch stores opening on this street. These projects were started during a period of exceptional strength in luxury watch sales in the United States. Will they survive if the market cools? Might manufacturers find retail tougher than they anticipated? Perhaps a mixed performance will create opportunities for Long’s to take over some of these boutiques?

CR: I would be surprised if all of these new stores are still here in five years’ time. Some of them will be here forever, but I doubt all of them will make it. Let’s see what happens.

Even with our new location with Patek Philippe on the ground floor and a mix of Long’s jewelry and pre-owned watches on the second floor, we may decided there is potential for an additional branded watch store or somewhere specializing in just bridal jewelry. We will see.

WP: And I noticed there is a very large vacant space down the street on the corner of Newbury and Berkeley Street. Is that tempting you?

CR: [laughs] That is a former Brooks Brothers building. It is huge. It is the last unit on this block that is available. We will see what happens there.
In the age of the eco-conscious consumer, Anthony DeMarco asks whether capitalism can be compatible with sustainability.

The best way to maintain a sustainable lifestyle is to buy less and buy better. Watch brands, however, spend a great deal of time, money and energy trying to convince consumers to buy more. Publicly traded luxury holding companies have a fiduciary responsibility to produce constant and sustainable revenue growth for their shareholders. CEOs of watch brands who put sustainability over sales will not be in their positions for long. Independent companies have many of the same pressures without the funds or manpower to prioritise sustainability.

The luxury watch industry is in a unique position to grow its business by reducing its production while charging more for its products, but the momentum is clearly toward more production, says Stéphane JG Girod, professor of Strategy and Organizational Innovation at IMD Business School for Management.

“If they curb volume and increase prices and therefore focus on growth in value, analysts think it would cost them a few EBITDA margin points, but the profitability would still be very high,” Girod says. “Are they prepared to accept this? It seems they are not since stock prices, incentives, etcetera would be punishing. The institutional set up is not geared for it.”

If there is a balance between a commitment to sustainability and increased revenue, it hasn’t been articulated by the luxury and fashion industries or non-governmental organisations who serve as watchdogs.

“The luxury watch industry’s journey toward reconciling sustainability with sales growth underscores the need for innovative approaches that not only uphold traditional luxury values but also embrace the evolving demand for ethical and environmentally responsible products,” says Jana M. Arden, director of consumer goods, retail and manufacturing for Capgemini Invent and executive board member of IMD 2050 Luxury Forum. “As consumer preferences continue to evolve, I believe that luxury watch brands will need to navigate this delicate equilibrium to remain relevant.”

An often-cited 2018 report from the World Wide Fund concluded that the watch industry “does not meet good environmental standards”. Certainly, since the report was published the watch industry has improved its record. IWC, which scored the highest among watch brands in the 2018 WWF report says it uses 100% renewable energy for its operations since 2021 and has been carbon-neutral certified since 2018. It was the first watchmaker to produce an annual sustainability report. Several other watch brands have since followed suit.

Chopard uses its vertically integrated manufacturing structure to be a pioneer in using sustainable materials for its watches and jewels. By the end of 2023, Chopard says it will use its proprietary Lucent Steel for all its watches, which is made of 80% recycled steel. The goal is for the steel to be 100% recyclable by 2025. It has used 100% ethically produced mined and recycled gold since 2018. It also works to ensure that the diamonds, coloured gems and leather it sources are from ethically produced sustainable sources. Ulysse Nardin and Panerai have engaged in nautical projects with a focus on sustainability through products and charitable partnerships. Sustainable packaging for products is becoming commonplace among watch brands.

What I find more concerning in the WWF report is that out of the 15 watch brands that were con-
tacted by WWF, only six replied to its pre-assessment. This secrecy of luxury watch brands is an issue that can dampen its good attentions to show sustainable leadership. This is likely why Chopard fared poorly in the report. Intense competition among brands is very much the reason for this secrecy. However, one must also look at the way watch companies communicate to the public (and the press). They are exceptionally skilled at creating engaging marketing and advertising campaigns. Communicating sustainable practices requires an information-based approach. A marketing approach runs the risk of damaging the credibility of sustainable programmes.

Another challenge is that the industry watchdogs are often funded by the brands they work with. The Responsible Jewellery Council (which includes watch brands in its membership) is an example of the challenges of maintaining this type of alliance. While businesses, governments and organisations quickly severed ties with Russia and Russian-owned companies when Russia invaded Ukraine, the RJC was slow to expel Russian-owned mining giant, Alrosa, from the organisation. Its member companies, big and small, began leaving, followed by the resignation of Iris Van der Veken, RJC’s executive director. It had the potential to create a confidence crisis.

David Bouffard, RJC chair, said at the time that the organisation had to conduct a third-party legal assessment prior to making such a decision. Recently, Melanie Grant, who replaced Van der Veken as RJC executive director, says the RJC board now has the capability to expel members if they bring the organisation into disrepute.

The Watch and Jewellery Initiative 2030, founded April 1, 2022, by Cartier and Kering, grew out the RJC controversy. Van der Veken is the executive director and secretary general. The organisation is still young. It seems to have differentiated itself by being closely tied to the United Nations and other international organisations. Its language closely follows the tightly structured rhetoric of the UN. It has created a list of ambitious goals that at this time amount to a framework. Whether this initiative will have staying power has yet to be determined.

The watch industry is rare because of the passion of its consumers. There are few products that have this appeal. Because of this, sustainability hasn’t been on the minds of many enthusiasts. But this is gradually changing. Deloitte’s 2022 study on the Swiss watch industry shows that consumers are split equally between those who value sustainability and those who don’t care as long as they like a watch (32% each). Brand image also scored high on the list at 21%.

Arden’s view, and the view of others, is that consumer demand for sustainable products will continue to grow. “I think it’s crucial to consider the evolving landscape of consumer behaviour and preferences,” Arden says. “I’ve observed a significant shift in consumer values, with sustainability progressively shaping consumer decision-making processes. This shift is particularly relevant when contemplating hard luxury.”

She continues, “The evolving consumer sentiment reflects a notable consideration for sustainability during the information search phase and at the point of purchase decision. This indicates that sustainability has become a factor in the purchase process. However, it’s noteworthy that the integration of sustainable practices by luxury watch brands is increasingly viewed as a baseline expectation rather than a distinguishing factor.”

While much is talked about how companies are framing their sustainability strategies, the reason we have these strategies in place to begin with is often not part of the conversation. It’s about making a positive contribution to the planet.

The Science Based Targets initiatives (SBTi) were established in 2015 to help companies to set emission reduction targets in line with climate science and the goals of the Paris Agreement. IMD’s Girod says at the current rate of production, the watch industry will not meet these goals.

“I do not think brands can continue to grow in volumes and meet SBTi targets and reach net zero,” he says. “However, using a combination of methods: carbon capture, regenerative agriculture and ecosystems plus intensifying and pushing the boundaries of recycling, they can considerably reduce the negative impact. Will it be sufficiently fast and go sufficiently far is the question.”

Buy less, buy better is a good place to start.
TONDA PF SPORT CHRONOGRAPH
MY TOP 10 WATCHES

JUSTIN HAST

Justin Hast is a watch writer, photographer, content creator and digital marketing specialist. He has worked with brands including Vacheron Constantin, IWC and Mr Porter and is the editor of The Watch Annual, a book that celebrates the year’s best timepieces.

"I think this has been one of the hardest tasks that I’ve been given for a long time because I want to honour and respect the past, but I am also fascinated with watchmakers striving to create something brand new.

The collection I have put together below is not for investment opportunities, or made of things that I particularly want to sit on for years. I would wear each of them every single day, if I could. I also think that this is my ideal collection for now but I tend to change my mind a lot on what perfection is.

I’m a bit of a minimalist and about a year ago, I bought myself a watch box with 10 slots in it, so my goal has always been to have a maximum of 10 watches at any one time. However, one of the choices in my Top 10 won’t fit in the watch box, so I still have an extra slot to fill!"

REXHEP REXHEP CHRONOMÈTRE CONTEMPORAIN

Without a doubt, Rexhep is the hottest watchmaker in the world right now. Meeting him a couple of years ago had a huge impact on me. He’s a really nice guy, which helps, and he’s looking at the industry differently. He’s not promoting himself, he’s just doing his own thing, which I like.

To me, the Chronomètre Contemporain looks like nothing else – the simplicity, the typography, the dial layout. The case is by Jean-Pierre Hagmann who is one of the ‘Golden Era’ casemakers. I’d love to own a Hagmann case of any kind, but this one is really special.

The movement is so perfectly balanced in a way that emanates from the bottom up and the finishing of the bridges and the barrel is exquisite. It’s just absolutely stunning. For anyone lucky enough to own one, it is a piece of art that they have invested in. So few of them have ever come to market.

For me, Rexhep is up there with Philippe Dufour. He is as good as it gets. I struggled to decide between Dufour’s Simplicity and the Chronomètre Contemporain, but I thought I should only take up one slot for classic time-only and the Chronomètre Contemporain is just a better size and fit for me, so it took the spot.
**LAURENT FERRIER SPORT AUTO 40**

Funnily enough, it was WatchPro’s editor Tracey that helped me to connect with Laurent Ferrier. Back when we both worked at Revolution, she lent me her LF watch to wear for the day. It was the most beautiful, elegant thing I had seen.

The man is second to none. He is every inch a watchmaker and every inch a designer. And that case by itself, makes me weak at the knees.

I’ve ordered a Classic Origin Blue piece and will collect it when I’ve finished paying for it next year. I absolutely love it, but for this article I had to choose the Sport Auto, which I got to wear the other day.

This is a big statement, but I believe he’s bettered the Royal Oak and Nautilus with this integrated-bracelet.

This one is titanium, not steel, but I believe that people will look at these new watches – the Moser Streamliner, Czapek Antarctique, the Parmigiani Tonda PS and so on – in years to come and prize them on a level that they truly deserve.

With the new Sport Auto 40, I love the green dial and accents to the hands and lume. The colours, the case shape and the matte finished bracelet just work. This is a future classic. For people who don’t want to follow the pack, you can’t go wrong with Laurent Ferrier.

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**ANDERSEN GENÈVE TEMPUS TERRAE**

I’ve always had a soft spot for a worldtimer, and I wanted to include one in my Top 10. It was between a Patek Philippe model and this one, but I thought the Andersen Genève was a little more interesting.

I met Svend at SalonQP. He had a Worldtime watch with an officer case and I remember the GM, Alex, flipping the caseback and showing me the movement inside. I was blown away.

Svend is the Godfather of the independent scene and, to me, he is the king of the worldtimer. From the beautiful case design to the blue-gold finishing and sharp arrow-like hands, I just think it’s sexy as hell.
F.P. JOURNE ÉLÉGANTE

This brilliant watch was designed for women and it took six years to develop the quartz calibre. I love this piece and I think it represents where I am in my watch journey. Just because you expect things to be a certain way, does not mean that they have to be.

The battery life of the Élégante is 8-10 years if used daily, and up to 18 years in stand-by mode. A dial-side sensor can detect motion and communicates this to the movement. After 35 minutes of inactivity, the watch shuts down the hands while the microprocessor continues to track the time. When the watch wakes up, the hands move to their correct position.

Finished to the highest level, it has a gold movement and a titanium case. I might go so far as to say this is the perfect watch because I can wear it to meetings and to the gym, to play tennis or golf. I don’t have to worry about it jarring.

I’m not looking to compete with anyone, so I don’t feel like I need to apologise for it not being mechanical. I think you can have fun, and I had to have one quartz watch in my Top 10. This one feels so thought-out and is the ultimate sort of power-play.

VACHERON CONSTANTIN
AMERICAN 1921

As a teenager, a mentor of mine told me this was the most elegant watch he had seen. I eventually tried one on after seeing Josh Brolin wearing one in Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps, and the way that watch sits on the wrist is unlike anything else.

It’s a cushion case, very flat on top, but curved around the sides. I was desperate to get one but couldn’t afford it. Then, just before I got married in 2021, I went online typed in ‘yellow-gold 1921’ and the first thing that came up was that Watches of Switzerland on Regent Street had one in stock.

I sauntered over and, as I stood in my t-shirt and flip-flops drooling over it on display in the window, a lady asked if she could help me and went on to say that the piece had a 20% discount. It seemed like fate so I paid a £2,000 deposit and have been paying the rest off monthly since then. I was on cloud nine but was brought back down to earth when my now wife clocked it as she came down the aisle! She quite likes it now, though.

I think it’s a travesty that they don’t make it in yellow gold anymore, because that is what gives it that old-school glamour, that Jay Gatsby feel.

IWC PILOT’S WATCH DOUBLE CHRONOGRAPH TOP GUN CERATANIUM

This one is a sentimental pick – IWC was my first love and, when I think of aviation watches, IWC rules.

I wanted something that represents the brand in its current state and this 44mm Top Gun won out, largely because of Richard Habring’s connection to the creation of the double chrono. And I had to choose black ceramic because of IWC’s history with the material.

It feels more compact than its 44mm and I adore the stealthy dial. I would feel comfortable wearing this watch every day. Nobody does black Pilot’s watches like IWC, but more than anything, the brand is close to my heart.
TUDOR SUBMARINER 7016

Any Top 10, has to have at least one dive watch – and I’ve chosen two, one traditional and one very modern. For traditional, I’ve gone for the ‘Snowflake’ Submariner. The 7016 was the very first time that Tudor used an ETA calibre and the first time that we saw Snowflake hands.

The Submariner transcends watches. It’s a design icon. I have never wanted a Rolex Sub, the Tudor is so much more interesting to me. It is vintage and it captures that part of me that loves the aged, beaten-up aesthetic.

The watch was made with Rolex parts – crown, caseback, and so on – and it looks great on a fabric strap. I just find Tudor to be really sexy and they honour their heritage in a very thoughtful way.

I am fascinated by Tudor’s connection to the French navy and, when I put this on, I feel like a weathered, French guy sitting on the beach in Marseille having once served in the Special Forces – it just makes me dream a little. And from a design perspective, I’m blown away.

RESSENCE TYPE 5

This is my modern diver. Again, the brand is very close to my heart. When I was at Revolution, Tracey [Llewellyn] sent me out to interview the company founder Benoît Mintiens and it was probably the one meeting that really stuck with me because of Benoît’s passion for building something, for overcoming adversity, and his determination to do something different.

I’ve always loved the design because it sits in the middle of everything – it’s not luxury, it’s not fine watchmaking, it’s not sporty watchmaking at scale. It is its own entity and the design stands out because of the creativity. The minimalistic element resonates with me. You can see the time at every angle that you look at it and that’s pretty damn cool.

When I saw the Type 5, the colour accents on the dial, the fluid-filled case that holds a reworked, 3D axis ETA, the way that the bezel rotates and clicks – it’s honestly phenomenal and made me ask: ‘Who are you? What the hell are you doing?’. And I love that it’s a complete story by itself.
HONOURABLE MENTION
VACHERON CONSTANTIN
ALUMINIUM POCKET WATCH
Thinking about objects that I love, this pocket watch is high on the list. It’s made of aluminium and weighs nothing. It’s got an inscription on the back for the guy that it was given to who worked at the Canadian aluminium factory where the cases were made in 1953.
They were specially commissioned and very few of them were made. It’s the most elegant thing I own and I wind it every morning. When I look at it on my desk, I know that my life would be less enjoyable without it.

JAEGER-LECOULTRE ATMOS HERMÈS
The Atmos clock is an amazing technical innovation – getting the energy it needs to run from temperature and atmospheric pressure changes in the environment.
If you go to the manufacture, you’ll see a wall full of Atmos clocks but none of them appeals to me quite like this one, because it’s in the shape of a golf ball, which speaks to my heart.
I love golf deeply, and this clock is just so odd and so weird.
Traditional Atmos clocks are wood and gilt and would be at home sitting on your grandparents’ fireplace. But this version is so modern and a super-chic version of a classic. I’d be happy to clear out my office and just have that one object to gaze at.
Robin Swithinbank urges us to get ready for a low-calorie Watch Easter – and to hope that the diet doesn’t last until Watch Christmas.

As we move into the watch industry’s Easter season. As Christmas does to the definitive moment in the ecclesiastical calendar, Watches and Wonders relegates the autumn auctions-and-awards season into the role of a brief, chocolate-themed half-event, even while it has far more to say about the true meaning of the watch industry than Geneva’s annual bauble-fest.

At this time last year, the Grand Prix d’Horlogerie de Genève, Only Watch and the big November auctions line up like the Stations of the Cross, inviting us to pause, reflect and, where necessary, realign. If it’s not too blasphemous, I’d suggest this year’s auctions-and-awards season will prove as sobering as Station 3, where Jesus falls for the first time, and that realignment is upon us.

We’ve become used to this being a season of glad tidings, witnessing record auction results as bidders have pushed values to unimaginable heights, a phenomenon that peaked with the CHF 31 million sale of a steel – steel! – Patek Philippe Grandmaster Chime at Only Watch 2019, making it the most expensive watch in the world, now as then (sorry Graff, yours are bracelets that happen to tell the time).

For years, there’s been an air of inevitability about the sums top lots will fetch, sending insiders – many of whom stand to benefit – into euphoria. And then the GPHG rounds it all off with a frothy and often quite fun festival of navel-gazing and back-slapping. Bountiful optimism, you might call it. But the tone this year is different.

Back at Watches and Wonders in the spring, Cyrille Vigneron, Cartier chief executive, was asked what he felt the outlook was for 2023. His response was “cautious optimism”, a stock answer for “the storm is coming, but it hasn’t hit land yet”.

Vigneron’s assessment surprised no one in that press conference that day. Partly because his is one of the industry’s biggest and brightest minds and his analysis merits credence, but also because the evidence is there for all to see. The handbrake applied to the crypto-fuelled secondary market last year, combined with stock market wobbles, interest rate spikes, cost-of-living crises, falling house prices, the war in Ukraine and the apparently unresolvable problem of Switzerland’s plummeting production volumes hardly point to boom time.

If there is a surprise, it’s that the storm has still only grazed the odd promontory. In July, the FHS reported that monthly exports were down, bucking the post-Covid trend, if only by a single percentage point. That might have created a Fast Show Channel 9-style panic as a single cloud appeared on the horizon (“Nimbo cumulos?”), but the FHS’s assurance that the dip wouldn’t have a “significant impact on the general trend or forecasts for 2023” appeared justified when August’s report showed the curve pointing upwards again. Exports are up almost 10 per cent year-on-year, at the time of writing. But they’ve slowed, just as the most important quarter of the year dawns.

The auction scene has cooled off, too. According to The Mercury Project’s latest Hammertrack report, the total value of watch auctions hosted by the big six – Antiquorum, Bonhams, Christie’s,
Phillips, Poly Auction and Sotheby’s – in the first half of this year had stumbled to 312 million Swiss francs. Historically high, but 18 per cent down on 2022.

In the retail world, the same. Watches of Switzerland Group’s sales fell by 8 per cent in the UK and Europe earlier this year, as reported in WatchPro in August. Speaking off the record, one retailer of high-end pre-owned pieces explained to me that after three years of spectacular year-on-year growth, 2023 was shaping up to be far more “normal”.

It’s tempting to feel rather gloomy about all this. Large-scale growth seasons are exciting and gloss over problems, even if no one in their right mind expects them to last, but then when the sun sets few enjoy it. And as I look out the window, the bright light of the post-Covid years is fading.

If anything though, we should embrace the coppery feel to this autumn’s activity. A more reflective auctions-and-awards season has a right feeling about it. The wild speculations and silly-bugger prices of previous years had made the industry look bad. Dirty even. Greed is not good. By the law of opposites, a more sober atmosphere would suggest reason and measure, a far better look in the long term.

If we dig, though, we can still find whispers of a trajectory that – as I’ve said here a number of times before – should be of concern to the Swiss watch industry. The Hammertrack report highlighted that there is still one area of untrammelled growth: the very top.

It showed that the value of millionaire lots in the first six months of this year surged by an astonishing 38 per cent over the same period in 2022, prompting the aphoristic resignation that “the rich are getting richer”. True or not, it disguises another phenomenon: that the number of people buying luxury watches is in decline and that the industry is increasingly reliant on a smaller and smaller cohort of buyers.

As aphoristic is that interest in watches is at an all-time high, and that there’s invariably a correlation between interest and sales. But that’s only true when products are available and affordable, which increasingly watches aren’t.

I spoke with one analyst recently who warned of “The Ferrari Effect”, whereby a brand and its product may entice consumers to look, even while both parties know they will never buy. That contract will work for the few: Rolex, Patek, AP, Cartier and a handful of others. But not all.

Against that backdrop, the GPHG, Only Watch and the big auctions arrive at a good time. Records may not tumble, the awards may not go to the “right” watches, but these events will warm the market, even if only temporarily.

This Watch Easter, we’re going to have to enjoy smaller, lower-calorie eggs. And that’s ok. Question is: will we be drinking alcohol-free mulled wine when Watch Christmas comes round again?
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2023 NOVELTIES

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

**NOVELTIES**

**GLASHÜTTE ORIGINAL**

**SENATOR CHRONOMETER TOURBILLON**

Glashütte Original is claiming to have solved a significant challenge in high horology timepieces with the development of a tourbillon movement where the delicate rotating regulator is protected and reset when the watch is stopped.

The hand wound Calibre 58-06 flying tourbillon solves two problems that have challenged watchmakers for over a century. First, when its crown is pulled out, a vertical clutch safely halts the balance and locks the tourbillon cage in place. Secondly, when the crown is pulled out to its next position, the tourbillon cage swings up until the second hand at the tip of the cage comes to a stop at the zero marker. The minute

**HERBELIN**

**ANTARÈS SQUARE**

French watch business Herbelin has embellished its Antarès line of ladies’ watches with 52 diamonds. The 19.4mm x 19.4mm timepiece comes in polished stainless steel, lit up by a square bezel of diamonds. Antarès watches also come in rectangular and circular styles, typically without diamonds, but with feminine touches such as mother of pearl dials and elegant interchangeable straps.

The diamond-framed piece is designed to sparkle with its polished and sharply faceted case and gems. A Clous de Paris guilloché dial brings additional texture to the watch. It is sold on a blue velvet strap that can be swapped without tools for any of around 40 Herbelin straps. The Antarès Square with diamonds is on sale now for £1,679.

**BREW WATCH CO.**

**BREW METRIC CHRONOGRAPH EXTRACTION TIMER**

Watchmaking can so often be about solving timekeeping challenges of the 18th century, but award-winning American business Brew Watch Co. has more of a 21st century issue in its sights.

Fresh from winning American Watch Brands of the Year at the WatchPro Awards in New York City, the company’s owner and designer Jonathan Ferrer has introduced the Brew Metric Chronograph Extraction Timer, a watch that counts the seconds required to make a perfect barista coffee shot.

The concept came to Mr Ferrer at his local coffee shop, where he noticed baristas starting a digital timer to ensure a perfect brew. “Why not design and create a wearable, mechanical shot timer?” Mr Ferrer thought. “It’s about creating a tool that will boost both your style and the taste of your espresso,” he adds.

There are two models in the range, one with a silvery white dial, the other in dark blue. Both come in 36mm x 41.50mm cushion shaped cases with integrated
LONGINES

TITANIUM SPIRIT FLYBACK CHRONOGRAPH

Longines is adding a titanium piece to its popular Spirit Flyback chronograph collection with a 42mm model with an integrated bracelet in the same material. The watch houses a COSC-certified Longines L791.4 automatic calibre, which is resistant to magnetic fields thanks in part to a silicon balance spring, and will keep running for up to 69 hours without being wound. Its decorated movement is presented via an exhibition case back.

The watch has a bi-directional black ceramic bezel, which uses the same Super-LumiNova for its numerals as the dial’s golden hours and hands. It is water resistant to 100 meters and is sold with a black and grey NATO strap that can be swapped with the bracelet. On sale now, it can be bought now for £5,000 on a titanium bracelet or £4,700 on a synthetic strap.

MAURICE DE MAURIAC

L3 CHERRY BLOSSOM

Maurice de Mauriac is supporting breast cancer awareness charities this month with the release of a special edition of its L3 chronograph in cherry blossom pink. During the month of October, 20% of the L3 Cherry Blossom sales will be donated to the Zurich Cancer Foundation.

“The L3 Cherry Blossom is a logical development of our best-selling L3 Sees Red”, says Leonard Dreifuss, design director at Maurice de Mauriac. “Instead of the red sapphire glass, we used a sapphire glass in soft pink and then chose both a pink dial and a pink strap to reinforce a statement: Think Pink!”. The manual-wound L3 chronograph was launched last Fall as a 40.5mm steel watch housing a Concepto C8100-M movement. It is on sale this month for CHF 4,400.

“The L3 Cherry Blossom should be a statement for anyone who wants to encourage those affected by cancer, as well as those who want to fight the disease,” says Maurice de Mauriac CEO Massimo Dreifuss, who adds that the business is also introducing an automatic version of the L3.

NORQAIN

WILD ONE HAKUNA MIPAKA

Any fan of Disney’s The Lion King will know that hakuna matata means no worries in Swahili. But what about Hakuna Mipaka, the name of a new Wild One watch from Norqain?

The Swahili dictionary in this case tells us that it means no limits, an odd choice for this new 300-piece limited edition, but the name has been chosen to highlight the work of the Hakuna Mipaka Oasis, a wildlife sanctuary and animal rehabilitation centre in South Africa where Norqain wildlife ambassador Dean Schneider works. Ten percent of the sale price for each of the limited edition watches will go to support the centre’s work.

The new watch’s design has been inspired by a lion named King Dexter, who has been raised from a cub at the sanctuary. It has a 42mm brown carbon fibre composite case with a titanium holder for a Kenissi-made NN20/1 automatic three-hand movement with a 70-hour power reserve. Its dial is laser engraved to look like the coat of King Dexter, and is elevated with golden applied hour markers, helden hands and the logo of Hakuna Mipaka Oasis at 6 o’clock.

The rugged watch, which is water resistant to 200 metres, weighs in at just 84 grams on its sand-coloured textured rubber strap. It is retailing for $5,590.

USA.WATCHPRO.COM
The annual WatchPro USA Awards are more than an awards ceremony, they are an opportunity for the American watch industry to come together under one roof for a night of catching up with friends, sharing news and making new contacts.

200 people attended the gala dinner at Cipriani’s incredible ballroom in the old Cunard booking office at 25 Broadway, right in the heart of Manhattan’s Financial District.

They were treated to a spectacular light and laser show in the cathedral-like great hall ahead of the awards presentations by WatchPro co-founders Rob Corder and Daniel Malins.
LONGINES IN NEW YORK CITY

On September 22, Longines launched its new Mini DolceVita collection. Among the guests at New York City’s Gotham Hall were stars from the worlds of entertainment and sport, including brand ambassadors actor Jennifer Lawrence and award-winning South Korean superstar Suzy. The night was hosted by Longines CEO Matthias Breschan who presented the Art Deco-inspired Mini DolceVita collection and introduced the new campaign film starring Ms Lawrence.

The square-dial Mini DolceVita comes with a choice of a newly-designed steel bracelet or a leather strap in a colour that matches the dial. Mr Breschan concluded: “These stunning jewel watches are not only built on a rich heritage, they are also contemporary models for dynamic, spirited women, such as our guests of honour tonight.”
Thank you to everyone who came along. And a special thanks to our sponsors who made it possible. We hope to see you all again next year.
The first watch brand to embrace the world of sailing, the Corum Admiral collection celebrates its nautical origins. With its unique 12-sided case and nautical pennants as hour markers, it is instantly recognized the world over.

ADMIRAL 42