

# Watches & Jewellery

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## Growth in wearables sparks 'battle of the wrists'

As Swiss watch exports decline, sector tries to second-guess changing tastes, writes *Ralph Atkins*

For the global watch industry, the latest James Bond film *Spectre* has a poignant moment. At the end of his usual gadgetry update, Q, the fictional head of British Secret Service research, hands the spy a new watch — an Omega product placement. When Bond asks if it “does anything”, Q replies, tartly: “It tells the time.”

The question of what exactly consumers expect — or want — from a wrist device is increasingly concerning the world's largest jewellery and timepiece manufacturers. The sector is being buffeted by economic trends, especially the slowdown in China, the strong Swiss franc and volatility in the world's main trading currencies.

At the start of 2016, it is also facing changing trends in watch fashions. Fashion-oriented wearable technology was a top theme at this month's

Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where Fitbit launched a fitness-focused smartwatch.

Initially, the Apple Watch and its various imitators were seen as posing little threat to the top end of the market. That remains largely the case. This month's Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie exhibition in Geneva will celebrate innovation in precision-built, mechanical devices with timeless luxury qualities.

But in lower price segments, there are clear signs that long-established watchmakers have been forced to react — including Swatch, the Swiss group that sells mass-market timepieces as well as owning the Omega brand.

And the effects are rippling up the price scale, with brands such as TAG Heuer, Montblanc and Bulgari launching smartwatch-like functions over the past year. The range of new products and applications suggests rising demand for devices that are about more than just telling the time.

“The emergence of Apple's smartwatch and its potential threat to traditional luxury watchmakers is now well absorbed by the market,” says Thomas Chauvet, analyst at Citigroup. “If Apple, a strong brand with a cult following, is

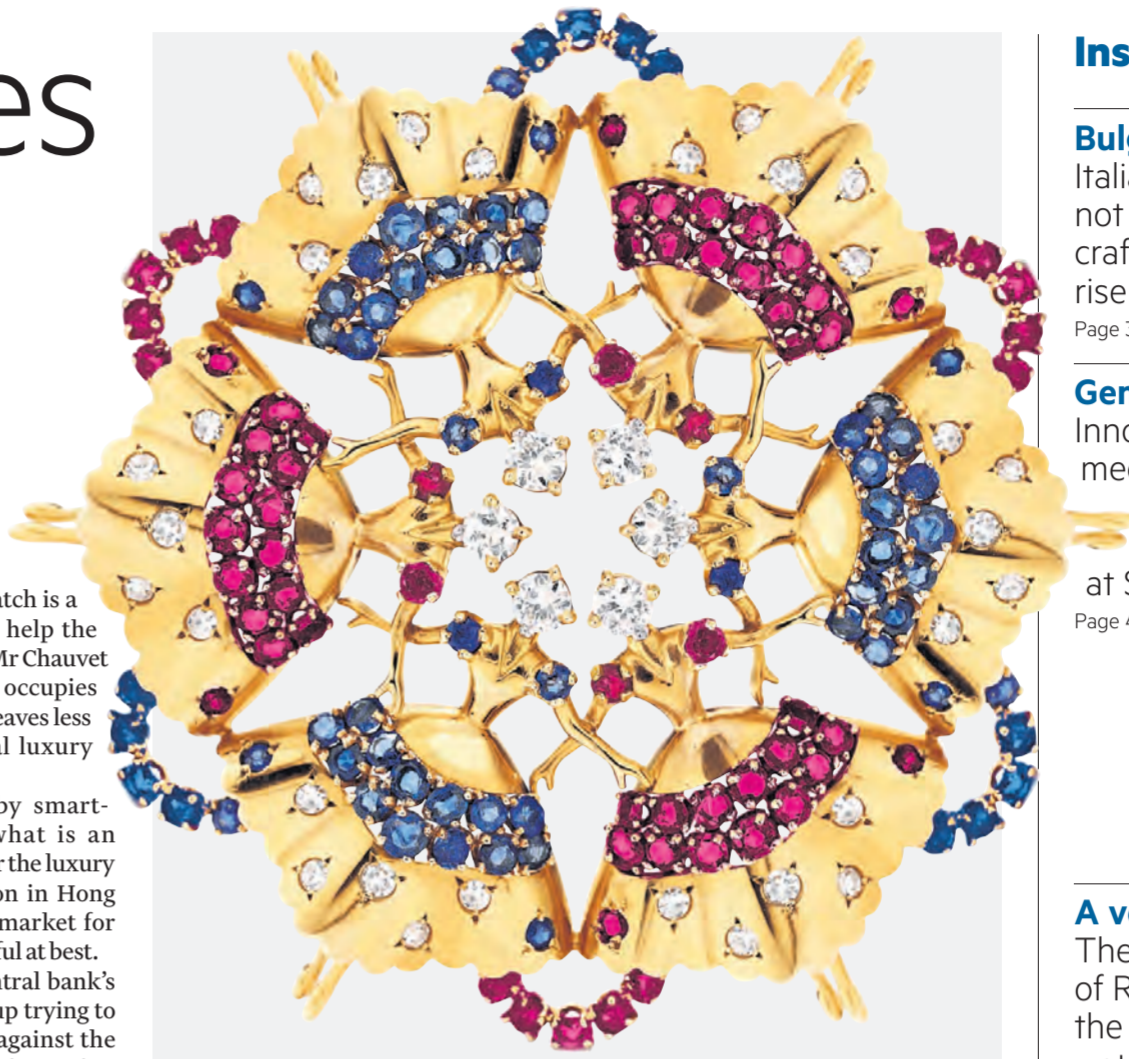
telling millennials that a watch is a cool accessory, it can only help the entire watch industry.” But Mr Chauvet warns “If the Apple Watch occupies people's wrists, it probably leaves less room to wear a traditional luxury watch.”

The challenges posed by smartwatches have come at what is an increasingly difficult time for the luxury sector. Signs of stabilisation in Hong Kong, the most profitable market for many manufacturers, are fitful at best.

Meanwhile, the Swiss central bank's decision a year ago to give up trying to cap the value of the franc against the euro has increased the costs of manufacturing in Switzerland. The franc is about 10 per cent higher against Europe's single currency, although it has given up its gains against the dollar.

Swiss watch export sales figures tell the story in numbers. Exports to Hong Kong in the first 11 months of last year were 23.2 per cent lower than in the same period in 2014, according to FH, the Swiss watch industry federation. That was partly offset by double-digit percentage increases in sales to countries such as France and the UK. Overall exports were down 3.3 per cent.

*Continued on page 2*



### John Rubel Relunched brand dances to a very contemporary tune

Few have heard of the atelier John Rubel. However, Sophie Mizrahi-Rubel, whose great-uncles founded the jewellery house in the early 20th century, has relaunched the brand after discovering drawings at the family's country home in France. Ms Mizrahi-Rubel's collection comprises original pieces and others inspired by

the Rubel archives. In her Vies de Bohème collection, Ms Mizrahi-Rubel has reinterpreted a theme dear to the Rubel brothers — the dancer.

The Bleu Carmen brooch by John Rubel (above) features six dancers decorated with rubies or sapphires and was inspired by Bizet's opera. **Page 8**

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Swatch and Visa have teamed up to create a 'pay-by-the-wrist' watch'



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## Watches &amp; Jewellery

## Deconstructed: The Harry Winston Opus 14



FT graphic. Photo: Harry Winston Timepieces

## Harry Winston turns to rock'n'roll

If you thought watchmaking was not really rock'n'roll, you probably have not seen the latest from Harry Winston — a mechanical marvel inspired by the workings of a 1950s American jukebox.

Called the Opus 14, it is the latest in a line of radical concept pieces born from the Opus project. This was launched in 2001 by Max Busser — then chief executive of Harry Winston's watchmaking arm but now the founder of MB&F, a brand renowned for the avant-garde timepieces it refers to as "horological machines".

The idea behind Opus was to bring together innovative designers and engineers from the watch industry to create a series of masterpieces featuring new and imaginative ways of telling the time. As a result, the back catalogue of Opus contributors reads like a *Who's Who* of great independent watchmakers, such as François-Paul Journe — who created the Opus One — Antoine Preziuso, Christophe Claret and Vianney Halter. Only a few of each model are made and price tags are high, making each version attractive to collectors.

Indeed, the annual launch of an Opus became a highly anticipated event at the Baselworld watch show in March, but the project temporarily stalled following the 2013 takeover of Harry Winston by the Swatch Group.

The 14, therefore, became the first Opus in three years when it was unveiled in Baden-Baden, Germany, in October.

Designed by Franck Orny and Johnny Girardin, the watch features four disks, which are housed in a store, with each disk showing a different display — local time, GMT, date and the brand's star symbol.

Pressing a push piece at the four o'clock position activates the jukebox-style pick-up arm that selects a disk and places it on the platform to the top right of the dial. Pushing it again returns the disk to the store, while the date and GMT displays are set using two pushers located at 12 o'clock.

Housed in a 54.7mm case made from white gold, the Opus 14 comprises 1,066 components. The movement has 124 jewels and two spring barrels. One of these drives the timekeeping display for up to 68 hours; the other provides enough power to carry out five disk-changing movements.

But while the lyrics of "I Love Rock'n'roll" by Joan Jett and the Blackhearts called for another dime to be put in the jukebox ("baby"), more substantial funds will be required for anyone hoping to get into the groove with an Opus 14. Just 50 are being made and they cost £283,000 apiece.

**Simon de Burton**

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## 'Battle of the wrists' follows growth in wearables

*Continued from page 1*

This year might bring some cheer. The US Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates in December was a sign of a strengthening US economy, which could lift local luxury goods sales. But in 2015, watch and jewellery purchases were strongly related to tourism flows — Americans' spending on trips to Europe, where the euro was weak against the dollar, left them less inclined to spend back at home.

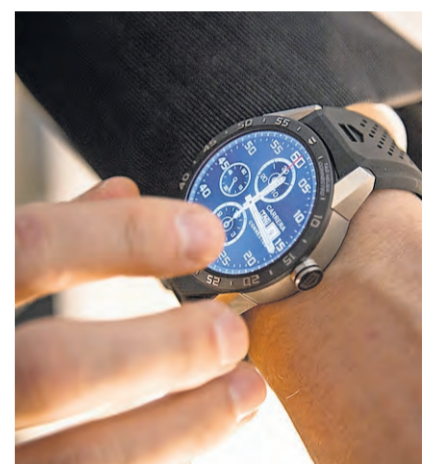
Against that economic backdrop, watchmakers are positioning themselves in the "battle of the wrists". When the Apple Watch first appeared, there was uncertainty about its impact. On the one hand, Apple shapes consumer trends; buying one of its products is a personal statement — just as with a luxury watch. However, an Apple Watch is different from a mechanical timepiece crafted finely out of precious metals and stones. Moreover, it was unclear whether consumers would want multi-function wrist devices. Or if they did, they might switch to more traditional timepieces as they grew older — boosting overall demand.

Some of the implications have since become clearer. Although Apple has released few sales numbers, nobody disputes the Apple Watch has created a market.

"We have heard that US retailers have been anxious about stocking up with other watches — they want to see the Apple impact. It is probably going to get more traction, in terms of the watch industry," says Julie Saussier, consumer industries analyst at Credit Suisse.

A report by MyPrivateBanking, a Swiss-based finance technology research group, noted the rapid growth in apps for Apple watches — further evidence of their popularity. It criticised the quality of banking applications but argued they could be improved, and that wrist devices would be important in banks' future interaction with their customers.

Swiss watchmakers might seem to have particular advantages in capturing such opportunities. Switzerland has a strong reputation as a financial centre as well as for watchmaking. But so far that has not been the case. In November, Swatch announced that it had teamed up with Visa to provide payment functions on a new generation of



Linked in: the TAG Heuer Connected

"pay-by-the wrist" watches, branded Swatch Bellamy, which will use "near field communications" technology to allow payments around the world by Visa cardholders in the US, Switzerland and Brazil. Similar watches have already been launched in China.

Other luxury goods manufacturers are similarly looking to leverage interest in smart technology. Last year, Montblanc, part of the Richemont group, unveiled its "e-straps", which offer smartwatch functions but with a traditional fine watch. Also in 2015, TAG Heuer, owned by LVMH, unveiled its "Connected" series of smartwatches. But TAG Heuer hedged its bets. It is offering to replace Connected watches with a three-handed mechanical timepiece for an additional \$1,500 once the two-year guarantee expires. In this way TAG Heuer hopes to solve the eventual problem of its smartwatch becoming obsolete.

Meanwhile, Bulgari, which is also part of LVMH, is launching chip-enabled mechanical watches that act as keys to digital vaults, storing important information such as passwords and bank details. Nevertheless, Bulgari is not expecting chip-enabled watches to become the most important part of its business — it is not even considering adding fitness functions to them.

The European watch sector is relying on the long-lasting design and manufacturing appeal of its high-quality products to address the challenges posed by Apple. That makes sense.

"If you're buying a luxury watch, the point is that you can pass it on to future generations, so you don't want it [to become] obsolete after three years," says Ms Saussier at Credit Suisse.

Swiss and other European watchmakers do not have much choice. "There are opportunities to leverage traditional Swiss strengths in terms of precision, design and use of materials such as gold," says Steffen Binder, head of research at MyPrivateBanking.

"But I doubt whether the Swiss watch industry will be able to compete with the 500lb gorillas in the electronics industry."

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## Watches &amp; Jewellery

**Interview** Bulgari's Jean-Christophe Babin sees watches as jewellery for the arms, says *Ralph Atkins*

# 'I do not wear a watch because I want to tell the time'

Jean-Christophe Babin does not wear his watch primarily so that he can tell the time. He has a collection of smartphones and tablet devices for that. "It's just to enjoy this good feeling of having a nice object on my wrist."

It is a striking comment by the chief executive of Bulgari, the Italian luxury goods company that is part of LVMH. It highlights how the world is changing for luxury watch manufacturers — even if their products are not. Managing the upheaval is arguably the biggest challenge facing multi-product brands such as Bulgari. Weak watch sales, resulting in particular from a slowdown in China, contrast with a more resilient global jewellery businesses.

The rise of the smartwatch is forcing Bulgari and others to make the argument more explicitly that a wrist-worn device can mean many different experiences. For some, that means providing additional functions in traditional timepieces. Bulgari has gone partly down that route, launching a range of men's watches with electronic chips that can unlock information stored in digital "vaults".

But it also means emphasising that luxury Swiss-made watches are,

essentially, jewellery for the arms. "I think, first and foremost, people should buy their watches for the timelessness of the design, of the materials, and not functionality, because functionality to me is always secondary," says Mr Babin in an interview in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, from where Bulgari runs its watches business.

The arrival of smartwatches does not necessarily spell bad news for traditional watches, the manufacture of which has evolved over centuries. "It's attracting to the watch market more people earlier in the process, and educating people at a younger age to put something around their wrists, which I think is very positive for the watch industry," argues Mr Babin, who joined Bulgari from TAG Heuer in 2013.

But the Bulgari boss cannot escape the fact that these are tough times for Swiss watchmakers. With Apple watches still a novelty, the bigger negative effect over the past year has been the impact of a crackdown on corruption and tax evasion in China, says Mr Babin. "We have not yet seen the impact of the smartwatch."

Such woes contrast with brighter times in global jewellery, which accounts for more than half of Bulgari's



estimated SFr2bn (\$2bn) in annual sales. Bulgari was originally founded by a Greek family who had settled in Italy, and its designs continue to have a distinct Roman influence.

The group sees itself as "primarily a jeweller", says Mr Babin. "We want to be the most desirable jeweller in the world, which one day might mean as well the largest one."

Despite a more sluggish outlook for China's economy, Mr Babin remains bullish about the country's long-term growth prospects. "We can talk about

slower growth, for sure, but I still think that Chinese luxury jewellery is the strongest driving force of the luxury market."

A good part of the resilience is explained by jewellery's association with important stages in people's lives. "The Chinese get engaged and married as much as Americans, Europeans or Africans . . . Whatever the region of the world, people anywhere between 25 and 35 will get into that process and will be quite likely to buy an engagement ring, then a wedding band, and probably

that will get them into jewellery."

In Europe, jewellery sales have been knocked recently by terrorism fears following November's Paris attacks. But in December, Bulgari announced plans to increase jewellery manufacturing capacity in Valenza, in Italy's Piedmont region, which will add about 300 staff. The investment decision, Mr Babin says, is a vote of confidence in Italy — and especially the jewellery manufacturing expertise to be found in Piedmont.

Mr Babin's optimism about the outlook for jewellery has clearly influenced his strategy for countering the challenges facing Bulgari's watch business. Over the past two years, for instance, considerable emphasis has been put on developing ranges of women's watches, which could offer similar sales resilience. "The ladies' [watch] segment is closer to jewellery in terms of dynamics. It is more an ornament. It is often made, like jewellery, of precious materials . . . The more feminine you go, the closer you are to jewellery."

Nevertheless, Bulgari is seeking to ride the smartwatch trend with a range of chip-enabled mechanical watches launched last year. It has teamed up with WISEKey, the Swiss cyber security company, to turn watches into keys that provide access to encrypted information such as passwords or bank account details.

Mr Babin sees a symmetry with the jewellery business. "Jewellery is always associated with a safe . . . in jewellery you always think about safety."

Bulgari will not compromise by including batteries in men's mechanical watches, however. Its chip-enabled watches will use "near field communication" technology, allowing them to draw on energy sources of the nearby devices with which they communicate. "It's a mechanical watch containing a microchip. It's not a digital watch with digital capabilities."

Nor does Mr Babin believe his watches need some of the additional functions provided by others — such as measuring the pulses of fitness fanatics. "Especially in my professional life, my pulse is not my key priority, and if I did wish to take my pulse, I would use a serious medical instrument," he says.

Most Apple watches, he says, perhaps pose a threat for Swiss electronic watches selling for between SFr100 and SFr1,000. "If you talk about a brand like Bulgari, which on average sells beyond SFr8,000, I'm not sure we're competing against them directly."

'In my professional life, my pulse is not my key priority, and if I did wish to take my pulse, I would use a serious medical instrument'

TO BREAK THE RULES,  
YOU MUST FIRST MASTER  
THEM.

THE VALLÉE DE JOUX, FOR MILLENNIA A HARSH, UNYIELDING ENVIRONMENT, AND SINCE 1875 THE HOME OF AUDEMARS PIGUET, IN THE VILLAGE OF LE BRASSUS. THE EARLY WATCHMAKERS WERE SHAPED HERE, IN AWE OF THE FORCE OF NATURE YET DRIVEN TO MASTER ITS MYSTERIES THROUGH THE COMPLEX MECHANICS OF THEIR CRAFT. STILL TODAY THIS PIONEERING SPIRIT INSPIRES US TO CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE THE CONVENTIONS OF FINE WATCHMAKING.



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## Watches &amp; Jewellery

## Avant-garde brands join traditional line-up

**SIHH preview** Arrivals breathe new life into Geneva show, writes *Simon de Burton*

This year's 26th edition of the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie sees a new format for the Geneva-based show following the organising committee's decision to invite an additional eight independent brands. Despite Ralph Lauren's decision not to attend any longer, there is an increase in the number of exhibitors from last year's 16 to 23.

Their arrival is set to impart a more avant-garde flavour to the show, since several – notably MB & F, Urwerk and De Bethune – are known for their unconventional designs. Equally, the products of fellow newcomers H. Moser & Cie and Laurent Ferrier maintain the more traditional tone set by long-established exhibitors such as Vacheron Constantin, A. Lange & Söhne and Jaeger-LeCoultre.

Here is a sample of what each brand will unveil.

**A. Lange & Söhne**

Saxonia Moonphase

High-end German watch house A. Lange & Söhne announces an understated creation for 2016 in the form of its Saxonia Moonphase. The miniature moon is said to replicate the movement of the real thing to an accuracy of 99.98 per cent and (assuming the watch is kept running) will need to be corrected by a day every 122.6 years.

**Audemars Piguet**

The Royal Oak

The Royal Oak has been Audemars Piguet's signature watch for decades, during which it has been produced in myriad variants. The latest for 2016 is the Double Balance Wheel Openworked (right), which features a highly skeletonised dial and movement designed to showcase the brand's patented dual-balance design, which enhances accuracy. The watch is available in steel or pink gold.

**Baume & Mercier**

Clifton chronograph

The trend for more affordable watches featuring small complications is reflected in this new version of Baume & Mercier's Clifton chronograph, incorporating a complete calendar showing the day, month, date and phases of the moon. The watch also offers a day and night indicator and auxiliary counters for hours and minutes.

**Cartier**

Rotonde de Cartier Astromystereux

Cartier further demonstrates its in-house horological prowess this year with the introduction of an all-new watch called the Rotonde de Cartier

Astromystereux, in which the rotating tourbillon movement indicates the hour while appearing to float freely within the case – a trick achieved by the judicious use of an arrangement of transparent discs.

**Christophe Claret**

Marguerite

The watchmaker has created a mechanical marvel for women in the Marguerite model, which features a dial in the form of a daisy, perched on top of which are two butterflies – one indicating the hour, the other the minutes. Pressing a push piece, meanwhile, causes the numbers around the dial to be replaced by the phrase "Il m'aime passionnément".

**De Bethune**

DB25 World Traveller

Watches by De Bethune are known for their superb finish – and the DB25 World Traveller (right) is no exception. The mechanical, hand-wound movement displays the correct time in two of 15 locations simultaneously while a flawless, half-blued ball of rose gold combines with the second timezone indicator to show whether it is night or day at home.

**Greubel Forsey**

Signature 1

Greubel Forsey is known for specialising in tourbillon watches – but it breaks the mould in 2016 by introducing the manually wound, three-hand Signature 1, which heralds a new collection of pieces by individual makers. Created by master watchmaker Didier Cretin, it will be available in three editions of 11 – respectively made from white gold, red gold and platinum – and as an edition of 33 in steel.

**Hautlence**

Vortex Primary

Actor and former football star Eric Cantona designed this decidedly different watch from Hautlence. The Vortex Primary features a PVD-coated titanium case fitted with 19 coloured glass panels that reveal the high-end, in-house movement. The time is displayed using a combination of retrograde minutes and a revolving chain, which carries the hours.

**H. Moser & Cie**

Swiss Alp

Low-volume, high-end Swiss maker H. Moser aims to capitalise on the smartwatch revolution not by making one of its own, but by making a traditional, mechanical watch that (loosely) resembles a high-tech wearable. While Moser's new Swiss Alp (right)



might look a bit like an Apple Watch, it contains a beautifully engineered, hand-wound movement.

**HYT**

H2 Tradition

Young brand HYT was established only in 2012 but has already made a name for itself with its unusual hydromechanical watches, which indicate the hour by pumping coloured fluid around a glass tube encircling the dial. The H2 Tradition (right) combines the technology with classical watchmaking codes, such as guilloché finishing and blue steel hands. Just 50 will be made.

**IWC**

Big Pilot's Heritage Watch

IWC pulls the wraps off its Big Pilot's Heritage Watch, which replicates the vast, 55mm diameter of its original Observer's watch, introduced in 1940 to supply the German Luftwaffe. Just 100 examples will be released, plus 1,000 48mm versions featuring the same vintage look. Both are made from titanium and feature hand-wound movements.

**Jaeger-LeCoultre**

Tribute Calendar

The 85th anniversary of the Reverso will be the focus of Jaeger-LeCoultre's 2016 models. To be offered in three collections – called Classic, Tribute and One – they include the sophisticated Tribute Calendar. This features a complete calendar and moon-phase display on one side, while turning the case reveals a further moon phase and second dial on the reverse.

**Laurent Ferrier**

Galet Traveller Globe

Gold and champlevé enamel have been combined in the new Galet Traveller Globe to produce a watch dial depicting an impressive interpretation of a bird's-eye view of the Earth by night. The 288-part, self-winding movement provides a second timezone (indicated through a window on the left of the dial) and a date display.

**MB&F**

Legacy Machine

Unlike its more typical, futuristic creations, MB&F's Legacy Machines are brand founder Max Busser's interpretation of how his watches would have looked had he been operating during the 19th century. SIHH 2016 will see the unveiling of a platinum-cased version of the LM101, a watch that contains MB&F's first entirely in-house movement.

**Montblanc**

Twincounter Date

Montblanc chief executive Jerome Lambert's dynamic approach to establishing the brand as a serious horological player continues with two additions to the Heritage Chronometrie collection launched last year. Especially notable is the new Twincounter Date, which features an in-house movement, a crisp dial design – and a price tag of just £2,155.

affordable. Piaget leads the way with its Emperor Coussin XL700P, which uses an ultra-thin, Swiss-made electronic generator to regulate a self-winding mechanical movement. The launch of the watch coincides with the 40th anniversary of Piaget's first quartz movement.

**Richard Mille**

RM67-01

The high-tech maker noted for its use of space-age materials has created its most svelte watch yet in the form of the RM67-01 automatic, which contains a 3.6mm-high movement in a 7.75mm-thick case. Metal numerals mounted on titanium rails help to maintain the skeletonised look characteristic of Richard Mille designs.

**Roger Dubuis**

Velvet Secret Heart

The Geneva brand known for the high quality of its mechanisms is out to target women buyers in 2016, and sets about drawing them in with five gem-set models in its Velvet range. Perhaps its most impressive piece is the tonneau-shaped Velvet Secret Heart, featuring the maker's new RD821B movement with double retrograde date display.

**Urwerk**

UR-105 T-Rex

Niche brand Urwerk combines innovative, high-end watchmaking with a sense of playfulness – as demonstrated in its SIHH launch of the UR-105 T-Rex (above). Housed in a pebble-shaped case with a protective cover made from textured bronze, the watch indicates time by way of a single hour pointer that sweeps, like the sun, from east to west.

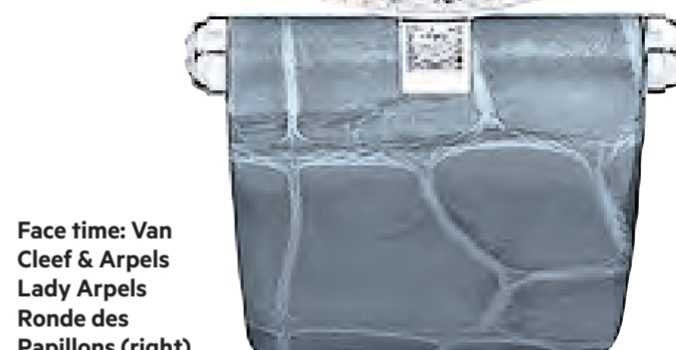
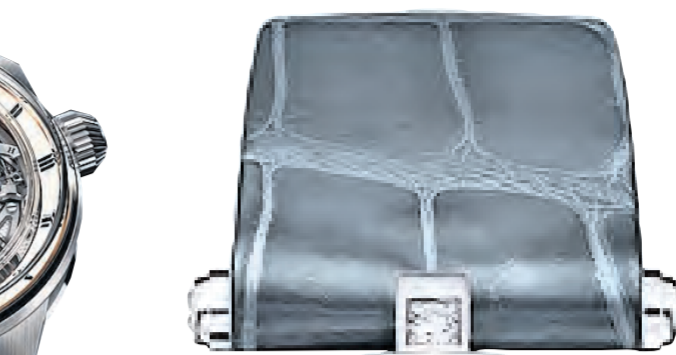
**Vacheron Constantin**

Overseas

Vacheron Constantin has given its popular Overseas family a makeover with the introduction of five pieces that will be available in 12 variations. The line-up comprises a chronograph, large and small time and date watches, an ultra-thin perpetual calendar model and an ultra-thin dress watch. All feature Vacheron's quick-change strap system.

**Van Cleef & Arpels**

Lady Arpels Ronde des Papillons The maker of "jewels that tell the time" adds to its Poetic Complications range with the mother-of-pearl dial Lady Arpels Ronde des Papillons watch, featuring minutes indicated by circling butterflies and hours by a swallow's wing tip. Additionally, the butterflies can be sent on a 13-second flight around the dial at the push of a button.



Face time: Van Cleef & Arpels Lady Arpels Ronde des Papillons (right)

**Panerai**

Radiomir 1940

The Radiomir 1940 is considered by many aficionados to be the quintessential Panerai since it most closely resembles the group's original military watch. This version, (right) the first to be fitted with a white dial, carries the brand's in-house P. 4000 automatic movement in a 42mm steel case fitted with an untreated leather strap.

**Parmigiani**

Super Sport Sapphire

Parmigiani Fleurier unveiled its first Type 370 in 2004 to complement the then-new Bugatti Veyron supercar. Recognisable by its lateral movement, the watch has since been made in several guises – this latest being the Super Sport Sapphire, with a skeletonised case made from red gold and sapphire crystal. The movement includes 19 gold parts.

**Piaget**

Emperor Coussin XL700P

Quartz mechanisms are set for a revival in fine watchmaking as more luxury brands are starting to use them again to make their entry-level products more

'We are idealistic. Our aim is to make people happy'

**Brands**

For the husband-and-wife owners of Habring2 watchmaking is a labour of love, writes *Ming Liu*

The Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève has been called the Oscars of the watch world, and last October's ceremony saw one acceptance speech that is sure to rival any at the Academy Awards. It came courtesy of the husband-and-wife team behind watchmaker Habring2, whose speech was topped off with an on-stage kiss.

The award was certainly an occasion to mark. Habring2, derived from Richard and Maria Habring's surname, is a tiny manufacturer based in Carinthia, Austria – known for its mountains and lakes – and where five employees produce about 150 watches per year.

The Petite Aiguille prize, which recognises a superior watch priced under

SFr8,000 (\$8,000), was also the third time the independent maker had picked up a GPHG award since setting up shop in 2004. Last year's honour went to its Felix watch, whose components are entirely constructed in-house, and which eclipsed 17 other designs from the likes of Zenith, Tudor and Montblanc.

"It was a symbolic win for us," says Richard Habring. "Not only because the Felix marked our 10th anniversary, but also because we really must be the smallest watch manufacturer in the world – and the jury recognised that."

The GPHG said its jury was "seduced" by the Felix's "neat appearance and very pure yet classical style". It has a diameter of 38.5mm and a case height of 7mm. Powering that design is a manual-winding mechanical watch with 99 individual parts, 84 of which are different components. Workings include the movement's custom-made sub-assemblies, manually adjusted anchors and hand-curved balance springs. The Habrings committed to creating 50 pieces, priced at €4,450 (\$4,700), in



**Precision art:** Richard and Maria Habring won the Petite Aiguille prize for their Felix watch

2015 – a departure from their usual policy of 12 pieces per year for each model.

This limited production dates back to the company's origins, when the Habrings first dreamt up a pared-back watch brand focused on technical expertise and customer service – a simple mix that reflected their own backgrounds. Mr Habring trained under the industry veteran Günter Blümlein in the 1990s and worked for a decade with IWC and later LMH (the holding company for IWC, A. Lange & Söhne and Jaeger-LeCoultre; later sold to Richemont for SFr3bn). Meanwhile Mrs Habring worked in German tourism, specialising in customer service.

The couple met on a train to Dresden airport. "When people ask how to find one's life partner, we tell them to ride more trains," laughs Mr Habring.

Their debut watch was the TimeOnly



– a pioneering, modular design then priced at €1,500 and limited to 12 pieces. The purist design can have functionality added – moon phase, power reserve, minute tourbillon among them – years after production.

Asked about the decision to launch with a modular system – an idea that was "in my drawer from my LMH days" – Mr Habring recalls: "We needed first and foremost to be on the market. Once going, we could then technically improve with customer feedback."

That thinking influenced a key feature of Habring2 today: that all watches are made to order. "Hardcore collectors came to us with their own ideas, asking for changes," remembers Mr Habring. "We discovered in the very first year that it made sense to wait for them to approach us and customise the watch. It was a better system."

Workings include the movement's hand-curved balance springs

Using TimeOnly as a base, the company developed its savoir-faire and by 2007 had created its own deadbeat second complication (a mechanism that slows the rate of the second hand) – a feat that would be further refined and eventually win a GPHG award in 2013. Like the Felix, the Jumping Second Pilot was recognised for its quality and accessible price – from €5,250 for the hand-wound version. Today, with six base models and the Felix in its repertoire, the company has grown around 20 per cent annually and counts Japan, Australia, the US and Europe as its main markets.

The Habring2 buyer is typically someone "who has done their research", says Robert Stewart, a self-proclaimed "watch nerd" and owner of Stewart's Watches in Leicester, UK. Habring2 has a watchmaking pedigree, he says, which he believes "interests people".

A desire to know the origin of one's watch parts and the people behind them is an industry-wide trend that Mr Habring is also seeing. For a small manufacturer, that is easier to deliver, he admits. Habring2 aims to source as many parts from Austria as possible, before turning elsewhere for parts it cannot find.

But it is in pushing innovation where Habring2 seems to have found its niche. The company does not advertise and has a marketing budget of €30,000 per year. Production will always be limited. "We'll never be a mass product as all watches go through our hands," says Mrs Habring.

"We are idealist and our motivation is to make people happy."

## Watches &amp; Jewellery

# Knowledgeable buyers turn to vintage pieces

**Auctions Decline in new sales prompts collectors to negotiate deals with retailers, writes Simon de Burton**

The last two months of 2015 proved to be a busy period in the world of watch auctions during which the leading players – Antiquorum, Bonhams, Christie's, Phillips and Sotheby's – offered more than 3,250 vintage and modern pieces at more than a dozen events in London, New York, Hong Kong and Geneva.

Between them, the sales grossed around \$394m. A further \$11m was raised by Only Watch, a biennial charity auction which has made more than \$25m for research into Duchenne muscular dystrophy since the first event in 2003. Comprising 44 unique watches especially made and donated by leading brands, the sale – conducted by Phillips in association with watch consultancy Bacs and Russo – resulted in a record for any wrist watch when a Patek Philippe Reference 5016 minute

repeating, perpetual calendar tourbillon in a unique steel case reached \$7.3m.

Typically, Patek Philippe dominated at the regular auctions, too, with Phillips selling four examples at its Geneva sale for in excess of \$1m, one of which made \$3.5m. Another, sold for \$1.55m at its Hong Kong auction, became the most expensive watch ever to cross the block in Asia, while Phillips Geneva also sold a 1953 Rolex triple calendar piece for double its estimated price of \$1.2m.

While the longstanding domination of the top tier of the vintage market by Patek Philippe and (at a relatively distant second) Rolex looks set to continue, there are signs that 2016 could see significant shifts in other areas.

Some modern Patek watches, for example, are attracting less attention in the salerooms, while enthusiasm for buying many other makes of pre-owned, contemporary watches at auction also seems to be waning. Some attribute this to the growing number of alternative sources of such watches, which allow buyers to negotiate prices, accept part exchanges and do not charge the buyer's premiums demanded by the auctioneers.

The sudden downturn in new watch sales which has occurred in some

regions – Russia, Hong Kong and China – means deals can more readily be done with retailers for first-hand pieces. Additionally, the traditionally high demand for modern watches among Asian collectors is giving way to a greater interest in vintage models as knowledge of the subject grows.

There are indications that the seven-figure and high six-figure sums now commanded by the best Patek Philippe and Rolex pieces are stimulating interest in vintage models by makes that have so far failed to realise similar prices in the salerooms. At Christie's New York on December 16, a 1957 Audemars Piguet perpetual calendar wrist watch with a low presale estimate of \$150,000 sold for \$545,000, while a 1937 chronograph by the same maker realised \$341,000 – five times what was expected.

With the most collectable, steel-cased Rolex sports models continuing to command prices in the mid-to-high tens of thousands (and sometimes beyond),



**Watching brief:** a 'Missions' set of 23 Omega Speedmaster watches sold last month by Christie's in New York for \$66,250 – Christie's Images

"tool" [professional watch enthusiasts are increasingly turning to more affordable pieces from alternative dial names. A 50-lot Christie's New York auction dedicated to the Omega Speedmaster, for example, achieved a 100-per-cent sale rate and grossed \$1.3m.

Vintage watches by makes such as Universal, Tudor, Longines, IWC, Jaeger-LeCoultre and Vacheron Constantin are also attracting higher prices.

John Reardon, international head of Christie's watch department, says 2016 is set to be an interesting year.

"There has been a serious drop in saleroom prices for some modern brands, much of which can be attributed to the situation in China, currency fluctuations and international pricing structures. Alongside this, there is clearly a growing interest in quality, vintage timepieces for which prices are getting stronger all the time.

"The most common calls we receive at the moment are from collectors who want to sell their modern watches and reallocate the funds to vintage pieces. It

is all about scholarship, originality and provenance.

"Our policy is to bring in vintage watches that are fresh to the market and with long ownership history. I think the days of 500-lot mega-sales packed with every modern offering imaginable really are of the past."

Adrian Hailwood, who heads the watch department of the family-owned Fellows auction house, based in Bir-

"The days of 500-lot sales packed with every modern offering imaginable really are of the past"

mingham, also believes the market is set for polarisation.

"It's clear that collectors' knowledge is growing rapidly, and that is resulting in a realisation that the best vintage watches to buy are the really excellent, original ones with boxes and paperwork – I believe that anything which is not 100 per cent correct, or has been badly restored or is somehow not original, will soon become virtually unsellable."

## James Bond is not the only Briton with a Swiss watch

### Sales trends

**As stores open and budgets increase, UK interest in luxury pieces has risen significantly, writes Simon de Burton**

The British are not known for spending large sums of money on luxury wrist-watches. The "man in the street" appears content to wear a timepiece costing tens of pounds rather than thousands, as long as it does the job. Those who are more extravagant have usually seen an expensive watch as a one-off buy to last a lifetime.

Yet the most recent statistics published by the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry tell a different story. Released in late December, the November numbers show that the UK soared to fourth spot in terms of the month's world distribution of Swiss watch exports – from eighth in October – behind Italy in third place, the US in second and Hong Kong in first.

The figures for the first 11 months of 2015 further show the UK to have become the eighth-largest market worldwide, after an increase of more than 18 per cent over the previous year. Since 2010, the value of Swiss watch exports sent to the UK has almost doubled, from SFr596m to SFr1.06bn (\$1.06bn), sending the country ahead of previously stronger regions such as Singapore, Russia and the Middle East.

The growth in UK watch sales seems all the more impressive when compared with the dramatic downturn that has taken place in some of the world's leading markets. Exports to Hong Kong dropped almost 28 per cent in November compared with November 2014, although it still took in watches worth a total of SFr248.8m, twice the value of those sent to Britain.

While foreign visitors still account for a large proportion of luxury watch sales made in London, in cities such as Birmingham and Manchester and at airports, Brian Duffy, chief executive of Aurum Holdings, which owns the UK-based retailers Watches of Switzerland, Mappin & Webb and Goldsmiths, says the relatively sudden increase in the standing of the UK in the global watch market can be attributed to a range of factors.

"During the past year alone, there has been a great deal of very specific activity in the UK that has led to an increase in both awareness and sales," says Mr Duffy, whose 150 stores offer watches ranging in price from £100 to £1m.

"From Aurum's point of view, our flagship Watches of Switzerland store on London's Regent Street has now been open for a full year and is proving extremely successful, and we've opened

another huge store on Oxford Street. There have also been a number of significant mono-brand store openings by makers such as Patek Philippe, Jaeger-LeCoultre and IWC – and the Patek Philippe exhibition held at the Saatchi Gallery during the summer brought in a great deal of business, thanks to the large number of visitors coming from both this country and abroad."

The major watch brands have been investing heavily in marketing, he adds. "There have been events such as the release of the latest James Bond movie, *Spectre*. Omega is the official supplier of Bond watches and buyers in the UK respond especially well to that association."

In the year to April 2015, Aurum Group turned over £410m; according to market researcher GfK, that gives it a 31.2 per cent share of the market. The average price of men's watches sold by the group has remained flat at £4,750, but the average expenditure on women's pieces – £3,836 – represents an 8 per cent increase over the past year, attributed to a rise in demand for more expensive mechanical models.

Mr Duffy believes UK residents are becoming increasingly comfortable with the idea of investing in luxury watches in an act of what he terms "rational indulgence".

"British people realise that they don't need an expensive watch to be able to tell the time," notes Mr Duffy. "But they are becoming more and more appreciative of the fact that a watch can be a very resilient investment and a family heirloom."

It is a sentiment with which Mark Hearn, managing director of Patek Philippe in the UK, agrees. "UK residents are more knowledgeable about quality watches and therefore are prepared to spend money to acquire them," he says.

Patek Philippe has seen very strong, double-digit growth in the UK and increased demand throughout the range, from entry level to the high-value, grand complication models that have been steadily attracting more UK buyers over the past four years.

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Leonardo da Vinci

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## Watches &amp; Jewellery Watchmaking



Small world: Roger Smith in his workshop

## Louis Vuitton Dispensing with tradition as modern timepiece qualifies for the Seal of Geneva

Louis Vuitton has come a long way in the six years since Hamdi Chatti took over the luggage brand's watch and jewellery division. Just how far was made clear in Geneva recently as Louis Vuitton flew in some top clients to inspect its new Seal of Geneva watch.

The Seal of Geneva is a rigorous set of quality and aesthetic standards that dates from 1886, when Geneva's reputation as a watchmaking centre was under threat from fakers. The canton of Geneva set up a system of optional inspection for watches made within its borders and, if standards were met, they would be engraved with the arms of the city of Geneva. Over the years the Seal of Geneva criteria have been updated, most recently in 2012.

The company previously only assembled and carried out quality control on its watches in a facility in La Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland. Two years ago it built a factory on the outskirts of Geneva, making Louis Vuitton geographically eligible for the Seal of Geneva. The brand also acquired a specialist movement design and manufacturing business — La Fabrique du Temps — allowing it to make watches of a suitable quality and ingenuity.

At this factory Louis Vuitton has assembled the know-how to master all aspects of watchmaking. It still uses components from Swiss sub-suppliers for some of its watches, but for the high watchmaking pieces, such as the tourbillon, all the design, the components for prototypes and the first series are made in-house. "If we need a bridge we can make it in a couple of days, if we need a dial we can make it in a week rather than waiting two months for it from an external supplier," says Mr Chatti.

A watch bearing the Seal of Geneva, is proof of this in-house craftsmanship. "It makes tangible something that we have done over the last 24 months during which we've centralised all the various trades that we have mastered over the last 12 years, from dial making to case making... to movement manufacture," says Michael Burke, president and chief executive of Louis Vuitton.

"If you are in Geneva you see it when you visit our site, but it needs to be rendered tangible

**Flybill**  
**Tourbillon**  
**Geneva Seal**  
**Louis Vuitton**

worldwide through a product. At the end of the day that's what it's about."

The result is a watch that looks like nothing Louis Vuitton has done before. "We decided on this very light, transparent design, with a new case and new movement. The watch is fully transparent. It's a see-through watch," says Mr Chatti.

The brand's two master watchmakers, Enrico Barbazini and Michel Navas, have been crucial. "Together they have something like 70 years of experience, many spent preparing movements for the seal. Until you go into it, it is impossible to understand the detail, even the smallest screws have to be finished and polished in a particular way.

"It is a bit disruptive," he adds. "Nobody expects that kind of thing from Vuitton."

This policy of disruption is continuing in Louis Vuitton's decision to pull out of the Baselworld fair in March.

As a brand with no wholesale business selling only through its stores "It's always been a little bit of a stretch," says Mr Burke. When it comes to presenting new products Mr Burke believes there may be other avenues better suited to the brand's business model which also correspond more closely to the products' availability.

"It's a problem that all marketplaces have today because the digital world has shrunk the notion of time," he says.

In fashion week collections are shown six months in advance, he adds, but consumers can immediately view the new collection digitally. "You then tell your client, 'But you have to wait six months'. That's OK when you're placing something bespoke. But when you're selling ready-to-wear, there's nothing ready about it."

Mr Burke hopes that in horlogerie the brand can be innovative, and "the first to do something slightly different".

**Nicholas Foulkes**



## Making timepieces the British way

**Horology** In his workshop on the Isle of Man, Roger Smith is in pursuit of perfection, says *Simon de Burton*

Much has been made lately of the revival of British horology. More than a few young, UK-based watch brands are enjoying international success by dint of the gravitas many overseas buyers attach to the words Made in Britain. But how many truly British watches are made today? Watches in which virtually every component is conceived, designed, formed and assembled into a finished timepiece within the confines of the British Isles?

The answer? Well, a precious few — probably fewer than 10 a year — do emerge from a workshop in that British dependency (not technically part of the UK) in the Irish Sea where cats have no tails and motorcycles race on public roads at speeds approaching 200mph.

The Isle of Man might seem an unlikely place for watchmaking but it is where, from 1982, the late horologist George Daniels — regarded by many as the greatest watchmaker since Abraham-Louis Breguet — chose to settle for its favourable tax regime. It is where he tutored, mentored and encouraged the only apprentice he ever took on in a career spanning more than half a century.

At a time when the mechanical timepiece was in danger of disappearing (and most British makers had already sunk without trace), Daniels embarked on a solo crusade to show the world there was still a market for superb quality watches with components made

entirely by hand and finished in the traditional British way. Characteristic features include frosted movement plates, silver, engine-turned dials and jewels set in gold chatons rather than directly into the movement baseplate.

His apprentice, Roger Smith, born in Bolton in 1970, adopted the same philosophy and carried on what Daniels had started by founding his own dial name on the island and perpetuating what he terms "the Daniels Method".

That was in 2001 when the mechanical watch industry was in the relatively early stages of its revival and far from holding the position in retail luxury that it commands today. In pure business terms, therefore, the chances of Mr Smith's fledgling business surviving, let alone progressing, seemed slim.

However, this year marks the 15th anniversary of RW Smith watches — the W is for William. Its founder now employs eight people (with another joining shortly), and is preparing to move to larger premises and make a £500,000 investment in machinery.

Along the way, he has been chosen by the UK Cabinet Office to produce a one-off watch that is touring the world on the UK government's "Great" campaign to showcase British skills.

He has featured on the BBC Radio 4 programme *In Business*, been the subject of the 2015 documentary film *The Watchmaker's Apprentice* and last year picked up a Walpole award for the outstanding example of British luxury craftsmanship.

Mr Smith, a considered and mild-mannered individual, courted controversy at the end of 2014 by writing an open letter to watchmakers and collectors. In it, he expressed his dismay at the growing number of brands capitalising on the concept of British watchmaking when, in fact, they had merely revived a long-forgotten name, or added some appropriate British touches to a piece comprised largely (or entirely) of foreign-made components.

Although his outspokenness caused a minor storm, he has no regrets about voicing his opinions on a subject which is close to his heart and to which he has devoted almost 30 years. Since he unveiled his £250,000 "Series 4" watch two months ago — featuring an escapement that he spent years designing — sufficient orders have come in to ensure the workshop is kept running to capacity until well into 2019.

For a leading Swiss player that would mean producing thousands of pieces. For Mr Smith it means low, double figures — which is how he likes it.

"People have often asked me why we don't try to make more watches, and the answer is that I simply don't want to," he says. His products have an entry-level price of about £100,000 and take up to three years to deliver.

"Our clients come to us because they want a watch which is genuinely English and completely handmade and hand finished. Often, they have worked their way up through other independent brands and that has given them an

interest in exclusivity, rarity and extreme quality which they perhaps don't find with the better-known, high-end names."

Mr Smith says more than 90 per cent of the brand's components are made in-house. The only parts that are bought in are straps, sapphire crystals, balance and main springs, screws and jewels, all of which are made in the UK.

Each watch takes about 11 months of continuous work to make. "It just isn't something that you can do quickly, especially since we use this very particular style of finishing. If you place one of our watches beside a 200-year-old English pocket watch, you can immediately see the continuation, both in the architecture of the movement and the overall appearance. The style of the frosting, the purple-blue of the screws. It is all done in the traditional English way."

Unlike the globe-trotting bosses of many large watch firms, Mr Smith is content to stay put on the Isle of Man. "I am happy to say that I spend at least 85 per cent of my time at the workbench and probably take one international flight every year or two. Clients often come to us when they have decided to buy a watch but often the whole process is conducted via email."

When he started the business, he recalls, he was apprehensive and did not know what to expect. But the brand has grown and he believes is taken seriously. "My ambition remains to spend every waking hour working towards making the perfect watch," he says.

'People have often asked me why we don't make more watches. The answer is that I simply don't want to'

## It's 9am, your heart rate is 65 bpm and blood pressure 120/80

## Smartwatches

Technology companies are producing wearables to help prevent or control lifestyle diseases, says *Sarah Murray*

The global market for wearable medical devices is growing rapidly. Armed with sensors, devices that capture and transmit physiological data can be embedded in anything from clothing to skin patches. But a more traditional wearable could also play a prominent role in this expanding section of the healthcare market — the wristwatch.

When it comes to athletics and fitness training, the sports watch market is well established, with brands such as Garmin, TomTom, Polar and Suunto offering products to help individuals monitor their performance.

However, there is also an appetite for wristbands that monitor daily fitness by tracking physical activity, calories burnt and sleep patterns, helping to motivate people to lose weight and improve their health.

Seeing the potential, companies are starting to develop timepieces with capabilities similar to those on fitness wristbands. Many entrants to this market are technology companies, rather than watchmakers.

The Apple Watch, for example, can monitor activity throughout the day, whether the wearer is in the gym or simply walking upstairs. And, looking more like a traditional digital watch, the Samsung Gear 2 uses an optical heart rate sensor to track the wearer's physical activity.

Luxury watchmakers are eyeing the opportunities. However, many are testing the waters rather than rushing in with fully featured products.

Simon Hall at PA Consulting Group cites the TAG Heuer Connected, which is equipped with fitness apps such as RaceChrono Pro and Google Fit. "It's a very light product and it's handsome in that it looks more like a traditional watch," he says.

"But it doesn't do that much. Functionality-wise there's a big step change between TAG's Connected and Apple Watch."

Some luxury watchmakers are



Well connected: the Philips Health Watch is Bluetooth connected and automatically measures a wide range of health biometrics

combining conservatism with innovation by leaving the watch alone and equipping the strap with fitness tracking and other capabilities.

"They're obviously not going to want to build obsolescence into their beautiful handcrafted watches," says Ben Wood, head of research at analysts CCS Insight. "So you're going to see the rise of the smart strap."

One example is from Montblanc, known for its handcrafted fountain pens, watches and other luxury goods. Its e-Strap is an interchangeable watch strap that can connect to some smartphones and whose features include a physical activity tracker.

This approach means watchmakers can offer traditional consumers the same products while accommodating those looking for digital capabilities — and hedging their bets against a fall in demand for fitness trackers.

While the focus on personal fitness is driving change in the watch industry, these devices could play another role — in helping to manage illness. The increase in conditions such as diabetes and congestive heart disease — as well as evidence that remote monitoring can

help manage these illnesses — is creating a market for wearable monitoring devices.

Much of the innovation is coming from companies that are not in the business of making timepieces. For example, Philips, the lighting, consumer lifestyle and healthcare company, is developing the Philips Health Watch, which measures health biometrics such as heart rate, physical activity and sleep patterns. It says the watch is designed as a medical device to help prevent or control lifestyle diseases.

"It's about making remote monitoring easy," says Unity Stoakes, president and co-founder of Startup Health, an accelerator and venture capital fund with a global portfolio of early-stage digital health and wellbeing companies.

Watches that can track and transmit health indicators could also become powerful tools for running large-scale clinical trials and generating the data needed for policymakers to be able to make informed decisions on public health strategies.

However, in contrast to companies such as Philips, which has a large healthcare division, watchmakers

have little experience of working in the highly regulated health sector. This will make developing medical-grade devices to be used in clinical trials more difficult.

Currently few watchmakers are entering this segment of the health market. However, Mr Hall predicts that regulators may allow some consumer devices to be validated, despite the fact that they are not medical grade.

"But instead of trying to validate the whole device, a set of components [related to health] could be validated," he says.

If more non-traditional companies can participate in healthcare markets, watchmakers could start to carve out a bigger share of the market for personal fitness and medical devices — since watches may be more acceptable to consumers.

"People don't want to wear a medical device," says Mr Stoakes. "It's about doing something that devices haven't done in the past — focusing on beautiful design and the consumer experience."

"You're not always a patient," says Mr Wood. "You're first and foremost a person — and lifestyle matters."

## FT SPECIAL REPORT

## Jewellery

## 'Made by my father for my mother and given to me'

**My favourite pieces**  
Paloma Picasso tells  
*Kate Youde* why she  
cherishes her gold  
sun pendant

Paloma Picasso avoided being artistic as a teenager. She even stopped doodling on her schoolbooks — because she felt the weight of expectation that she would become a painter like her parents, Pablo Picasso and Françoise Gilot.

However, an “odd job” assisting the stage director at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris, which gave her the opportunity to design jewellery for a play, “broke the spell”. The experience inspired her to go to jewellery school and paved the way towards her entire career.

Now 66, she has since designed for Yves Saint Laurent and the Greek jewellery company Zolotas. She continues to work with Tiffany & Co, for which she designed her first collection in 1980, and divides her time between homes in Lausanne Switzerland and Marrakesh.

“What I like about jewellery,” she says, “is that it’s much more eternal, let’s say, than fashion. Fashion is the moment; jewellery is more than the moment.”

“I love the fact that it’s always related to particular memories or people that are dear to you or were dear to you. It could be that it comes from a family heirloom, passed down from generation to generation. I also love the fact of becoming part of somebody’s life.”

“There’s something really nice about knowing that somebody will wear what you design, and cherish it for years.”

Paloma Picasso wearing the pendant made by her father (right). Clockwise from top left: Line Vautrin gold and silver chain and ram; wedding ring with eight dents and Olive Leaf cuff (both designed by Paloma); Chopard ‘Mille Miglia’ watch — Keystone/Anthony Annex



Often it’s a message of love when somebody buys a piece of jewellery for somebody else.

“One [favourite] piece was made by my father for my mother. It’s a sun. It’s a big, round plate of gold, rather thin, that was hand-hammered by him with a very little face in the centre. It’s a portrait of my mother that he gave my mother, and my mother gave it to me. I think this is the result of the love I come from. It’s also like the cosmos — where we come from, the light, the sun — and so it’s very important to me.”

“He also did some [pieces] in wax. He discovered that dentists use wax [to model] the inlays in your mouth, so he asked the dentist, ‘Would you lend me some wax and if I made something in wax would you get it cut in gold or silver for me?’ My father made some jewellery pieces like that. Very few people have them or know [of] them.”

“The first time I designed for men was when I got married [in 1999] to Eric [Thévenet]. He told me he would not wear a wedding band because he did not like rings and they did not suit him. I said, ‘I will design one that you will want to wear.’ And I did.”

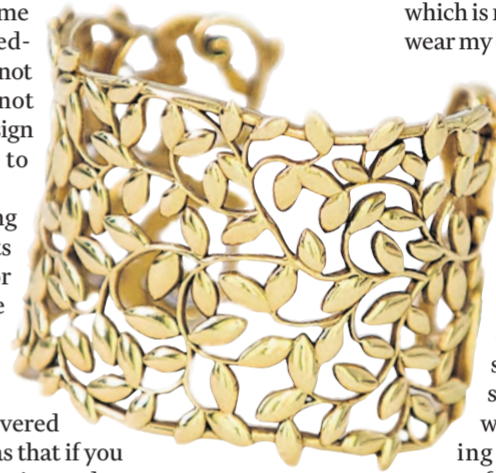
“It’s quite a heavy ring and it’s got eight big dents in it. The eight stands for eternity: you twist the eight in the other direction, that’s the eternity sign.”

“Another thing I discovered once I’d made the ring was that if you put it on a table on its side, it stands up, so I thought that the ring was built for a longstanding relationship. It’s made out of 20-carat gold.”

“So many people asked about our [matching] rings that some years ago, we decided to make them for Tiffany. They were quite successful and now we’ve decided to relaunch them.”

“My husband and I spend all our time together. One of our passions is classic cars. In 2014 a friend had organised to have somebody drive his car in Italy’s Mille Miglia [classic and vintage car rally].

“At the last minute that person



couldn’t do it, so they lent us their Lancia Aurelia. I was a co-pilot, Eric was a pilot and we did this rally, which is absolutely incredible.”

“Chopard is one of the sponsors of the Mille Miglia and each year they make a special watch and give it to the pilot. Eric saw that I really liked it, so he gave it to me. It bears the number of the car.”

“When Eric first met me he said it was difficult to give me jewellery presents because I am a jewellery designer and already have what I want. But still he knows I have a passion for Line Vautrin.”

“My astrological sign is Aries — the ram — so he found this really beautiful necklace where the links are made by her and in the middle hangs a ram. Half the Aries is gold and the other half silver, and half the chain is in silver on one side and gold on the other. It’s really wonderful, poetic, beautiful and I do wear it, which is rare, because most of the time I wear my own jewellery.”

Another piece I wear is one from my latest line, which is called Olive Leaf. It is a big cuff.

“Early on, I thought, everybody’s expecting me to be connected to my parents style-wise so obviously if I ever do something that reminds me of my father or my mother I should throw it away and do something else. That was how I was building my own style — trying to separate myself out of respect for what they’ve done.”

“I’d always been told as a child to take responsibility for my own design, then, when I started to draw a little better — I think I was maybe nine or 10 years old — I started copying things in the house. I copied a painting by my father, a painting by [Henri] Matisse and a Tom and Jerry cartoon.”

“Once I’d done those three I asked my father for his opinion. He told me: ‘You can’t expect me to be the judge. You have to be your own judge’. Which is a very grown-up answer and a very good one too. From then on, I knew I had to be on my own for my creative decisions.”

Jewellery is eternal. Fashion is the moment, but jewellery is more than the moment

## The details make the difference in a world full of luxury outlets

## Architecture

Award-winning architect Christophe Carpenle sees the megastore going out of fashion, writes *Claire Adler*

The architect Christophe Carpenle has carved out a career working for luxury brands including De Beers, Cartier, Bulgari, Boucheron, Swarovski, Vertu, Pandora and the Chow Tai Fook-owned Hearts On Fire.

Of late, he has noticed a sea change in the way retailers are planning their store interiors. Luxury jewellers are moving away from corporate retail cathedrals, Mr Carpenle believes. Instead they are opting for more intimate selling environments, inspired by a domestic feel that allows for products to be grouped together.

Mr Carpenle’s firm CAPS has either designed or built more than 500 luxury retail stores worldwide — 30 per cent of these selling watches and jewellery, including 40 De Beers stores. His work encompasses graphics, packaging, lighting, visual merchandising, offices and showrooms and ranges from entire buildings to a 1cm ring holder.

Opening a megastore may have strategic and symbolic impact for a brand, says Mr Carpenle, but it remains just one store. Changing a visual merchandising system by introducing a 50cm presentation tray might seem a small development in comparison, but for a brand with 500 points of sale “the visual impact on the entire network is massive”, he adds. Pandora, Swarovski and Vertu have implemented his store designs worldwide.

Mr Carpenle’s childhood prepared him well for a life in luxury architecture. Growing up in an 18th century French chateau, he spent summer holidays with his family sailing across the English

Channel to the Isles of Scilly on the south coast of England.

“As a boy, I daydreamed in large spaces among amazing landscapes and experienced nature as an adventure,” he says. “While sailing, I discovered the meaning of a small space and all the intriguing details that make [a boat] a smart place for travelling and living. I always took photos, but ultimately I wanted to reach out beyond the camera lens and create what was in front of the camera, rather than contemplating it and framing it for a shot.”

In his 20s, Mr Carpenle worked in Brazil, where he visited the architects Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and Roberto Burle Marx. In 1994, having worked with two other influential architects, Jean Nouvel in Paris and Antonio Citterio in Milan, he was appointed head of international architecture at the footwear and accessories retailer Bally, where he translated brand strategy into store design.

CAPS projects can last from three months to three years. They begin with a site visit, an analysis of the brief, meeting the people involved, understanding their goals and brainstorming. The next

Luxury jewellers are opting for more intimate selling environments that are inspired by a domestic feel

step, says Mr Carpenle, is forgetting about the project until “it comes back naturally like a tidal wave, allowing the design direction to take shape.”

His award-winning design for the Christian Lacroix flagship store in Tokyo, created in 2003, featured moveable glass wall partitions in 19 different colours, engineered to cope with Tokyo’s regular earthquakes. However, he says, that for him, the project’s greatest reward arose largely from the working



Making plans: architect Christophe Carpenle works on luxury projects

relationship he built with his client.

Mr Carpenle considers three things to be crucial to success in the luxury business: paying full and personal attention to every detail, listening more than speaking and adopting a softly-softly approach. He has no shortage of experience when it comes to working under pressure. When he built his first four stores for Cartier, they were all due to open on the same day in New Jersey, Arizona, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. The project demanded four round-the-world trips in six weeks. “All four stores opened on time but it took me a month to recover,” he says.

On another occasion, he found himself having to negotiate language barriers while co-ordinating Chinese workers constructing cabinets for a jewellery store in Azerbaijan. “I lurched into survival mode, sketching instructions on walls and kneeling down on the floor myself to mark up the installation.”

Last year Mr Carpenle moved the headquarters of CAPS from Zurich to Notting Hill in London, which he says is more convenient for his family — his clients are spread across the world. CAPS projects for the coming year include a De Beers store in Kuwait, a jewellery room in the UK outlet shopping centre Bicester Village, a Hearts On Fire store in Taipei and a London residence for a Swiss watch collector.

The demand for bespoke luxury projects around the world is growing, he says, and “it’s great to be a part of it”.

## Artist and architect add selling sparkle to two top jewellers

## Collaborations

Tracey Emin and Zaha Hadid join Stephen Webster and Georg Jensen in win-win alliances, reports *Ming Liu*

Fashion and art have long shared a rich symbiosis, with fashion designers and artists collaborating on one-of-a-kind collections from apparel to accessories.

Now jewellers are getting in on the art-world action. The London-based jeweller Stephen Webster and British artist Tracey Emin are presenting a Valentine’s Day collection, and just before the Baselworld trade fair in March, Danish marque Georg Jensen and the architect Dame Zaha Hadid will unveil their own collaboration.

Such alliances underline the growing presence of brands in the jewellery industry. According to consultancy McKinsey, brands comprise only 20 per cent of the jewellery market — however, this figure is “shifting rapidly”, says McKinsey’s Nathalie Remy. The consultancy estimates that the share could reach 40 per cent by 2020. “More brands are acting in the jewellery space, and as these names become bigger, the issue of branding becomes more prevalent,” says Ms Remy.

Mr Webster and Ms Emin’s collaboration — I Promise to Love You — is a 50-strong collection of rings, pendants, bracelets and cuffs, drop earrings and ear cuffs, cufflinks and a tie pin. Appearing on the luxury online retailer Net-A-Porter on January 20, the collection will then move to Stephen Webster stores and Harrods from February 10. It is the first collaboration of its kind for both Mr Webster and Ms Emin. The two have been friends for 40 years, and collect each other’s work.

“The collection really represents both our worlds,” says Mr Webster. Set in 18-carat gold and in

Mr Webster’s signature rock’n’roll, rebellious style, the pieces pay homage to Ms Emin’s best-known creations, such as the neon slogans.

“There is something in Tracey’s work that is so fundamental to jewellery,” he says. “So much of it is about commitment, marking occasion and emotions. That has always been the basis of jewellery, and Tracey’s work is all about that.”

Also unmistakably Emin are the figurative woodland animals, including a hare, owl, toad, badger and bird, which make their way into Mr Webster’s yellow gold necklaces, pendants and a charm bracelet.

Ms Emin, who chose all the creatures, explains: “I wanted English animals. My

‘My ancestors were forest gypsies and I wanted to work with this idea’

Tracey Emin

ancestors were forest gypsies and I wanted to work with this idea.”

Getting the creatures to “look and feel right” took some time, adds Mr Webster. “I had to take something in pen and ink and — using all my 40 years of jewellery experience — make it in gold.”

The two years it took to complete the collection were not without anxiety. “When I showed Tracey the first pieces I was as nervous as if she were a big-shot client,” says Mr Webster. “I’ve basically got someone else’s work, and you want to feel you’ve executed it in a way that the original creator would.”

Ms Emin adds that the collaboration “makes perfect sense as Stephen and I



Tracey Emin’s love ring

are such good friends. The whole process has been a pleasure.”

The gems are priced from £400, notably lower than Mr Webster’s best-selling collections — among them Lady Stardust, Magnipheasant and Fly By Night — which range from £1,750 to £175,000. But I Promise to Love You is meant to be accessible to Mr Webster’s clients and to Ms Emin’s “fans”, namely younger women. While more substantial, diamond pavé pieces will appeal to Mr Webster’s existing customers (and also those who can afford Ms Emin’s art), a new clientele is expected to join them.

Also teaming up with an art-world darling is Georg Jensen, which will launch a collaboration with Dame Zaha at Basel. This follows similar collaborations by the Danish marque, in particular a butterfly-themed collection with jeweller Jordan Askill last October and a silver tea set with the Apple designer Marc Newson in November.

Ms Remy at McKinsey says that often such collaborations are intended to “inject a bit of different artistic content” into brands, to be perceived as “either more modern or creative.” The 110-year-old Georg Jensen, which was bought by Investcorp in 2012 for \$150m, says it wishes to attract a “younger, cooler audience.”

Alliances with famous names seem to be a move in that direction. Such partnerships must also be a win-win, adds Ms Remy. “Especially when it’s with a designer who is putting his or her own name on the market. The benefit is increased visibility, attractiveness and momentum.”

Dame Zaha, who recently became the first woman to receive a Royal Institute of British Architects gold medal, will raise her profile. And, as past jewellery collaborations have shown, Dame Zaha is a fan of the art. There have been two stints with Swarovski: the first in 2008 for the blackened silver and precious stone Celeste necklace and cuff, followed by the Glace collection inspired by Swarovski’s precious-cut crystals.

## Watches &amp; Jewellery Brands

# Heritage brands stand the test of time

**Retail** Discerning owners have given a new lease of life to neglected companies, says *Rachel Garrahan*

Founded in 1613, Mellerio dits Meller is among the oldest of all jewellery companies. Rare in a world where many prominent brands are owned by international luxury conglomerates, it continues to be family owned.

Laurent Mellerio, its chief executive and a 14th generation member of the business, says that until recently Mellerio was a “sleeping beauty”. It lacked the global recognition it deserved, despite having been a technical innovator and the court jeweller to Marie Antoinette and many other European royals.

In the past few years, Mr Mellerio has tried to change this. “With one foot in the past and one foot in the future,” he says that the company has focused on growing its international profile and distribution.

Its extensive archives have served for marketing efforts that include a book and museum exhibitions, and also as inspiration for contemporary creations such as its capsule collection designed by the couturier Alexandre Vauthier.

The storytelling capabilities of a luxury heritage brand are valuable in reaching consumers, says Luca Solca, managing director and sector head of global luxury goods at Exane BNP Paribas. “I think heritage is incredibly important in luxury goods and is at the root of ‘the reason why’ for luxury brands,” he explains.

In the US, a number of people have spotted an opportunity to acquire undervalued or neglected brands, such

as David Webb, Marina B and Belperron, to capitalise on their heritage and give them a new lease of life.

In 1998, the former Sotheby’s expert Ward Landrigan acquired the design archives of Suzanne Belperron (1900-83), one of the 20th century’s most influential jewellers. In October, his son Nico opened a Fifth Avenue salon showcasing antique pieces and modern interpretations, a strategy Ward Landrigan first adopted with Fulco di Verdura (1898-1978), when he acquired his archives in 1984.

The private salon-style showrooms of Belperron and Verdura offer an alluring sense of exclusivity and tradition that appeal to the luxury consumer, says Robert Burke, a New York-based retail consultant. “The customer wants the ultimate luxury experience, something with a real sense of history,” he says.

Mr Burke adds that heritage brands appeal during a period of economic volatility, when people are drawn to hard assets such as jewellery as well as brands offering a safe, long-term bet. “The consumer wants timeless pieces that are also investment pieces,” he says. “Heritage brands have enormous archives that have withstood the test of time.”

Mr Mellerio says that his company’s heritage has been valuable in reaching new markets. Formerly available to purchase only at its store off the Place Vendôme in Paris, Mellerio jewels are now at Mitsukoshi in Japan, Al Fardan in Qatar and Lane Crawford in Hong Kong. The Alexandre Vauthier collection is



On display: Giorgio Bulgari with a Marina B collection — Marina B

available at Just One Eye in Los Angeles and Oxygene in Miami.

Mr Mellerio says these retail partners have been selected to reach customers who appreciate that the “spirit of the house will always remain about small production by a small Parisian atelier”.

For Mark Emanuel, remaining true to a brand’s spirit while looking to its future is key to giving it new life. With partners Sima Ghadadian and Robert Sadian, he bought David Webb out of bankruptcy in 2010 for \$11m (Ms Ghadadian is no longer an owner). The first priority, he says, was to study the company’s archives to understand its “design language”.

“We bought the company when it was on its knees. We first learned how to crawl, then to walk,” says Mr Emanuel, who declines to share sales figures but says growth has been steady, without the need for any outside capital.

As well as flexing its heritage muscles with a book and exhibitions, David Webb has attracted younger customers with lower entry price points, improved store locations and high-fashion advertising and social media campaigns. Its Woodworks collection is a modern interpretation of classic David Webb designs using more accessible materials.

The company is also looking abroad to expand. In February it will be at the Doha Jewellery and Watch Exhibition in Qatar for the third consecutive year, and further shows are planned elsewhere.

Marina Bulgari, who founded Marina B in 1978, retired in the late 90s after

relinquishing her company to a Saudi sheikh. The company was subsequently acquired by the New York investor Paul Lubetsky in 2012. However, the 2014 appointment of Ms Bulgari’s nephew, Giorgio Bulgari, as creative director extends the brand’s heritage.

Triangoli, Mr Bulgari’s first Marina B collection, is inspired by an early choker design of his aunt’s in triangle diamonds and was created to appeal to a younger, fashion-conscious customer who wants jewellery that can be worn every day. It also succeeds in hitting the lower end of prices ranging from \$1,500 to \$42,000. The average Marina B offering, excluding high jewellery, is \$15,000 to \$20,000.

As part of a wider campaign to raise awareness, the company invited fashion bloggers to the collection launch at its midtown Manhattan store. With guests able to try on and take photos of the jewellery, the event reflected how the luxury market has changed. “An event like that would have been unthinkable four years ago,” says Mr Bulgari. “There is a greater overlap between fashion and jewellery than ever before.”

While the bold pieces and equally bold retail prices of niche heritage brands such as Marina B, David Webb and Belperron contrast with the delicate, layered jewellery that has dominated fashion for the past 10 years, Mr Emanuel believes there is space for everybody. “The key is to honour a brand’s spirit,” he says. “The one true standard is to make something beautiful. If you do that, people will want it.”

## Long-forgotten dancers move to a modern tune

### Brand revival

The 1940s Parisian atelier has been relaunched for contemporary collectors, writes *Nazanin Lankarani*

Few in the world of fine jewellery have heard of John Rubel. When the occasional vintage piece comes up for auction, only enlightened collectors and jewellery historians recognise the signature of the Parisian workshop turned private label, which rose to fame briefly in the mid-1940s.

However, three years ago, Sophie Mizrahi-Rubel, whose great-uncles founded the jewellery house, relaunched the brand after discovering a trunkful of forgotten drawings, photographs and newspaper clippings at her family’s country home in France.

John Rubel’s story began in 1915 when Jean and Robert Rubel, eastern European immigrants fleeing the war in the Austro-Hungarian empire, set up shop in the Opéra district of Paris.

“My family migrated from Hungary, where they were established in the jewellery trade,” says Ms Mizrahi-Rubel.

Operating an atelier under the name of Rubel Frères, the brothers began working for prestigious jewellery houses on or near the Place Vendôme, many of which boasted an illustrious clientele and fancy storefronts but outsourced their production.

“Rubel Frères was an atelier fabricant,” says Marguerite de Cervel, a jewellery historian. “They worked as craftsmen for some of the best Parisian joailliers at a time when most had a boutique but no workshop.”

“Rubel Frères’ principal client was Van Cleef & Arpels, thanks to whom they became known,” adds Ms de Cervel. “Sometimes, they were allowed to put their name on pieces they made for Van Cleef as a gauge of quality.”

In 1939, with war looming in France, Van Cleef settled in New York, shutting its operations in Paris. The Rubel brothers followed. In the US they continued to work for Van Cleef, producing memorable pieces such as the ballerina brooch that went on to become an icon at the jewellery house. But in 1943, a dispute over the design of the twirling dancer brought the relationship to an end.

Determined to stay in business, the brothers opened a shop on Fifth Avenue

in New York and changed the name of the business to John Rubel. For a few years, the company catered to the New York and Palm Beach set, finding inspiration in the Art Deco style and exploring the repertoire of dancers in its designs.

“John Rubel became known for its bright colour combinations, its use of turquoise and rubies together, its dancer brooches and its pronounced Art Deco style,” says Ms Mizrahi-Rubel.

In the early 1950s the brothers, then in their 60s and unable to run the business by themselves, returned to France. By then, their nephew, Marcel, had closed the family’s Parisian workshop and turned to dealing diamonds.

Thus, John Rubel remained dormant until last September when Ms Mizrahi-Rubel, who grew up in a family of stone dealers and worked for 25 years in creative and management positions at Cartier, Mauboussin, Fred and Van Cleef & Arpels, introduced a collection of 18 pieces she had commissioned from workshops around Europe.

“The collection has some completely original pieces and a few inspired by the Rubel archives but always with a touch of modernity,” Ms Mizrahi-Rubel says.

In the Vies de Bohème collection, Ms

‘John Rubel became known for its bright colour combinations and its pronounced Art Deco style’

Mizrahi-Rubel has reinterpreted the dancer theme. The blue Carmen ring, set with a 12.74-carat Ceylon sapphire, was inspired by Bizet’s opera. It comes with matching earrings and recalls the twirling skirts of the ballerina that made John Rubel’s work famous.

Whether the revived label will pique the interest of today’s fine jewellery buyers remains to be seen.

“Collectors seek vintage Rubel pieces because of the established reputation of the original atelier,” says Ms de Cervel.

Vintage Rubel pieces usually surpass estimates at auction. Last month Christie’s auctioned a ballerina brooch manufactured by Rubel Frères for Van Cleef for \$149,000 (est. \$60,000-\$80,000).

“The old John Rubel was a confidential label,” adds Ms de Cervel. “The new John Rubel will have to appeal to a clientele who will likely know nothing about its heritage.”

## A house built on 400 rupees

### Brand development

Amrapali’s chief tells *Camilla Apar* about the journey from the workshops of Jaipur to global brand

Tarang Arora has not been sleeping well, yet the cause of his restless nights is not the stress from his job as chief executive and creative director of the Jaipur-based fine jeweller Amrapali. On the contrary, it is the rather welcome one of the birth of his first child, a boy.

For a family-owned jeweller — Amrapali was founded in 1978 by Mr Arora’s father, Rajiv, and his friend, Rajesh Ajmera — this is significant news. Will Mr Arora’s son eventually take over from his father? “I hope so — let’s see what he would like to do,” says Mr Arora.

Mr Arora’s father and Mr Ajmera began the company with 400 rupees in their pockets — in today’s values about £4. Fascinated by antiques and history, the pair bought a second-hand car and travelled India’s states, from Rajasthan to Gujarat, buying jewellery from small village pawn shops and discovering the traditions and craftsmanship of different local styles.

They amassed more than 2,500 pieces of antique jewellery, particularly silver traditional designs. Mr Arora says that in his father’s hands, one necklace might then be transformed into a dozen earrings. “It was entrepreneurship at a very initial stage,” he says. Today that process has been reversed — every day the brand is offered jewels and antiques from all over India.

“This is a recycling system,” says Mr Arora. “India has this strong belief of jewellery not as fashion or luxury, but as investment. Jewellery always rotates: someone buys it, keeps it and if there’s a wedding in the family and they need cash, they would go and sell it.”

He adds that it is rarer these days to find antiques of the same quality.

Whereas Mr Arora’s father would base designs around an antique, today Amrapali’s glittering, one-of-a-kind creations are more likely to be an original central design embellished with trinkets. The brand — now globally renowned — has evolved too and creates many more new pieces than the enterprise did 30 years ago.

Amrapali has about 1,500 people on its payroll, including the craftsmen at its three Jaipur workshops. In addition it employs artisans from Indian villages to create pieces. These are often families who have worked with the company for decades, receiving designs by post and travelling to Jaipur weeks later to show their designs. “Indirectly we are supporting 5,000 or 6,000 lives — we are responsible for their daily food and shelter,” says Mr Arora.

Amrapali is best known for its precious emerald creations, but it is slowly entering the coloured diamond market because of increasing demand from customers. Several gemstone workshops work exclusively for Amrapali and the jeweller also works with Gemfields, the mining company specialising in ethically sourced coloured gemstones.

Mr Arora says over the past decade tanzanite has emerged as an alternative to blue sapphire in India, where there is a superstition about the precious stone. “You can’t wear a blue sapphire unless told by a priest and there’s a process of wearing it — you put the blue sapphire under your pillow and sleep with it there for a week,” says Mr Arora. If the individual has good dreams, the sapphire is then worn for another week wrapped in a cloth around the arm. If all goes well, the stone can then be mounted as jewellery. Tanzanite offers a simpler, less expensive option, he says.

Mr Arora, who graduated as a gemologist from the Gemological Institute of America, spends his time designing fine jewellery at the Jaipur workshops, meeting clients, buying stones and travelling to shows and Amrapali’s retail outlets. “I pretty much make what I want,” says Mr Arora, who joined the company in 2004 and took the reins in 2012.



Tarang Arora of Amrapali

Although growth has slowed from rates of about 25 per cent year-on-year in 2007, to approximately 12-15 per cent today, Amrapali’s pre-tax revenue for retail in India in 2014 was about £20m. Sale volumes are highest in silver jewellery — the privately owned company does not reveal sales figures — but over the past two decades the brand has begun creating more in gold and fine jewellery with higher price tags. Mr Arora hopes that international sales will in time reach similar heights. The brand has boutiques in London and New York, stockists from China to Pakistan and will soon open in Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu.

Online retail has become important in India, adds Mr Arora and tapping into this market in part accounts for a focus on the online-only sub-brand, Tribe by Amrapali. Mr Arora’s wife, Akanksha, is designer and chief executive of Tribe which she launched in 2013, because of a growing demand for more accessibly priced jewellery. Tribe offers more “every day” jewellery, largely in silver, from about \$5 to more than \$1,000, and has become an unexpectedly important contributor to revenue, Mr Arora comments.

He believes that having products ranging from entry level to fine jewellery puts the company “in the best position possible” and able to adjust according to the needs of the market. Meanwhile, offers from external investors to buy Amrapali have been turned down. “We don’t want to let go of what we’ve created,” he says.

## Stars from Salma to Ronaldo shine in promotional campaigns

### Advertising

As jewellery sales expand globally, increasing numbers of brands are hiring famous faces, says *Melanie Abrams*

The glamorous link between the stars and jewellery is a long-established and flourishing one. But while it is often the red carpet where celebrities shine brightest, advertising campaigns are beginning to share the spotlight.

For the first time Cartier, Buccellati and Dior are using famous faces. Pomellato now has Salma Hayek, whose husband, François-Henri Pinault, and his luxury group Kering own the brand. TAG Heuer is using the Australian-born Hollywood actor Chris Hemsworth for its latest ads. “He appeals to the younger 20- to 25-year-olds, as well as the Australian market, which is our third-biggest market after the US and Japan,” says Jean-Claude Biver, chief executive.

As Gen Kobayashi, UK head of planning at advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, says: “In today’s fame-obsessed world, using celebrities in an ad is a shortcut to getting people talking about the brand.”

Stephen Webster agrees. The jeweller is still reaping benefits from his 2008-11 advertising campaign starring Christina Aguilera, especially in markets such as South Korea where the brand is less known.

Competition is driving the trend as the jewellery market expands and the watch market contracts. McKinsey, the consultancy, predicts annual global jewellery sales to grow at 5 or 6 per cent every year by 2020. Swiss watch market exports have dropped 3.3 per cent year on year between January and November 2015, in the wake of the slowdown in Hong Kong, China and Russia, according to the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry.

Relationships are also forming in more sophisticated ways. Chopard rarely uses personalities in its adverts,

says Raffaella Rossiello, international communications director. However, the Chinese actress Fan Bingbing, best known in the west for her role in *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, has been the face of the brand in China since last year.

“In such a vast country, we needed to communicate quickly that we are here and that we are an important brand,” says Ms Rossiello. “So we used a powerful person like Fan Bingbing, who is a trendsetter in Asia and appreciated in other markets like the US, where the Chinese also buy.”

*Game of Thrones’* Emilia Clarke was an unexpected choice to promote Dior’s Rose des Vents jewellery collection, but has helped to make it distinctive, as jewellery brands play safer than most, says Marcel Knobil, brand consultant and founder of the luxury products and experiences website VeryFirstTo.com. “Their reputations are huge — any blip has a negative effect on sales,” he adds.

For Andrea Buccellati, president of Buccellati, changes in consumer habits prompted the choice of the model and actress Elisa Sednaoui to show how the house’s ornate jewels could be worn every day. “Women are now buying jewellery for themselves to wear even for shopping at the supermarket,” he says.

Omega’s president Stephen Urquhart explains that advertising has been crucial to the success of its James Bond partnership since the 1995 film *GoldenEye*. “There’s no point putting a watch in a film without talking about it, as no one would notice,” he says. “If I look at a sales

Star power: Miranda Kerr has designed a collection with Swarovski

graph of the Bond-related watches over the eight films in 20 years, it’s like looking at the stock price of a fantastic stock without any dip.”

Mr Biver believes five years should be the minimum length for any partnership, and ideally 20 years, to allow the association with a celebrity to develop credibility and to make the financial investment more cost-effective.

Relationships extend beyond advertising. TAG Heuer has created a limited-edition watch with the footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, using his personal CR7 logo, the first time the company has branded a watch after a celebrity. The model Miranda Kerr has designed a 29-piece collection with Swarovski.

Celebrities’ millions of social media followers instantly widen a brand’s audience base. Ronaldo has more than 100m fans on Facebook. However, Charles Georges-Picot, co-president and chief executive of Publicis 133 — the agency behind advertisements for Cartier diamonds starring the model and singer-songwriter Karen Elson — cautions that social media have limits for luxury brands, which may not wish to become too mainstream.

While the Oscars awards ceremony remains the sought-after red carpet event for celebrity endorsement, there are other opportunities. Vincenzo Castaldo, Pomellato’s creative director, cites the Venice film festival, held in September, as a hidden gem: “This is when the peak season in terms of sales begins.”

Chopard tips the Toronto film festival, with its increasingly international programme and audience.





## Watches &amp; Jewellery

## Trophies, decanters and the occasional silver table

**Asprey** The store's master silversmith Billy Boreman notes how the principles of hand craftsmanship never change, says *Claire Adler*

Two floors above Asprey on Bond Street, through a labyrinth of narrow, well-trodden corridors and a multitude of offices and workshops, master silversmith Billy Boreman is sitting by his workbench in Asprey's silver workshop. He is surrounded by hammering and firing tools, a forge for heating metals and a bath, called a pickle tank, used for cleaning metals before soldering them.

To step into this industrial setting is to enter a world far away from the royal palaces, luxury residences and swish headquarters of international football, rugby and equestrian clubs, where the results of Mr Boreman's highly skilled silver handiwork — imaginative decanters, tableware, trophies and bespoke commissions — are to be found, and where they are likely to be treasured for generations. The workshop is also in stark contrast to the plush Sir Norman Foster-designed Bond Street store downstairs.

Mr Boreman joined Asprey in 1977, aged 16, as a silversmith apprentice after completing a one-year pre-apprenticeship course at the Sir John Cass College in Clerkenwell, London where he studied silversmithing, engraving, design and metalwork.

Today, he is Asprey's longest serving silversmith, responsible for handcrafting precious silver items including the Derby and Barclays Premiership trophies.

"There is a certain music to the daily sounds of the workshop, the hammering, the welding, the polishing, the banter, the camaraderie," says Mr Boreman. "I do sometimes go down into the store, which is beautiful and modern. Only very rarely, I've met clients. But I feel



**Fine art:** Billy Boreman in the Asprey workshop  
Charlie Bibby

much more comfortable up here doing my work in the workshop and being a more private person."

Mr Boreman is currently working on trophies for, among others, Premier League Football, Aviva Rugby and the Race to Dubai golf competition. He has created more than 150 trophies during almost four decades at Asprey, some of them up to a metre in height.

The workshop repairs and polishes trophies which can become damaged while being lifted and passed around by the excited winners. In many tournaments, winners hand their trophy on

the following year, so some sports clubs or sportspeople commission replica trophies to keep in their showcases for posterity.

Mr Boreman, who works from 8am till 5pm each day to exploit maximum daylight, says the course he took at Sir John Cass College both inspired him and provided him with the foundation for everything he still does in his work to this day.

"I was quite restless at school and always enjoyed working with my hands," he recalls.

"There were five other students on

the course and we constantly gave each other feedback, which was a powerful way to learn and helped me realise silversmithing would be the career for me."

Mr Boreman typically starts each day with a brief from Asprey's designers. Discussions begin with a paper printout image of a design and a sheet of silver metal. There are no computers in the workshop and Mr Boreman is not a fan of email.

He says 99 per cent of his job is hammering, or fashioning the silver into the desired form, while ensuring

the proportions of any object are perfect for the design.

"A silversmith needs an artistic sensitivity. Sometimes I make adjustments to the original design to bring the piece to life in the best way, perhaps widening the stem of a trophy, or increasing the thickness of the metal," says Mr Boreman. "I also work out the best way to assemble different materials together, for example, silver with lapis — should it be screwed or welded together?"

The main change Mr Boreman has noted over the decades is that the contemporary items he crafts generally have a cleaner aesthetic and their design is less intricate. Popular items at Asprey now include aeroplane, lighthouse and rocket cocktail shakers and animal head decanters.

"Fashions change, but the principles and methods of hand craftsmanship never do. Simpler designs are more popular now, but today private commissions involve the most elaborate, opulent styles."

Extravagant silver commissions for royalty are ingrained in Asprey's history. One of Mr Boreman's most memorable commissions was a silver table plated in gold which he crafted for a Middle Eastern king to celebrate his long reign, incorporating a built-in dock for the king's iPod, preset with his favourite music.

Asprey has held royal warrants as silversmiths awarded by Prince Edward in 1920, King George VI in 1940, Queen Elizabeth II from 1955 to 2007, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother from 1961 to 2007 and Prince Charles from 1982 till the present.

In the 1920s, India's maharaja of Patiala ordered wooden travelling trunks for his five wives from Asprey. Each was fitted with solid silver bathing utensils, silver soap dishes and silver bottles for pouring hot water.

Mr Boreman is looking forward to sharing his finely honed skills with two teenage students, who he will choose from the Goldsmiths Centre to join the Asprey silver workshop as apprentices in the coming months.

"The new apprentices need to have an artistic eye and lots of patience. The younger they are, the better they are likely to learn," he says.

'There is a music to the workshop's sounds, the hammering, the welding, the banter'

## Cartier adds the finishing touch to China's fledgling museums

## Partnership

The brand's French foundation can offer expertise in a country where culture and commerce are interlinked, writes *Ming Liu*

Last April a framework agreement was signed in Beijing between the Chinese government and watchmaker and jeweller Cartier — establishing a partnership that will be closely scrutinised by China-watchers and the art world.

Under the agreement, Art Exhibitions China, an organisation controlled by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, will co-operate with Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, the maison's non-profit contemporary arts institution, on various arts and cultural exchange programmes. Directives include exhibition promotion, personnel training and art industry development. Two events held last year — one in China, another in Europe — have set the wheels in motion.

The partnership is in many ways timely and prescient. China is on a museum building spree, opening new institutions both public and private. More than 10 private museums have opened in Shanghai in the past few years. Insiders say the government will construct an additional 400 public and 1,200 private ones countrywide in the coming five years. Of the latter, 600 are expected to be contemporary art and design institutions.

"China is living through the museum era," says Philip Dodd, former director of the ICA in London and founder of the Global Private Museum Summit and the UK-based creative agency Made in China.

But while China may be adept in building infrastructure, it lacks what Mr Dodd calls "software": curatorial experience, educational expertise, marketing, branding and the like — the very competencies that a house such as Cartier can provide. Its foundation, established in 1984 and today based in a Jean Nouvel-designed museum in Paris's 14th arrondissement, has hosted more than 100 exhibitions and commissioned more than 1,000 contemporary works.



Turtle-Chimera Clock, Cartier 1943

There is also the globetrotting Cartier Collection of 1,500 heritage pieces that Cartier invites museums around the world to showcase.

Links with China have already been forged: Cai Guo-Qiang, Huang Yong Ping and Yue Minjun are among Chinese artists that Fondation Cartier has promoted, while five Chinese museums have hosted Cartier Collection shows.

The maison is among China's most recognised foreign watch and jewellery brands. It first entered the country in 1992, planting its flag in Shanghai, and today has more than 35 boutiques. Cartier's commercial success is also particularly significant for Art Exhibitions China. Commerce and culture are very much bedfellows in China — museums in shopping malls, for example, are commonplace.

China is engaged on a building spree of public and private museums

Cartier "is at the cusp between luxury and culture", says Mr Dodd. "It's a very smart vehicle [to partner with] because the government too understands the complex relationship between commerce and culture."

Co-operation between AEC and Cartier dates from June 2014 and, according to AEC, the maison is the only luxury brand with which

it has signed such an agreement.

Established in 1971 as a platform for Chinese and foreign cultural exchange, AEC is a 40-employee organisation that has organised 200 exhibitions and exchange programmes at home and abroad. Among them was a show in 2014-15 in Paris at the Musée Guimet for Asian art, which brought together 27 Chinese museums to exhibit a collection of Han cultural relics. Marking 50 years of Sino-French ties, it had 83,500 visitors and featured lectures, workshops and film screenings.

With Cartier acting as "cultural mediator", says Pierre Rainero, Cartier's image, style and heritage director, the framework agreement will cement the maison's foothold in the country, while also reflecting its "pioneering commitment to open up contemporary art, rendering it more accessible with the Fondation Cartier".

Education is key. Hervé Chandès, the Fondation's director, adds that young professionals trained in different countries will "become the curators of tomorrow".

Two inaugural programmes have given a taste of things to come. At an exhibition in Chengdu last summer, 300 Cartier Collection pieces were displayed alongside 87 works from Sichuan Museum. The show attracted nearly 1m visitors, 700,000 of them digital.

The Chengdu event was followed with a four-week tour around France and Switzerland. Three curators from Beijing's Palace Museum, Shanghai Museum and AEC visited nearly 20 museums and foundations and met leading personnel. Exhibitions were used as case studies, with four main areas covered: contemporary art (Fondation Cartier, Paris's Salle du Jeu de Paume and the Louvre were among those institutions visited); scenography (the Arab World Institute, Paris, and the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent); new museums and cultural policies (Centre Pompidou-Metz, Geneva's Ethnography Museum and Lausanne's Olympic Museum, among others); and heritage and collection management (Musée Cernuschi and the Baur Foundation, where a Cartier Collection show is currently being staged).

Future initiatives, such as exhibition exchanges, are in their infancy but programme planning is very much a joint effort.

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VICENZAORO January  
JANUARY 22-27, 2016

THE GOLDEN VOICES



VICENZAORO January 2016, the International gold and jewellery Exhibition will be back from January 22nd to 27th at Fiera di Vicenza in Italy, opening the international trade fair calendar for the Jewellery industry and offering a unique occasion to global visibility to Jewellery brands presenting new collections and new trends.

"The Golden Voices" will be the main theme of VICENZAORO January 2016 with exclusive events, meetings and workshops, featuring the most important aspects of the gold and jewellery industry with specific attention to current and future trends. A multi-voices stage: from the subject

of Corporate Social Responsibility, to the excellences of national and international manufacturing, and from tech innovation and manufacturing creativity to new trends in the industry and the marketplace, as well as the cultural aspects and developments

focusing around the world of the jewellery trade. During the Show themes such as ethical trade, environmental protection, safeguarding the right and duty to work, the value of traceability and health protection will be explored.

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VICENZAORO January will be also the occasion to announce the international appointments that will take place in the key markets for gold and jewellery sector: USA, China, India and Dubai. From April 14th to 17th 2016 the second edition of VICENZAORO DUBAI will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre. The unique networking platform organized by DV Global Link - a joint-venture company between Fiera di Vicenza and the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), designed for the Jewellery Business Community from four strategic markets: Middle East, Eurasia, North and East Africa, Central and South Asia.

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