



MONKEYING AROUND

To mark the Year of the Monkey, many luxury watch brands have created
BY CHUANG PECK MING timepieces with special simian designs

A SOFT economy has held back Chinese spending. But an exception is made when it comes to celebrating the Chinese New Year. This being the Year of the Monkey according to the Chinese zodiac, many luxury watch brands have created timepieces with specially designed dials interpreting the monkey – a symbol of intelligence, curiosity and knowledge – in ways that are historically and culturally meaningful to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Among the brands cashing in on the Year of the Monkey is (4) **Jaquet Droz**, which has released not one, but two watches inspired by the legend of Sun Wukong or the Monkey King. The pair of timepieces – **Monkey in red gold and diamonds**, and **Relief Monkey** – are based on the Swatch group-owned brand's Petite Heure Minute collection.

The first watch (S\$49,000 and S\$59,000 with diamonds) shows a monkey on its dial leaping onto a branch to pick a peach. The timepiece comes in a 35 or 39 mm red gold case. The smaller one has diamonds set on its bezel.

The Petite Heure Minute Relief Monkey, the second model (S\$109,000 in red gold, S\$124,000 in grey gold with diamonds), has on its dial the animal perched on the branch of a peach tree against

a background of foliage. The dial is made of lacquer and mother-of-pearl sculpted in gold. There are also two versions of this model: one in a red gold case, and another in white gold case with diamonds.

Both the Monkey in red gold and diamonds and the Relief Monkey watches, in a limited edition of 28 pieces each, are equipped with the Jaquet Droz 2653.P automatic movement with 68 hours' power reserve.

Ulysse Nardin's Year of the Monkey Classico (6) has a playful and happy monkey depicted on the dial in a comic-like style to capture the lively creature's character as it appears to jump through a brush of palm fronds. It is brought to life by the champléve method of enamelling. Housed in the timepiece's 40 mm rose gold case is the UN-815 automatic movement with a COSC-certified chronometer. The watch is limited to 88 pieces. Price: S\$67,100.

Harry Winston's Premier Monkey Automatic 36mm, (2) in a limited edition of eight pieces, features a gold monkey with a diamond for an eye hanging against a pink mother-of-pearl and gold-flecked dial, as if grasping the bezel at 9 o'clock. Its tail winds around a diamond at 12 o'clock. The rose gold ladies timepiece is driven by the HW2008 automatic movement. Price: S\$78,000

Chopard's offering (5) has a Urusei (which comes from the sap of a "Japanese varnish tree") lacquered dial hand-crafted by a Japanese master lacquer artist. The dial on the **LUC XP Urusei Year of the Monkey** (S\$30,970) shows a red-coated monkey perched on a branch plucking peaches. Beneath it is a golden sky ablaze with

the last sunlight, while behind are golden valleys composing a warm scene in soft tones. At the heart of the 39.5 mm rose gold timepiece is the LUC 96.17-L automatic movement.

Master engravers and enamellers interpreted paper cutting techniques in China and Switzerland to create **Vacheron Constantin's Metiers d'Art La Legend du Zodiaque Chinois Year of the Monkey**, (7) which has a gold or platinum monkey hand-engraved and applied to the dial centre. The foliage motif on the dial is based on classic Chinese iconography that is etched directly in the metal. The 40mm watch is powered by the Caliber 2460 G4 movement and limited to 12 pieces in platinum and 12 in pink gold. Price: S\$158,000 (rose gold), S\$191,000 (platinum).

There are no monkeys hanging on the dial of **Blancpain's Calendrier Chinois Traditionnel – Year of the Monkey**, (1) which instead displays both the Gregorian and Chinese calendar. The monkey is seen through the case-back engraved on the movement, which has a white gold oscillating weight. The 36-piece limited edition watch retails at S\$121,500.

Panerai's celebration of the Chinese New Year, the **Luminor 1950 Sealand 3 Days Automatic Acciao – 44mm**, (3), also has no monkey on its dial. The animal is engraved on the hand-made steel cover that comes with this Chinese New Year's special edition now in its eighth year. The watch is equipped with Panerai's P.9000 automatic movement with three days' power reserve, housed in a 44 mm steel case. It is limited to 99 pieces at S\$33,900 each. ■



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