



ONGOING CELEBRATION

Patek Philippe's 175th anniversary celebrations extend into this year / BY CHUANG PECK MING

BUT of course the Grandmaster Chime took centre stage when Patek Philippe presented its new timepieces last October to mark the venerable watch brand's 175th anniversary. Fitted with 20 complications, the Grandmaster Chime is the most complicated watch that Patek Philippe has ever made for the wrist.

Still, it wasn't so grand as to eclipse the other timepieces which were also part of the celebration that is to be extended into this year. The latter are also interesting pieces.

Indeed, some watch writers already found the Chiming Jump Hour watch in the 175th anniversary collection more intriguing than the Grandmaster Chime. "The hours, minutes and seconds (of the Chiming Jump Hour) all jump instantaneously – the seconds hand is a dead-beat seconds, ticking in one-second steps, while the minutes and hours jump one minute and one hour at a time (respectively)," Su Jia Xian writes in his popular blog, *Watches by SJX*. What's more, the watch's movement strikes a single chime alongside the jumping hour at the top of each hour, he adds.

The Chiming Jump Hour, which comes in a classic tonneau-shaped case, is not even exactly new. For its 150th anniversary in 1989, Patek Philippe included in its commemorative collection a tonneau-shaped wristwatch with a jumping hour in an aperture and centre minutes. This piece, the Reference 3969, is today a coveted collector's item that, at S\$55,000, commands a price that's over two times the price when it was first sold.

A complication like Ref 3969, which was originally produced in the 1920s, is no longer available in Patek Philippe's regular collection. The Chiming Jump Hour, otherwise known as Ref 5275, offers collectors the rare chance to own a similar one.

The new version is supposed to be better than the older model. And we're not talking of just the hand engravings that adorn Ref 5275's case, or the superior material used to make the case – which is platinum. Ref 3969 has an unadorned pink gold case.

But more than looks, the Chiming Jump Hour is powered by an entirely new hand-wound movement that took four years to develop – and has four patent applications.

"Contrary to ordinary jumping mechanisms, which usually called for additional energy-hungry jumper systems, this calibre functions solely by means of gears and the instantaneous displays are fully integrated into the base movement – resulting in a total of 438 parts, a considerable number for a watch devoted to the hours, minutes and seconds," Patek Philippe says in a commemorative booklet.

To reduce inertia, several silicon-based components are included, particularly for the jumping hours. And despite its four complications, Ref 5275 provides a power reserve of 48 hours with a single barrel.

The use of a patented Spiromax balance spring made of Silinvar (silicon with an oxide outer layer) also makes the movement more reliable and accurate.

The Chiming Jump Hour is limited to 175 pieces and retails at 310,000 Swiss francs (S\$418,500) each.

Patek Philippe president Thierry Stern says that he is equally proud of all the 175th anniversary timepieces, but also added that after the evening when they were unveiled, his handphone had been ringing non-stop the whole night with collectors demanding a particular piece in the collection: the platinum model of the Multi-scale Chronograph, Ref 5975.

Mr Stern could satisfy only 100 collectors because the platinum version of this anniversary chronograph, featuring a black dial, is limited to only 100 pieces. The other collectors would have to settle for the yellow, white or rose gold model, which is limited to 400 watches per model.

The Multi-scale Chronograph has a 40 mm case. There is also ladies' model, Ref 4675, which has a smaller 37 mm case in white and rose gold, each limited to 150 pieces.

As the name suggests, the Multi-scale Chronograph combines scales for a pulsimeter that measures heartbeats; a tachymeter for calculating speed; and a telemeter to determine distance. It is driven by a new automatic movement with a classic column wheel to control the start/stop functions – and a nearly friction-free disk clutch for the sweep chronograph hand to be used as a permanently running seconds hand.

Prices of the Multi-scale Chronograph: S\$117,000 for the platinum model; S\$82,500 for the rose and white gold; \$79,500 for the yellow gold; and S\$82,500 for both ladies' models.

Finally, there's the World Time Moon. This is essentially the same as Patek Philippe's existing world time complication, but with some additional features and modifications, chief among which is an oversized moon phase display.

At the heart of the new World Time is a new ultra-thin automatic movement that is deployed "to achieve a harmonious fusion of the world's 24 time zones with the lunar cycle". Another new feature is a local time hour hand.

In paying tribute to Patek Philippe's notable heritage, the central European Time in the World Time Moon is represented by the city of Geneva, instead of Paris.

The men's model of the watch, Ref 5575, has a 39.8 mm white gold case and is limited to 1,300 pieces and priced at S\$69,000 each.

The ladies' version, Ref 7175, features a smaller 38 mm rose gold case with a bezel decked with 70 diamonds. Ref 7175 is limited to 450 watches. Each carries a price tag of S\$75,000. ■

