

WILL Patek Philippe break another record in this year's Only Watch biennial charity auction? Patek has been a critical contributor to this event that raises money in search of a cure for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy – a genetic muscular disease that usually afflicts boys at birth.

In the last auction in 2015, Patek's Ref 5016 was sold for an all-time high of US\$7.54 million, making the unique timepiece the most expensive stainless steel wristwatch. The winning bid nearly doubled the previous record – US\$3.98 million, which was also for a Patek watch, a rare titanium Ref 5004. The latter had in turn exceeded the US\$1.8 million fetched by a Patek steel Ref 3939 in the 2011 auction.

Hosted by the Monaco Association Against Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, the Only Watch auction has, since it started in 2005, raised nearly US\$30 million from timepieces donated by luxury watch brands. Patek alone accounted for almost half the money.

The latest auction, to be held in November in Geneva and conducted by Christie's for the first time, will see 48 one-of-a-kind timepieces up for bidding – timepieces contributed by well-known and less-well-known brands including Audemars Piguet, Armin Strom, Barbier Mueller, Breguet, Chopard, Farberge, Hublot, Konstantin Chaykin, MCT, Piaget, Rebellion and Zenith.

Patek's offer is a triple complication of minute repeater, mono-pusher chronograph and perpetual calendar. Listed as Ref 5208T-010, the timepiece first appeared in the guise of Ref 5208 in 2011. It is one of very few ultra-complicated watches endowed with an automatic movement. Ref 5208T-010 is also made of titanium, a metal that Patek rarely uses. The watch is valued at US\$932,000 to US\$1,139,000, the highest in the latest Only catalogue.

The next most valuable is the highly respected independent watchmaker F P Journe's Chronographe

Monopoussoir Rattrapante. This chronograph with split seconds in a 44 mm Tantalum case, developed entirely new, costs about US\$208,00 to US\$425,000. F P Journe says that it is “a unique watch that will never exist in the F P Journe collection”. It is powered by a one-off F P Journe hand-wound movement.

F P Journe is also the creator of Mosaïque, another gift for the Only watch charity auction. The timepiece does not bear his name but Barbier-Mueller, a prominent family in Geneva most famous for their eponymous museum of tribal and primitive art. A scion of the family is an old friend of F P Journe and got him to make the watch, which pays homage to fine Genevan watchmaking and decorative arts.

The entire timepiece has a subtle cloisonné motif that evokes the art of mosaics, which dates from the end of the 4th century BC. Like a pocket watch, the back of the Mosaïque has a cover which, when open, reveals a gold movement designed by F P Journe. The estimated value of the watch is US\$115,000 to US\$208,000.

MB&F, another creative independent watchmaker, donated a “childlike” version of its HM8 model. The piece – unique in white gold and titanium – is instantly recognisable because of its special sapphire crystal pane, which is engraved and metallised with a whimsical drawing by Cassandra Legendre, a talented 15-year-old artist currently living in Madrid.

Under the watch's doodle, the automatic HM8 engine features a unique purple winding rotor. A miniature white gold elephant stands between the hour and minute prism on the lateral time display. It was sculpted by engraver Olivier Kuhn based on the elephant in Cassandra's drawing.

The MB&F logo on the double-screwed plate is replaced by a happy face, a symbol of the childlike perspective that Cassandra brings to HM8. The watch's estimated cost is US\$83,000 to US\$103,000.

The pricey timepieces on offer at the Only watch bid is understandable, given that the purpose is to raise as much money as possible for charity. Yet not all

BLANCPAIN THE TRIBUTE TO FIFTY FATHOMS MIL-SPEC



BARBIER-MUELLER MOSAÏQUE



TAG HEUER LUXURY KIT ONLY WATCH SPECIAL EDITION



MB&F HM8



TUDOR BLACK BAY BRONE ONE



MONTBLANC 1858 CHRONOGRAPH TACHYMETER



MAURICE LACROIX, THE AIKON AUTOMATIC CHRONOGRAPH



AUDEMARS PIGUET ROYAL OAK PERPETUAL CALENDAR ONLY



CHOPARD SUPERFAST 8HZ POWER CONTROL PORSCHE 919 ONLY WATCH 2017



F P JOURNE CHRONOGRAPHE MONOPOUSSOIR RATTRAPANTE



the watches on the auction list are out of reach for the less wealthy who want to do their bit to help.

The timepiece contributed by Maurice Lacroix, the Aikon Automatic Chronograph, is valued at only US\$3,600 to US\$4,600. The sporty looking watch was a quartz icon of watchmaking in the 1990s, now given a heart transplant. A self-winding mechanism has replaced the original quartz movement that powered the timepiece.

Tudor, which made headlines in the 2015 auction when its Heritage Black Bay One sold for 375,000 Swiss francs (S\$525,233), over 120 times its estimated value, contributed the price-friendly Black Bay Bronze One for the latest auction. The left-hand timepiece, which has the winding crown on the left, boasts a 43mm bronze case with a khaki green dial and bezel.

The winning bidder will also get to visit Tudor's headquarters in Geneva, a first for Tudor which does not run a visit programme. The estimated value of watch is US\$4,600 to US\$5,700.

Blancpain's donation, the Tribute to Fifty Fathoms Mil-Spec, is a reinterpretation of the first modern diving watch, created in 1953. At 6 o'clock is the circular water resistance indicator, which was a standard issue feature on watches worn by US combat swimmers. Estimated at a value of US\$11,000 to US\$18,000, the diving watch comes with a diving lesson for five persons. The instructor is Gianluca Genoni, who holds 18 apnea (breath-hold diving) world records.

TAG Heuer's Luxury Kit Only Watch Special Edition package includes a lunch for four with Jean-Claude Biver, CEO of the brand and president of the watch division of LVMH Group. The timepiece is a smart watch which is interchangeable with TAG Heuer's mechanical COSC-certified chronograph tourbillon. The watch's estimated value is US\$16,000 to US\$26,000.

The successful bidder for Chopard's Superfast 8Hz

Power Control Porsche 919 Only Watch 2017 will also get to spend a weekend at the Monaco Historique GP 2018 with Jacky Ickx, the motor-racing legend who helped in designing the high-frequency timepiece, which has an estimated value of US\$19,000 to US\$26,000.

Montblanc's original 1858 Chronograph Tachymeter was launched in 2016 in a blue limited edition of 100 timepieces. It won the highly regarded Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Geneva's best chronograph prize that year. In Montblanc's 1858 Chronograph Tachymeter Unique Piece Only Watch 2017, the mono-pusher chronograph appears in a 44 mm bronze case combined for the first time with a vintage green dial. Its estimated value is US\$29,000 to US\$36,000.

Audemars Piguet's offer is the Royal Oak Perpetual Calendar Only Watch, the brand's “first black ceramic perpetual calendar watch to feature a black ceramic caseback with sapphire display revealing a unique hand-finished black oscillating mass”. Its estimated value is US\$83,000 to US\$124,000.

When a stickler for classic watchmaking and an unconventional watchmaker get together to create a timepiece, the result is the Arpal One LF-UR1. It is recognisable as the work of maverick Urwerk, one of the two independent collaborators. There is the distinctive satellite display that uses a quartet of circular discs on a central rotating carriage to show the time.

But the timepiece is also the work of Laurent Ferrier, a modern master of traditional watchmaking – and his mark is in the swooping lines of the case made of Arpal. Arpal is a colour-fast, oxidation-resistant alloy of 75 per cent precious metals and 25 per cent other elements typically used in high-technology applications. The estimated value of the watch is US\$52,000 to US\$72,000. ■

PATEK PHILIPPE REF 5208T-010



THE ODD COUPLE - LAURENT FERRIER & URWERK ARPAL ONE LF-UR1



BID FOR A GOOD CAUSE

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BY CHUANG PECK MING