

LOOKING AHEAD

BY CHUANG PECK MING

The world's biggest annual watch show – Baselworld 2015 – ended in Basel in Switzerland at the end of March, with luxury watch brands unveiling the timepieces that will set the standards for the year ahead. We highlight some of the watches here and in the next two pages.

1) Calatrava Pilot Travel Time Ref 5524 by Patek Philippe
(US\$47,600 or S\$65,212)

This two-time-zone piece is reported to have created the most buzz at BaselWorld 2015. And Patek's boss Thierry Stern loves the fuss that it caused, even when it was not all flattering. The excitement is proof that Patek, which celebrated its 175th birthday last year, can still spring surprises after all these years – it hasn't grown dull with age. And for those who say that they dislike the Pilot Travel Time, they would secretly still like to own it, according to Mr Stern.

Many who saw the watch say that it looks "un-Patek". Mr Stern disagrees, pointing out that there is already an earlier model displayed in the Patek Philippe museum. While the 42 mm white gold case is larger than the usual Patek watch, he says that is because a pilot watch must provide very clear readings of the time. Yet there are deviations from the conventional pilot watch models. The Pilot Travel Time, powered by an automatic movement, has a dark navy blue dial – not the usual black in a pilot's watch.

2) Tradition Repetition Minutes Tourbillon 7087 by Breguet
(S\$662,000)

Regarded by many as one of the most impressive minute repeaters produced in recent years, the Tradition 7087 is actually a remake of earlier chiming complications but presented in a totally new light, both in terms of approach and result. It is not just a superior minute repeater with better sound quality, it is also a gravity-defying tourbillon – a nod to one of Breguet's greatest inventions. Tradition 7087 is powered by an automatic movement contained in either a 44 mm rose or white gold case.

3) Oyster Perpetual Yacht-Master by Rolex (US\$22,000 or S\$30,140 in 37 mm case; US\$24,950 or S\$34,181 in 40 mm case)

Apart from a rose gold case, what is new in the latest Yacht-Master is a Rolex-patented sporty black rubber "bracelet" – the "Oysterflex" – that compromises none of the strong features of a steel bracelet: robustness, waterproofing and reliability. The watch, which has a ceramic bezel, is also the first Yacht-Master with a matte black dial.

4) Project Z9 by Harry Winston (S\$37,400)

The ninth in a line that concentrates on producing innovative pieces, this latest creation – a flyback chronograph – boasts a unique material, high frequency movement and complex dial. The 44.2 mm case is made of Zalium, a very tough but ultra-light exclusive alloy. The movement is fitted with a silicon balance spring and beats at five hertz, faster than the usual four. Both make the Project Z9 more accurate in keeping time. The dial is modern, composed of an open-worked 3D grid bearing the indications.



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5) Premier Precious Butterfly Automatic 36 mm by Harry Winston (S\$66,700 to S\$68,300)

Butterfly wings are the material used in making this beautiful lady's timepiece. The vibrant colours adorning it are created using the fragile, iridescent, powder found on butterfly wings. Harry Winston designers successfully harvested and expertly placed the delicate powder on the dial, a technique which took three years of creative reflection and development.

Driving the watch is an automatic movement fitted with a silicon balance spring to ensure high precision in time keeping. It is housed in a 36 mm white gold case decorated with 57 brilliant-cut diamonds.

6) PanoMaticLunar by Glashutte Original
(S\$17,900 in steel and S\$37,000 in rose gold)

The latest model in this Pano collection comes in two versions with new dials: a rose gold case with a matt black dial; and a steel with striking blue face. Its defining feature remains: the panorama date and moon phase display.

The 40 mm case houses an automatic movement.



7) L-Evolution Tourbillon Carrousel by Blancpain
(S\$517,200, limited 50 pieces)

Putting a flying tourbillon and a flying carrousel together is impressive enough, but Blancpain takes it a step further and pairs the combo with a bezel sculpted into an innovative form – one which is both aggressive and sporty – in this complication timepiece. The dial, designed with multiple levels, reveals all of the complexity of an opened worked movement. Both the dial and hand-wound movement are housed in a 47.40 mm platinum case.

8) North Flag by Tudor (US\$3,550 in leather, US\$3,675 in bracelet)

Along with the Pelagos, this rugged looking timepiece inspired by the British North Greenland Expedition in the 1950s is equipped with Tudor's first in-house movement. The automatic mechanical movement, featuring a bidirectional rotor system, has 70 hours' power reserve and is officially certified by the Swiss Official Chronometer Testing Institute. The watch comes in a steel bracelet or leather strap. It has a 40 mm steel case with a double bezel in steel and ceramic.

9) Reine De Naples Princesse Mini 9807 & 9808 by Breguet (S\$36,800 in rose gold, S\$22,300 in steel)

This is one of two new versions of the first wristwatch that Breguet made for the Queen of Naples, Caroline Murat, in 1810. The timepiece is noted for the delicate shape of its case and elegant curves. This rose gold model has the same automatic movement as the steel version, but its domed dial is slightly different – it is made of mother-of-pearl from Tahiti. Another feature exclusive to the rose gold model are the diamonds set on the spherical attachment of the strap; the crown also wears a briolette diamond.

10) Calibre 111 by Oris (S\$7,500 in steel)

If you missed the Calibre 110 that was launched last year, the first Oris watch to be driven by an in-house movement in 35 years, you can now have Calibre 111 which has the same movement. Calibre 110 was a limited edition that celebrated



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Oris' 110th anniversary – only 220 pieces were produced and are sold out.

Calibre 111 is no less special. It marks Oris' return to making its own in-house movements in a big way – "industrialising the production of this uniquely complicated calibre", in the brand's words. Like Calibre 110, the new Calibre features a 10-day power reserve and a non-linear power indicator. In addition, it has a date function. There are four new models in the collection: a 43 mm steel case with a silver-grey or sun-ray black-gold dial; and a 43 mm rose gold case with an opaline silver-gold or maroon dial.

11) Jour Nuit/Day Night by Blancpain (S\$71,400)

At 40 mm, the red gold case is bigger than usual for a lady's watch. But the diamonds set on the Day Night's bezel more than soften the masculinity of the case, which houses an exclusive automatic movement incorporating two retrograde indications, seconds and hours. The minute is displayed with a regulator hand which sweeps non-stop over its circle of rotation.

12) 14 J12 Flying Tourbillon by Chanel

(limited 50 pieces, prices to be provided upon request) Still popular after 15 years, the ceramic-based J12 collection launched in 2000 has expanded its range over the years to include various complications. This model, driven by a hand-winding movement with 40 hours' power reserve, is part of Chanel's new Flying Tourbillon set that also includes four other diamond-set and skeleton complications.

13) De Ville Prestige Dewdrop by Omega
(S\$44,850 for 33 mm, S\$37,100 for 27 mm)

Distinguished by its sophisticated style, the latest addition to the De Ville Prestige collection seeks to combine elegant fine jewellery and precise timekeeping to appeal to a new generation of fashion-forward style icons. The watch comes in either a 32.7 mm red or yellow gold case, or a smaller 27.4 mm red or yellow gold case. At the heart of the larger model is the Co-Axial calibre 2500 movement. The smaller model is driven by an Omega quartz movement. Both models have a mother-of-pearl dial.



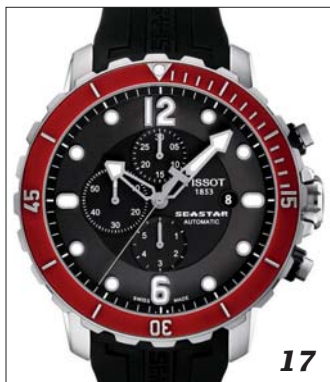
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14) LUC Regulator by Chopard (S\$42,740)

Regulators are watches in which the hour hand is not fixed at the centre of the dial. Like the high-precision regulator clocks used to provide the reference time in watchmaking workshops in the late 19th century, the hours, minutes and seconds of the LUC Regulator are separated and placed on different parts of the dial to maximise visibility.

As the hand-wound movement, nestled in a 43 mm rose gold case, is COSC-certified, it means that the LUC Regulator – the second of such a model that Chopard has made (the first was in 2006) – lives up to the high precision of the regulator clocks. There is also a window on the LUC Regulator's dial for GMT time and power reserve indicator; the watch has power reserve of 216 hours, or nine days.

15) Speedmaster Apollo 13 Silver Snoopy Award by Omega (S\$9,500, limited 1,970 pieces)

This chronograph pays homage to the astronauts of the aborted Apollo 13 mission to the moon 45 years ago, in particular to their quick thinking, ingenuity and courage to bring the space ship back safely after an unexpected crisis when they were 200,000 miles away from Earth.

A key feature of the watch, housing in a 42 mm steel case the same manual-winding movement that powered the famous Moonwatch model, is Snoopy the beloved dog from the Peanuts cartoon. Snoopy, which is also a Nasa mascot, decorates the dial and the caseback – a nod to the Silver Snoopy Award that Omega won in 1970 for its contributions to the Apollo programme.

16) Big Bang Alarm Repeater by Hublot (Limited 250 pieces in titanium – S\$86,100; or gold – S\$114,200)

This big watch, which has a 45.5 mm case, is part of the collection produced to mark the 10th birthday of Hublot's Big Bang models. A fusion of tradition and modernity, the Alarm Repeater offers a mechanical alarm clock, which was invented even before the hands, and a second time zone. The alarm clock chimes for around 16 seconds as a steel hammer strikes a gong. With the Alarm Repeater, Hublot shows that it is just as capable as the top watch brands in producing almost all new materials and its own movements. The hand-wound in-house movement has a power reserve of 72 hours.

17) Seastar 1000 Automatic Chronograph by Tissot (S\$1,890, S\$1,950 with bracelet)

This diver's watch is not just water-resistant to a depth of 300 m, it is also fitted with a helium valve which automatically depressurises. The steel case is fitted with a new ceramic anti-clockwise rotating bezel.

18) Elite 6150 by Zenith (US\$8,300, S\$11,371)

With this classic and elegant timepiece, Zenith intends to raise the profile of an ultra-thin in-house movement that has long been overshadowed by the brand's legendary El Primero chronograph movement. The Elite base, as the movement was called, was launched in 1994 and picked as the Best Movement of the Year that year. And for the next 20 years, it has been used to drive Zenith's ultra-thin and gem-set models.

In the Elite 6150, the Zenith base movement – contained in a 42 mm steel case – has now been updated, its performance boosted and its power reserve doubled to 100 hours.

Zenith says that the Elite 6150 is to be "the basis of future variations". It was created with that in mind.

19) Pulsometer Chronograph by Longines (S\$6,360)

Just what the doctor ordered? This reissue of a model which first appeared in the 1920s not only tells time with precision, but also measures heartbeats with accuracy. It is driven by an automatic movement, housed in a 40 mm steel case. The watch features a lacquered dial.

20) Rado HyperChrome Si3N4 by Rado (3,850 Swiss francs, estimated S\$5,467)

Rado's dream of making a full watch out of ceramic has been fulfilled with this timepiece.

Rado first introduced a watch with an ultra-light high-tech ceramic case three years ago. The new HyperChrome has not only an ultra-light silicon nitride ceramic case, its bracelet is also made of the same "extremely light-weight, hard, man-made, high-performance material".

Together with an automatic movement that boasts light-weight aluminium bridges, the HyperChrome is now lighter than ever.

21) Ulysse Anchor Tourbillon by Ulysse Nardin (Limited 18 pieces in rose gold – S\$152,200; and 18 in white gold – S\$159,400)

The product of eight years' research and development, the standout feature of this tourbillon is a constant force escapement made entirely of silicium, which the brand has pioneered. This provides the complication with greater stability and precision in timekeeping. The hand-wound movement that powers the timepiece is housed in a 44 mm gold case with an enamel dial. It has a power reserve of seven days. ■



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