

Watches of the YEAR

Presenting the ones to watch: the finest new models, from dazzling concoctions to ingenious feats of horological engineering

SET IN STONE

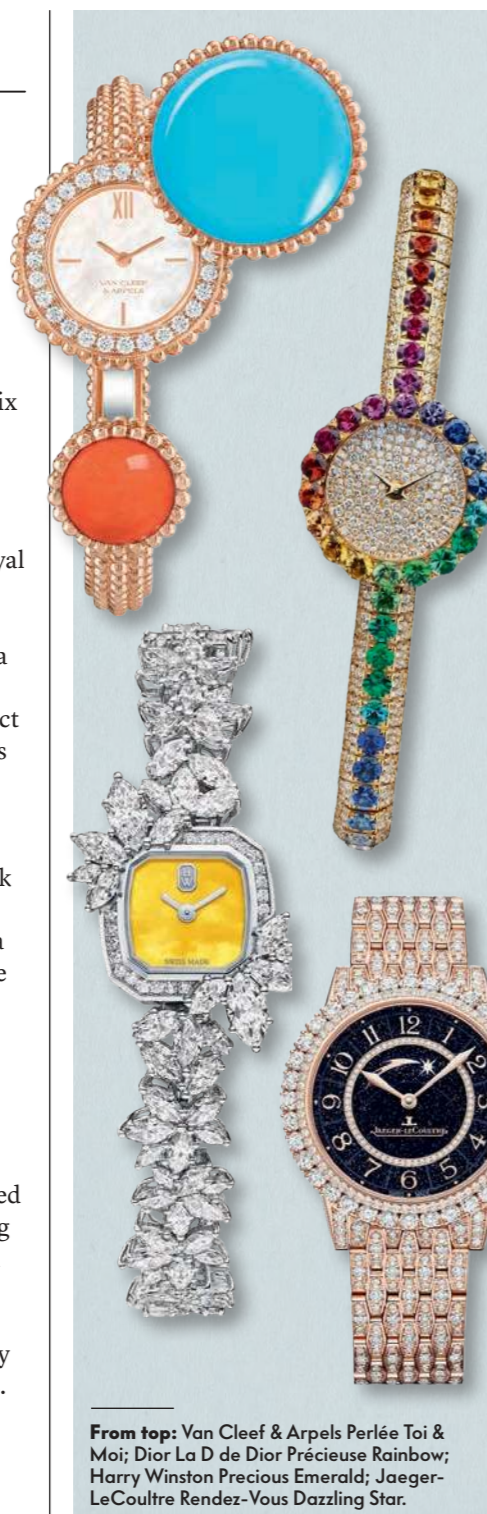
By Vivienne Becker

FLAVOURED WITH OLD-SCHOOL

Hollywood glamour, there's suitably starry-eyed drama to this season's gem-smothered pick 'n' mix. Stargazers will thrill at Jaeger-LeCoultre's Rendez-Vous Dazzling Stars, with its diamond-encircled midnight-blue aventurine dial, across which streaks a golden comet, at random intervals, roughly four to six times an hour, thanks to a new and ingenious in-house mechanism. And an otherworldly aurora borealis iridescence hovers over the black ceramic tapisserie dial of the new Royal Oak Selfwinding. This third collaboration between Audemars Piguet and designer-jeweller Carolina Bucci delivers a striking contrast between the evanescent rainbow effect and opaque velvety blackness. Rolex's Oyster Perpetual Yacht-Master 40 ripples with the light and colours of dawn, like sunlight on water, its rotating bezel set with diamonds, pink and blue sapphires.

There are more cosmic phenomena for eveningwear: the sweet round case of the latest exquisite La D de Dior is encircled by a rainbow of coloured gems, in three different colourways. Piaget's Extravagant Touch watch celebrates the theatre of the night sky through a dial of black opal, with its lightning blue and green flashes echoed in the sapphires and emeralds clinging to the Gala's lyrical diamond-rimmed silhouette. Natural blue and green feathers, arranged by artist Nelly Saunier, add a whimsical flourish; they can be detached and worn as earrings.

The colour that has become a keynote of high jewellery watches reaches a chromatic crescendo this season. Chopard's Red Carpet



From top: Van Cleef & Arpels Perlée Toi & Moi; Dior La D de Dior Précieuse Rainbow; Harry Winston Precious Emerald; Jaeger-LeCoultre Rendez-Vous Dazzling Star.

Collection parades a cuff watch on which lavish diamonds are encrusted, as if embroidered, with floral motifs of vibrantly coloured sapphires. Van Cleef & Arpels' new Perlée secret watch has a swivelling cover of turquoise or carnelian, each paired with a mini-me spherical motif (amplifying the roundness of the Perlée gold beads) respectively of coral or black pietersite. Yet the most exuberant, uninhibited colour comes, unsurprisingly, from Bulgari; the Giardino Dell'Eden Tourbillon, one of five Eden Garden of Wonders masterworks, captures the

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unstoppable force of nature, the explosive life and colour of a Mediterranean garden, with lush flowers, foliage and butterflies, set en tremblant, among which slithers the seductive serpent, all set with a mass of 6,500 coloured gems, Paraiba tourmalines, pink tourmalines, sapphires of all shades, spessartites, rubies, opals and more, growing around a skeletonised mechanical movement with tourbillon. Harry Winston splashes brilliant colour onto the new Precious Emerald watches, the emerald-cut shaped dials of sun yellow or sky blue tinted mother-of-pearl sheltering among the marquise diamond clusters of the 1960s wreath-style bracelet.



Clockwise from top left: Hublot Classic Fusion Orlinski; Rolex Oyster Perpetual Yacht-Master 40; Bulgari Giardino Dell'Eden Tourbillon; Chopard Red Carpet Collection; Piaget Extravagant Touch; Girard-Perregaux Laureato; Hermès Medor; Chanel Première; Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Selfwinding Carolina Bucci Limited Edition.

Anyone who is colour-shy can indulge in new iterations of the classic gold and diamond combo. Go big and sporty with Girard-Perregaux's Laureato or small and fashion-fuelled with Hermès charming new rose-gold mini Medor secret watch, with the pyramid-shaped diamond-paved stud

(from the original 1927 dog collar and the 1993 watch) covering the dial, reprised on the rose-gold and diamond-dotted bracelet.

IN THIS YEAR'S heavenly haul, there are stars of past, present and future. Chanel relaunches the original 1987 Première

model, the gold case in the shape of Place Vendôme, black dial and black leather woven through the gold chain bracelet, just like the iconic handbag, an emblem of 1980s glamour. Continuing its collaboration with French sculptor Richard Orlinski, Hublot's Classic Fusion Orlinski edges into a futuristic monochrome mood, playing with light and shade, as the artist's characteristic facets spill over from the architectural case and dial onto a masterfully engineered bevelled metallic bracelet. Destined for horological stardom. ■

Flavoured with Hollywood **GLAMOUR**, there's suitably **STARRY-EYED** drama to this season's gem-smothered pick 'n' mix.

ADDED COMPLICATION

By Ken Kessler

COMPLICATIONS DESCRIBE ANY function on a watch that provides time-related data beyond hours, minutes and seconds, such as calendars or second-time zones. Historically, these add to the prestige offerings from the top makers because producing them requires high levels of horological expertise. It is no surprise that those with the greatest longevity continue to add or refine complications. Often grouped with these are tourbillons, which do not adhere to the definition of a complication as they do not display any data, but their desirability is undeniable.

Patek Philippe, which has mastered all of them, has two models this year to excite devotees who want more than mere time-telling. Ref. 5470P is a manually wound monopusher chronograph with the rare capability of tenth-of-a-second measurements, a modern achievement clothed in a deliciously retro package. Vintage looks, too, define the self-winding Ref. 5326G, which combines an annual calendar and the company's Travel Time display system in a watch that oozes military chic. Patek Philippe pulled a radical move with this beauty, its dial recalling the crackle finish of old film cameras (and period Ferrari valve covers).

Few names resonate more with aficionados of complications than Breguet, as the company's founder created most of them more than two centuries ago. Since perfecting the tourbillon was one of Abraham-Louis Breguet's crowning achievements, the Breguet Tradition collection showcases this with skeletal layouts that do not obscure the works. The latest in the line



Clockwise from top left: Jaeger-LeCoultre Master Control Chronograph Calendar; Breguet Tradition 7047; Patek Philippe 1/10th Second Monopusher Chronograph Ref. 5470P-001; Carl F Bucherer Heritage BiCompax Annual Hometown Edition; Vacheron Constantin Les Cabinotiers Minute Repeater Tourbillon Split-Seconds Monopusher Chronograph; Blancpain Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe Quantième Complet; Cartier Pasha de Cartier; Patek Philippe Annual Calendar Travel Time Ref. 5326G-001; Louis Vuitton Slim Vivienne Jumping Hours Fortune.

is the Tradition 7047 Tourbillon Waltz, with details finished in blue coatings. The talking point will be the fusée-chain mechanism, another technology dating back centuries but rarely used as it involves the construction of a microscopically tiny chain. Visually, it doesn't get any better for gearheads.

Blancpain, the equally venerable sister brand of Breguet, carved out a niche in the world of diving watches with Fifty Fathoms, first created in 1953. But the tool watch nature of the model hasn't precluded complications. This year, there are two new interpretations of the Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe Quantième Complet, one in red gold with blue gradient dial, and one in titanium with an anthracite dial. To its imperviousness to H₂O has been added a complete calendar with moon phases, should you need to know the date while diving.

Another maison with enviable longevity and expertise is Jaeger-LeCoultre, which has added two

models to its Master Control range: the Master Control Calendar and the Master Control Chronograph Calendar. Highly precise and tested to extremes, both watches show the day of the week and the month in apertures below 12 o'clock, with moon phase at the 6 o'clock position, while the latter adds a full-function chronograph.

The Heritage BiCompax Annual from Carl F Bucherer also combines calendar functions with a chronograph, its predominant feature being the hugely popular "big date" display below the 12. Cartier, which has revived the distinctive Pasha de Cartier range, enhanced its desirability with the new calibre 1904-LU MC, adding a jumbo moonphase display at 6 o'clock for one model, with the same aperture housing a 60-second tourbillon in another.

TORN BETWEEN A chronograph, a tourbillon and a minute repeater? Vacheron Constantin's elite Les Cabinotiers range now includes the Minute Repeater Tourbillon Split-Seconds Monopusher Chronograph in pink gold—and yes, you did see split seconds in there, adding to its roster of complications. This manually wound masterpiece places the hours and minutes in a subdial so the most visible action is the sweep of the chronograph's seconds hand, while the main talking point is its mellifluous minute repeater. The look mixes formal elegance, using shades of grey for the dial, accented by a telemetry ring in red.

Louis Vuitton, however, took another venerable complication—jumping hours—and came up with some wry takes which will surely have observers asking owners if they can play with their latest Tambour pieces. The Tambour Slim Vivienne Jumping Hours Casino and Tambour Slim Vivienne Jumping Hours Fortune added small apertures to the time-telling openings, displaying two kinds of playing cards. The former is a standard deck to appeal to poker players, the latter a tarot for those who want their fortunes told. Now there's a complication that goes beyond hours, minutes and seconds. ■

STROKES OF GENIUS

By Nazanin Lankarani

MÉTIERS D'ART WATCHES demonstrate the skill of masters of rare crafts and complex techniques who apply a broad range of practices to transform an ever expanding variety of materials into exceptional creations. This year, unique pieces or small series find their inspiration in both nature and culture, and reveal how beautifully métiers d'art techniques are applied to watchmaking.

Take the stunning precision with which Jaeger-LeCoultre has created a hand-enamelled miniature image on the caseback of its 10-piece Reverso Tribute Enamel Hokusai "Amida Falls".

The piece is inspired by a woodblock print known as *The Amida Falls in the Far Reaches of the Kisokaido Road* by the great Japanese master Katsushika Hokusai. The dial has a green guilloché lozenge pattern in grand feu enamel, but it is on the caseback that every detail of Hokusai's composition is miniaturised in enamel, capturing the artist's bokashi colour-gradient technique, contrasted with his signature vivid blues and yellows.

The stormy blue sea of Chaumet's Encre Swiss hints at Hokusai's *Great Wave off Kanagawa*, the work of Anita Porchet, who enhances, in her mastery of grand feu enamelling, the turquoise sky across which glides an albatross in flight, hand-engraved in white gold.

Métiers d'art watches demonstrate the skill of masters of **RARE CRAFTS** and complex techniques who apply a broad range of practices to **TRANSFORM MATERIALS** into exceptional creations.



Vacheron Constantin Tribute to Great Civilisations Buste d'Auguste; Patek Philippe Ref. 995/128J-001 Cheetah; Chopard Happy Sport Métiers d'Art; Chaumet Encre Swiss.

AT VACHERON CONSTANTIN, the Great Sphinx of Tanis, the Lion of Darius, the Victory of Samothrace and the Bust of Augustus are miniature interpretations of some of the most ancient works in the Louvre. Only 20 are made, each handmade piece being a testimony to the skilled artisans working in enamelling, micro-mosaics, marquetry and metal engraving.

The shades of turquoise, emerald green and midnight blue of Cartier's Métier d'Art Crash Tigrée Métamorphoses bring to mind the palette of Henri Rousseau's jungle scene paintings. This is the maison's first enamelled Crash, using champlévé enamelling on the case and dial to evoke the stripes of an imaginary beast. Just 50 numbered pieces will have the twist on this most coveted Cartier model.

This year, unique pieces or small series find their INSPIRATION in both NATURE AND CULTURE.

The garden of Christian Dior's Granville home in Normandy and the couturier's lifelong passion for roses are the inspiration for the one-of-a-kind Grand Soir Herbière No.7 by Dior. The model features rooster feathers applied onto a mother-of-pearl dial to create the petals of flowers, eternally in bloom on hand-engraved gold stems.

Chopard brings to life a menagerie of hummingbirds, turtles and polar bears in an eight-piece edition of the Happy Sport Métiers d'Art. Marquetry of opal, malachite and mother of pearl evoke the creatures' natural habitats, from the lush depths of the Amazon rainforest to the icy banks of the Arctic Circle.

Animal instincts also come alive in Patek Philippe's one-of-a-kind



Clockwise from top left: Dior Grand Soir Herbière N°7; Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso Tribute Enamel Hokusai "Amida Falls"; Cartier Métiers d'Art Crash Tigrée Métamorphoses.

Cheetah pocket watch, the dial of which depicts a wild cat in motion made from 610 mosaic parts, with 50 inlays from 16 different wood species in a dizzying range of colours. Micro-marquetry pieces form part of the brand's Rare Handcrafts collection, which includes table clocks and wristwatches. This year's 59 Patek Philippe métiers d'art creations are destined to become immensely collectable pieces. ■

ON A MISSION

By Bill Prince

GIVEN THE VOLUME of adventure-flecked watches coming onto the market, the cynical observer might allege that the horological equivalent of "sports-washing" is going on. Thankfully, if there are brands adopting the dress code—and some of the distress-proof amenities—of the classic tool watch the better to raise their profile, then thankfully there are enough examples of the real thing to lay such an odious notion to rest.

For whether stood on the shoulders of giants (the latest, green-hued Omega Seamaster Diver 300m can trace its lineage directly back to its 1948 forebear) or summoning the same strength of purpose found in the toughest timepieces (check out the chunky new TAG Heuer Aquaracer Professional 300 Orange Diver for go-anywhere kudos) there is currently a panoply of purchasing options.

Take the boldly camouflaged Panerai Submersible Forze Special Experience Edition, 50 examples of which come with an invitation to join Italian elite troops in a series of exercises, thereby underscoring the military origins of the Florentine-born brand. A non-combatant's version in black, DLC-coated with blue dial, is also available in a limited edition of 300 per annum.

But while brutalism has its place, the current trend is for a more blended approach to credentialising a Civvy Street watch with performance-imbued elements. Jaeger-LeCoultre's reanimated Polaris collection radiates this new mood, further set off by a new, lacquered gradient green dial. And Gerald Charles uses colour to similarly decorous effect with its ice-blue dialled Maestro GC honouring the 70th anniversary of Florentine retailer Ugo Piccini.

Louis Vuitton's new Tambour Street Diver leans in to the contemporary need for a watch capable of travelling from boardroom to locker room. Cohering to the needs of the urban explorer, the new model hosts an internal bezel set via a screw-down crown, generous coatings Super-LumiNova, and a choice of case



Clockwise from top left: Tudor Black Bay Pro; Seiko Prospex Glacier "Save the Ocean" 1970 Re-Interpretation; TAG Heuer Aquaracer Professional 300 Orange Diver; Gerald Charles Maestro GC2.0 Ultra-Thin UP; Panerai Submersible Forze Special Experience Edition; Area-D1 Diver; Jaeger-LeCoultre Polaris Date Boutique Edition; Breitling Superocean 42 Kelly Slater Limited Edition; Hublot Classic Fusion Chronograph Bol d'Or Mirabaud; Omega Seamaster Diver 300; Louis Vuitton Tambour Street Diver; Montblanc 1858 Iced Sea Automatic Date.

sizes depending on whether one chooses mechanical (44mm) or quartz (29.5mm) powered movements.

The new Street Diver shares the Tambour family's distinctive drum-shaped case, novelly recast since its launch in 2002 to serve as a host for high complications, as well as the maison's first ever smart watch. In the same spirit, Tudor's new Black Bay Pro GMT has familiar snowflake hands convening around an engraved 24-hour bezel and new, larger, even more luminous hour markers. (The latter are surefire indicators of a true tool watch, something that is not lost on a new dive watch entrant, the Aera D-1).

BREAKING THE MOULD whilst remaining true to its roots is Breitling's latest Superocean series, which takes as its stylistic cue an hour and minutes-only model launched in 1964 dubbed the Slow Motion, the new collection's four case sizes, available in three different case materials, all featuring the same bold, blocky batons of the original.

Hublot's familiar porthole design dates to 1980, and undergoes another over-water overhaul in the shape of the Classic Fusion Chronograph Bol d'Or Mirabaud, named for the famous Swiss regatta held annually on Lake Geneva and the largest inland competition of its kind in the world. Accordingly, the black ceramic case measures a healthy 45mm and features a blue rubber and technical fabric strap with contrasting top-stitching.

Finally, if all this heroism of the high seas leaves you a little cold, then you're still well served. Brands in search of life beyond the waves are developing more adventurous ways of depicting their hidden depths. Montblanc unveiled its Iced Sea collection, on which the dials are inspired by glaciers, and Seiko has announced the Prospex Glacier "Save the Ocean", a re-interpretation of the 1970 Diver's 150m model worn by Naomi Uemura on his solo dog-sled journey from Greenland to Alaska—a 7,500-mile trek that took the explorer two years to complete. Clearly, no "sports-washing" involved there. ■ *Bill Prince is acting editor in chief of Wallpaper*