

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS...

America's top retailers offer advice on what holiday watches to buy.

BY KEITH W. STRANDBERG

Every year, it gets tougher and tougher to find the right holiday gifts. People seem to have just about everything they could possibly want (smartphones, tablets, music, books and more). Don't forget, however, that a fine watch can be the perfect gift for that special someone...or for yourself.

There's never been a better time to buy a fine watch. Quality is excellent across the board, and there are so many great watches from which to choose.

And that's the problem—we are spoiled for choice today, so it's important to get advice from experts. Sure, the editors at *Revolution* are the best of the best, and you can see their favorites in the "Christmas Morning Watches" story in this issue, but I thought we'd go to the people on the ground, the soldiers on the front line of the retail wars, and find out what watches they think are perfect for holidays gifts this year.

Here's what they had to say:



Hank B. Siegal, president, Hamilton Jewelers (Princeton, NJ; Palm Beach, FL)

MEN'S WATCH: DRIVE DE CARTIER

Cartier is a watchmaker that sets itself apart with exceptional case designs. One of their newest offerings, the Drive de Cartier, combines the elegance we commonly associate with Cartier with a sporty design and size that has been missing from the Cartier men's line.

As most know, Cartier makes beautiful dive watches, but when they retired the Roadster a few years ago, the brand was missing a sporty option that was more fit for land than sea. The Drive fills this gap completely. At 40mm,



it's the perfect size on any wrist, and its wide but thin case gives a commanding presence without dominating the wrist. The design includes a discreet date window at three o'clock, and a perfectly proportioned small-seconds counter at six o'clock. Its tall Roman numerals retain a classic Cartier design element, and like many of Cartier's offerings, the Drive is available in a variety of options: it comes in a pink-gold or stainless-steel case, with a choice of a white, black, or gray dial.

The link between this watch and the world of auto racing is undeniable. Like the classically designed Roadster, the Drive features a cushion-shaped

case that fits perfectly under a sleeve (or racing glove, if you're that kind of driver). The guilloché design of its dial is made to resemble the radiator grill of an old, classic car, and its crown is fashioned after an automotive bolt. Like most Cartier watches, the crown is capped with a beautiful blue stone, once again underscoring the brand's marriage of refinement and utility.

This is the men's watch we've been waiting for from Cartier. Almost every aspect of this watch—its size, case design, dial options, movement—is a home run. This is truly a special and distinctive heirloom timepiece. \$6,250 for the steel version



**LADIES' WATCH: PATEK PHILIPPE
REF. 4968R IN ROSE GOLD**

In addition to making some of the most iconic men's dress watches in the last century, Patek Philippe creates equally impressive timepieces for its ladies' collection. Some, like the ref. 4968R, combine elegance with design and complication in a way unmatched by rival watchmakers. The ref. 4968R is a watch that refuses to be overlooked, both horologically and aesthetically.

First is the glowing dial, made of white mother-of-pearl with engraved spiral decoration. No matter the angle or light, the dial shines with a myriad of colors, sometimes pink, sometimes silver, at times like the moon, at times like a rare seashell. Despite its intricacies, the dial remains expressly legible, with long, thin rose-gold hands, and distinct applied gold numerals. Within a subseconds ring at six o'clock, it features a moonphase complete with golden stars.

The 33.3mm rose-gold case of the ref. 4968R is set with

a spiraling ring of diamonds that runs from the top of its bezel down to the sides of the case. The diamonds begin at 12 o'clock and increase in size as the spiral widens to the crown, and then grow smaller again as they approach the caseback. Patek Philippe calls this design "Diamond Ribbon Joaillerie," a pattern intended to reflect a gymnast's ribbon floating and spiraling in the air. As a result, the ref. 4968R shines like a remarkable jewel from every angle.

The ref. 4968R comes on a shiny taupe alligator strap with square scales, and to tie its design together fully, the connecting buckle is set with 32 diamonds, close to a quarter carat by itself.

In the flesh, the ref. 4968R calls to mind a ballet dancer. Like the best dancers, the watch is simultaneously light and powerful, precise and radiant. And like the ballet itself, it pairs well with a ball gown, ready to be seen under the bright lights of a formal night, watched closely by the stars and the elite. It is a watch as elegant and breathtaking as the lady who wears it. \$53,400



Russ Caplan, owner, Topper Fine Jewelers (Burlingame, CA)

MEN'S WATCH: ORIS DIVERS SIXTY-FIVE TOPPER EDITION

This is a 100-piece limited-edition watch we were able to design together with Oris that is only available with us. Using dial text and font treatments similar to the original Oris Divers Sixty-Five, we were able to work with Oris's designers to create a retro dive watch that included more iconic 1960s elements, and enhance the balance of the original. In its 112-year history, Oris has never made a non-date dive watch! When we looked at the bold blocks of vintage Super-LumiNova for the indices at three, six, nine, and 12 o'clock, we immediately thought of how balanced and beautiful a non-date version of the watch would be. We continued to think about the watch, and our good friend Eric Singer encouraged us with other design recommendations, including the orange bezel pip at 12 o'clock and the orange tip of the seconds hand. Although



the original Oris Divers Sixty-Five had an all-black-coated bezel, our version has a natural steel finish surrounding the black aluminum insert, which gives it a solid instrument feel.

Its aesthetics are also closer to the original 1960s watch. First, the dial text and font is more similar to the original piece. Instead of describing the water-resistance on the dial, the dial is inscribed with the original "anti-shock." In addition, we fully replicated the dial text of the original by including the movement

jewel count, a common declaration of 1960s watches. Also like the original, the words "Swiss Made" are at the bottom edge of the dial. The upper dial text has also received a retro makeover—the underscore for "Oris" was removed and the word "automatic" is in a font closer to the font used on the dial of the original.

The Oris Divers Sixty-Five Topper Limited Edition comes with two straps: a tropic-style rubber strap and a steel bracelet. \$2,199

LADIES' WATCH: OMEGA SEAMASTER AQUA TERRA

For ladies, we love the Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra with the Tahitian-pearl diamond-set dial and a diamond bezel. This is a gorgeous, fresh fashion-forward watch with a timeless design. It is also a versatile watch that can be worn for different occasions. Even better, it is powered by an incredibly sophisticated Omega Co-Axial movement. \$7,600





Ruediger Albers, president,
Wempe, New York

MEN'S WATCH: A. LANGE & SÖHNE SAXONIA MOON PHASE, VACHERON CONSTANTIN OVERSEAS, OR PANERAI PAM 1312

I really like the new A. Lange & Söhne Saxonia Moon Phase. With a 40mm 18K rose-gold case, the size is perfect. The moonphase is an eye-pleasing element and the 72-hour power reserve ensures that it will still run on Monday after you may have switched to a sporty watch for the weekend...perhaps to a watch like the new Vacheron Constantin Overseas, which offers not only a terrific in-house Geneva-Seal movement with a 60-hour power reserve, but also the versatility we all love—being able to switch from the iconic metal bracelet to a rubber strap or elegant alligator band.

Last but not least, for men, Officine Panerai's sleek PAM1312 with a new slim in-house movement allows customers not engaging in special ops to sport a Panerai with a business suit. It even fits under the shirt and the blue second hand is a great touch.



\$29,000 (Saxonia Moon Phase);
\$19,900 (Overseas); \$7,500 (PAM 312)



LADIES' WATCH: JAEGER-LECOULTRE REVERSO ONE DUETTO MOON

For the ladies, I suggest the new Reverso One Duetto Moon. In stainless steel or rose gold, this manual-wind watch with 38-hour power reserve and moonphase offers two dials, with sunburst guilloché on the front, and a feminine mother-of-pearl moon on the reverse.

\$12,500 (steel); \$23,800 (rose gold)



Jeremy Oster, Co-Owner, Oster Jewelers (Denver, CO)

LADIES' WATCH: DIOR SATINE

The ladies' watch that I recommend for my top clients is the new Satine by Dior. The world-famous French *haute couture* house has captured the essence of vintage chic in a most modern manner with this new watch. The skillfully crafted Milanese bracelet looks stunning in stainless steel. Combined with mother-of-pearl dials in a retro-chic size of either 19mm or 25mm, this watch really stands out from the crowd and looks and feels like no other on the wrist. From \$4,950



MEN'S WATCH: ULYSSE NARDIN EXECUTIVE SKELETON TOURBILLON

It is rare to see an extraordinary watch from one of the top blue-chip watch brands that is also extremely well-priced. Ulysse Nardin has broken the high-end rules with this new tourbillon, which is all made in-house, contemporary and unique whilst embracing over 200 years of traditional *haute horlogerie*. This may be the best value tourbillon wristwatch that has ever been created. \$38,000



Ray Grenon, owner, Grenon's of Newport (Newport, RI)

MEN'S WATCH: SPEAKE-MARIN LONDON CHRONOGRAPH

For men, legendary watchmaker Peter Speake-Marin has just released the London Chronograph. A special edition of three watches that features a vintage Valjoux 92 manual-wind chronograph movement from the 1950s. The 42mm case is made of titanium with black DLC case band. The white lacquered dial has three levels and features the Speake-Marin topping tool logo rotating in the center. The Gothic-style numbers on the dial are similar to the numbers used on the Speake-Marin Velsheda Gothic limited edition which sold out instantly. The gorgeous dial combined with a fantastic vintage movement make this piece a masterwork. \$18,900



LADIES' WATCH: ALEXANDER SHOROKHOFF "WINTER"

The Alexander Shorokhoff Winter Automatic has just been released and it is already a huge success. It features a 39mm stainless-steel case and a beautiful silver dial with the image of tree branches and leaves made of diamond powder. Beating within is the automatic ETA 2824 caliber. The striking blue strap is made of calf leather and is extremely soft and comfortable to wear. There will be an announcement coming out soon that Alexander Shorokhoff has won a prestigious award for this design (stay tuned). Shorokhoff pieces have been exploding in popularity because of their unique designs and attractive pricing. \$1,850



Armen Darakjian, owner,
Darakjian Jewelers (Birmingham, MI)

**MEN'S WATCH: TUDOR
HERITAGE BLACK BAY BRONZE**

The Tudor Heritage Black Bay Bronze is my choice. The basic reasons are easy: it comes with two straps (woven and distressed leather), its 43mm size provides a great presence on the wrist, its in-house automatic movement and it's Tudor. A relaunched powerful brand with the backing of its mother company gives watch collectors something to focus on. But the most interesting things about this piece are the specifics of style. The brown color of the dial, for a foodie like me, looks like decadent Swiss chocolate. The accents in gold and beige add elegance to the rugged overall design. The composition of the piece speaks "earthy" just in time for the millennial looking to start his or her (very cool) collection.

\$3,975



**LADIES' WATCH: VACHERON
CONSTANTIN OVERSEAS LADIES**

The Vacheron Constantin Overseas Ladies with electric blue dial and interchangeable straps will be on many ladies' holiday lists around the world. The Overseas has been redesigned and upgraded with many great features. But for me, it's mainly the electric blue dial reflecting off the diamond bezel. Yes, I know it's an in-house movement, but the dial speaks loudly of, if not screams, beauty. The richness and depth of the blue dial has always been in great demand. Now they have an interchangeable easy-click strap system —every Overseas watch comes with a steel band, a crocco band and a rubber strap. Great for the different applications these ladies will need; from vacations at the beach, to the evening ball and the club and finally, the everyday steel bracelet.

\$24,900

*Greg Simonian, president of Westime
(LA, San Diego, Miami)*

**MEN'S WATCH: TAG HEUER
CONNECTED WATCH**

Westime has sold over 200 of these timepieces this year, more than any other reference we offer in our boutiques. We predict it will keep its momentum.

From \$1,500



**LADIES': BVLGARI SERPENTI
TUBOGAS IN STAINLESS STEEL**

This watch is versatile, different, and a true ladies' watch—not a downsized men's watch. These characteristics make it a wonderful watch to gift (and receive).
\$7,650





*Scott Bolozky, Clarkson Jewelers
(St. Louis, MO)*

**MEN'S WATCH: ROLEX
GMT-MASTER II IN STEEL**

This 40mm GMT watch from Rolex was released at Baselworld 2015. The two-tone, blue-and-black rotatable bezel makes this piece an instant eye-catcher. Amongst the timepiece community, this watch is known as the "Batman." Even after roughly two years of consumer availability, this timepiece can be tough to locate, and they are typically spoken for as soon as they enter a jeweler's showroom. \$8,950



**LADIES' WATCH: ROLEX
YACHT-MASTER 37MM IN
EVEROSE GOLD**

This Rolex, which was also released in Basel in 2015, is the perfect mix of the timelessness of the Rolex Yacht-Master combined with a modern look of the matte-black bezel and dial, paired



with the sporty black Oysterflex band. Rolex was one of the last manufacturers to offer a rubber strap; however, with Rolex's innovation of the elastomer in this strap, it now offers this band with a five-year warranty. This watch is loved by everyone who sees it in the flesh! \$22,000