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1) Roger Dubuis' Excalibur Spider Pocket Time Instrument (S\$680,000): Two years ago, the brand launched the gravity-defying Excalibur Quatuor which boasts a movement with four sprung balances. Clients were flown first class to Switzerland to check out the radical creation. Roger Dubuis says that the watch has sold well. The movement is now fitted into this pocket watch which also feature two of Roger Dubuis' signature complications: the patented double moon-crescent power reserve display and its renowned double flying tourbillon. The hand-wound movement is housed in a 48 mm titanium case, and the watch is limited to 28 pieces.

2) Vacheron Constantin's Reference 57260

(price unavailable): "57" refers to the number of complications in this pocket watch and "260" is the brand's 260th anniversary this year. Vacheron made a similar super complication 10 years ago to celebrate its 250th birthday. But that pocket watch has only 16 complications. Ref 57260 is certainly the most complicated watch created by Vacheron, if not all watch brands. The last watch with the most complications – 33 – was Calibre 89, made in 1989 by Patek Philippe. Vacheron's unique piece, ordered by a customer whose identity is kept secret, is the work of three master watchmakers and has taken eight years to finish. Apart from the classic complications, Ref 57260 also boasts new ones like the Hebraic perpetual calendar and the dual retrograde rattrapante chronograph. At the heart of the watch is a hand-wound movement with 60 hours' power reserve. The movement is housed in a 98 mm white gold case.



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THE WONDER OF IT ALL

BY CHUANG PECK MING

Watches & Wonders (WW) is settling down to be a regular annual watch show in Hong Kong for Asian watch sellers and buyers. After a shaky start three years ago in the former British colony, the luxury watch fair appears to have finally found its footing when the three-day event was staged last month at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Fabienne Lupo, chairman and managing director of the *Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie*, the body behind WW, has stated on the eve of this year's exhibition that Hong Kong remains WW's home, despite rumours to the contrary.

"Our objective is always Hong Kong," she says. "We have chosen Hong Kong from the first time, and we will remain in Hong Kong for sure."

Even though there has been a recent drop in imports of Swiss luxury timepieces into Hong Kong, the Special Administrative Region is still the world's biggest watch market. And the biggest customers are just next door, in China.

According to Samuel Lee, CEO of *Elegant Watch*, a Hong Kong distributor for watch brands owned by Swiss luxury group Richemont, Hong Kong will continue to be the most important watch market – especially for those with high value. "With its long history of selling watches, strong sales background, abundant funding and centralised location, Hong Kong is believed to have a great advantage over other regions in long-term development," he says.

When it took off in late 2013, WW was an Asian offshoot of the *Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH)* – the mega watch show dominated by Richemont brands and held yearly in the Swiss city of Geneva. The exhibitors and timepieces on display at WW were no different from those at SIHH earlier in the year.

Some new models – not those already unveiled in SIHH – were launched in WW last year, but it is only in 2015 that the Hong Kong watch show has started to hold its own. The participating brands are still the same at the two exhibitions, but they have introduced not only newer but more substantial pieces at WW this year.

There are a fair number of new models for ladies as well as pocket watches and clocks. But what really stands out are several key launches: Vacheron Constantin's most complicated watch; Jaeger-LeCoultre's new *Geophysic* line; Panerai's latest movement; Piaget's first complication for women; and A Lange & Sohne's limited edition timepiece in honey gold.

What follows, in the first of two parts, are highlights of the timepieces presented by the 12 brands which took part in WW 2015.



3) Officine's Radiomir 1940 Tourbillon GMT Oro Rosso

(S\$219,400): The immediate thing you will notice about this complication is the skeletal features on what appears to be a dial-less face. They are actually parts of the watch's movement reduced to their essential structure. The hand-wound movement with a tourbillon regulator, resting in a 48 mm red gold case, has three barrels which give the timepiece a power reserve of six days. The tourbillon cage completes a rotation in 30 instead of the traditional 60 seconds – and it rotates on a perpendicular instead of a parallel axis. This makes the watch more accurate. The complication

has two sub-dials – for the seconds and am/pm indicator – which are an integral part of the movement. The linear hour-markers and numbers, all coated in ecru Super-LumiNova, are fixed directly to the black flange.

4) Jaeger-LeCoultre's Geophysic True Seconds:

Don't let its simple and uncluttered look fool you. The watch, which comes in a 39.6 mm steel (\$\$13,300) or pink gold case (\$\$25,900), is driven by a new sophisticated movement that is constructed to reduce air friction and increase precision. Its seconds hand moves in "jumps", at one jump per second



– no ordinary feat for an automatic mechanical movement. True Seconds is also a travelling watch – the crown in position one sets the jumping hours corresponding to the city that you are currently in, and the date.

5) Baume & Mercier's Clifton 1830 Five-minute Repeater Pocket Watch (\$\$75,000) is the brand's first pocket watch, made to celebrate its 185th birthday. Only 30 pieces are produced. The minute repeater's 50 mm red gold case holds a skeleton hand-wound movement designed by Baume & Mercier.

6) Piaget's Limelight Stella is the brand's first complication watch for women – and it got Hong Kong actress Carina Lau to help launch the timepiece at WW. The Limelight Stella comes in a 36 mm white or pink gold case housing an automatic movement. The pink gold case features a polished (\$\$30,500) or diamond-set bezel (\$\$42,700), while the white gold version has a diamond-set bezel. Piaget has developed the movement for the Limelight Stella, endowing it with the power to capture the moon cycle. The moon phases, a symbol of timeless femininity, are seen through a large fan-shaped aperture at 12 o'clock. While the moon phase in most watches lags one day behind every two-and-a-half years, the one in Piaget's Limelight Stella requires a one-day correction only after 122 years.

7) Jaeger-LeCoultre's Geophysic Universal Time is supposed to be a simpler world-time watch than all the models that came before it. You can tell the time in all 24 zones with one look at the dial. There is no push button for adjusting world time. In fact, no adjustment is needed once the universal time has been set. You only need to move the hour hand forward or backward with the crown to get your local time – the minutes and seconds will not be affected. Powered by a similar movement as the one that moves the True Seconds, the Universal Time is available in a 41.6 mm steel (\$\$21,900) or pink gold (\$\$36,900) case.

8) Van Cleef & Arpels' Charms Extraordinaire Esperance

is one of three models in its new Charms Extraordinaire Langage des Fleurs collection (\$\$43,500–61,600) each of a different size and gold colour and in a numbered edition. And each bears a different love message according to the flowers that it represents. This quartz-driven model, the smallest with a 25 mm yellow gold case, is



decorated with sunny colours. Along with miniature paintings and diamonds, it has a buttercup, daffodil and chickweed engraved on a mother of pearl dial with a bezel made up of three rings of precious stones.

9) A Lange & Sohne's 1815 200th Anniversary F A Lange (\$\$48,300) celebrates the brand's founder's 200th birthday. It appeared earlier in the year in platinum. The latest version is in Lange's proprietary honey gold, which is paler but harder than normal gold. The 40 mm hand-wound timepiece, in a limited edition of 200 pieces, is only the third Lange release in honey gold. The first, issued in 2010, was the set which also pays homage to F A Lange. The second was a very limited (15 pieces) Richard Lange Tourbillon Pour le Merite Handwerkskunst, launched the following year.

10) Piaget's Emperador Coussin XL Lune Astronomique (\$\$183,000):

One of 38 pieces in a collection called "Secrets & Lights – A Mythical Journey by Piaget", this moon-phase complication showcases the craft of enamelling and hand-engraving. This is displayed in the antique map and ocean on its dial, held by a 46.5 mm cushion-shaped pink gold case. The map and ocean are champléve enamelled and decorated with hand-engraving and miniature enamelled details, like the nautical compass motif. The large moon phase at six o'clock is as accurate as Limelight Stella's. Pumping the watch is an automatic movement with three-day power reserve.

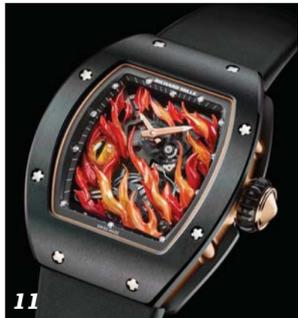
11) Richard Mille's Tourbillon RM 26-02 Evil Eye (\$36,500 Swiss francs or \$\$780,236) is "a new talisman to protect against . . . negative energies in the 21st century". Fashioned from 3N red gold, the flames and eye decorating this complication watch have been hand-carved with chisels "made specifically to perfect the tiniest details". "The art of grand feu enamelling is what gives the eye its striking depth and realism," says the brand. Resting in the timepiece's ceramic case is a hand-wound movement with power reserve of about 50 hours. The complication is limited to 25 pieces.

12) Richard Mille's 69 Erotic Tourbillon (\$690,000 Swiss francs or \$\$1.3 million)

is more playful than erotic, despite the naughty usage of "69" in naming the model and setting the power reserve. Unlike the many erotic timepieces produced, this one – which is limited to 30 pieces – has no explicit sexual images to show. Love and eroticism proclaim themselves only in words in this titanium timepiece, which is equipped with a hand-wound movement that Audemars Piguet's Renaud & Papi has a hand in designing. "Playfully interpreted, this fine watchmaking creation will delight and amuse its owners, teasingly displaying phrases that evoke desired pleasure," the brand says. The cost? About a million bucks. But there's also the tourbillon.

13) Cartier's Cle De Cartier Mysterious Hour:

The brand has lost no time in expanding its new Cle De Cartier line. Distinguished by a cushion-shaped case with a crown which is oblong in shape, resembling the key that is used to wind clocks, the Cle De Cartier was launched in January. It has since been integrated with Cartier classics such as the Cartier Flying Tourbillon and Cartier Mysterious Hour. The Cle De Cartier Mysterious Hour, featuring a semi-skeletonised dial, is equipped with Cartier's in-house movement – Caliber 9981 MC, which made its debut in 2013 in Cartier's mysterious watch. It comes in a 41 mm pink gold (US\$64,500) and a rare palladium (US\$68,500) case.



14) A Lange & Sohne's 1815 Chronograph (\$\$67,700), a chronograph with flyback function, is a re-issue of a previous model which boasts black details and blue steel hands. The new version, in a limited 15 pieces, features an argente colour dial printed with blue Arabic numerals in a 39.5 mm white gold case.

15) Cartier's High Jewellery Cristallin Watch, one of three new high jewellery timepieces, is a unique piece that has taken around 1,000 hours to create. The creation of this white gold, diamond-decked and rock crystal watch involved multiple crafts, of which the rock crystal work remains one of the most complex – both in terms of cutting and obtaining the desired prism.

16) Baume & Mercier's Promesse Jade (\$\$17,000), a ladies' timepiece in a limited edition of eight pieces, is also made for the brand's 185th anniversary. Its standout feature is a jade bezel ringed by 61 diamonds. Housed in the watch's 34 mm steel case is a quartz movement.

17) One of nine models in **Van Cleef & Arpels'** iconic Cadenas collection (\$\$44,800-129,000), inspired by the Duchess of Windsor and launched in 1935, the **Cadenas Sertive Pavée** is paved with diamonds on white gold. The timepiece, available in a leather strap, is equipped with a quartz movement.

18) Officine Panerai's Radiomir 1940 3 Days Acciaio (\$\$10,900) and 3 Days Oro Rosso (\$\$25,900): The only difference between these two timepieces is that the first comes in a steel case and the second, a red gold case. The main attraction is that both are driven by P.1000, the new movement fresh out of Panerai's new Swiss state-of-the-art factory. By the brand's standards, the two new models are relatively small. They sport a 42 mm case. Previously, Panerai watches of this size were equipped with P.999, a movement with a single-barrel 60-hour power reserve and 21,600 vph. Its replacement, P.1000, has a double-barrel three-day power reserve with 28,800 vph. The new models also feature light green superluminova, instead of ecru.

19) Vacheron Constantin's Historiques Cornes De Vache 1955 (\$\$105,800): This chronograph is more than its name suggests. Apart from its iconic "cow-horn" lugs, the timepiece bears the modern markings of a much-sought-after model which Vacheron launched in 1955 – its first water-resistant and anti-magnetic chronograph. While the original Reference 6087 has a 35 mm yellow gold case with a screwed-in back, the updated version appears in a 38.5 mm platinum case. The screwed-in caseback is fitted with a transparent sapphire crystal that reveals a hand-wound movement. But the layout of the minute and seconds counter is the same as the original.

20) IWC's Portofino Automatic Moon Phase 37 (\$\$12,900): The 37 mm steel case of this watch has 12 diamonds on its mother of pearl dial, but it is the moon phase display on it that steals the show. The original Portofino watch sported one, so it is natural that there is also one among its first timepieces for women. This watch is also powered by an automotive movement. The green alligator leather strap is made by Santoni too.



21) Montblanc's Heritage Chronometrie Dual Time Vasco da Gama (\$\$9,600): In a limited edition of 238 pieces, the watch is a nod to the Cape of Good Hope, around which Vasco da Gama first sailed in 1497. This travel timepiece is powered by an in-house self-winding movement. The 41 mm case built in three parts: a middle and case-back in steel and a red gold-finished bezel.

22) IWC's Portofino Hand-Wound Monopusher is its first watch with a single push-button chronograph and its second in-house chronograph in the Portofino line. The watch, available in a 45 mm white gold (\$\$38,900) or red gold (\$\$36,900) case, is powered by a hand-wound movement with eight days' power reserve. Its alligator leather strap is made by renowned Italian shoemaker Santoni.

23) Roger Dubuis' Excalibur Star of Infinity (\$\$865,000): This diamond-studded timepiece is the female equivalent of the Excalibur Spider Skeleton Double Flying Tourbillon unveiled earlier this year. Limited to 28 pieces, the watch is decorated with 312 diamonds totalling 14.93 carats. It is powered by a skeletonized double tourbillon movement nestled in a 45 mm white gold case.

24) Montblanc's Heritage Spirit Perpetual Calendar Sapphire (\$\$31,500): Montblanc's first perpetual calendar unveiled last year, the Meisterstück Heritage Perpetual Calendar, was a big hit – thanks largely to the price which was well under the rest of its competitors. The brand is offering a new twist in the new version with a smoky sapphire crystal dial to reveal the complex perpetual calendar mechanism. Beating at the heart of the watch is an automatic movement, housed in a 39 mm red gold case. ■