

REVOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE MACHINE WITH A HEARTBEAT

TODAY'S TITANS
THE TOP TALENTS
IN CONTEMPORARY
WATCHMAKING

BRAINS TRUST
A PHYSICIST
SHAKES THINGS
UP AT TAG HEUER

SECRET WORLD
ROLEX LIFTS THE
VEIL ON ITS NEW
MANUFACTURE

CALIBRE DE CARTIER CHRONOGRAPH

DESIGNS ON TIME

CARTIER'S FINE BALANCE OF
AESTHETICS AND MECHANICS



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IN SEARCH OF THE RARE

FOR SHAHZAIB KHAN, BEING SURROUNDED BY WATCHES FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE MAKES LITTLE-KNOWN PIECES ALL THE MORE INTERESTING – WHETHER THEY ARE CONTEMPORARY OR VINTAGE

INTERVIEW BY SANDRA LANE ★ PHOTOGRAPHY JAMAL SIDDIQ

Having been born and raised in Geneva, I was always very aware of watches and, when I worked as a private banker, they became a real interest. A good watch is part of dressing well and that adds credibility when you are in a responsible position in business.

I had very specific tastes, even as a boy. There was a watch with a calculator and I kept asking my father to buy me one. That happened more than once, as they would break and all I wanted was another one the same. They cost less than 10 Swiss Francs but I loved them. Then gradually I started to be more 'greedy' and ask for more expensive ones – still digital back then – but I never stopped looking for a better watch.

After 10 years in banking in Switzerland, I realised that I would rather be an entrepreneur. Having traded watches as a side interest for many years, learning through the business of my extended family, I set up K2 Luxury (www.k2luxury.ch) with my brothers, sourcing watches for private clients in the Middle East and Europe, finding sought-after models, advising them about collectible pieces – it's different for every client as it is very personal and really built on relationships. But, ultimately it's about helping people to find their 'dream' watch'. To me, a good watch is one that will stand the test of time – meaning generations, not years – in terms of both style and value.

I bought my first vintage watch by chance, when a collector friend of mine took me to see a guy who was selling some pieces. He was older, slightly crazy and he really taught me the passion. After getting the first piece from him – a 1963 Omega Seamaster De Ville in its original box – I started hunting for specific watches, as far afield as South America. I have about 20 vintage watches now, each with a story that makes it come alive.

I still buy contemporary watches for myself but I have narrowed it



down to elegant models that are not instantly recognisable – and, as often as not, are therefore made in limited numbers. That's what makes the Girard-Perregaux GMT [worn in main photo] such a favourite: GP is not such a well-known brand in this region – and this particular World Time complication is a real conversation piece.

I buy watches to wear and enjoy, not to keep in a safe – although there are a few exceptions. My Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore Alinghi contradicts everything I just said: it is very big and bold, instantly recognisable – and I don't wear it. I bought it a long time ago and will keep it because it's a classic that represents a particular moment in watchmaking. At the time, it wasn't a well-known piece but now, ►



DISCRETION RULES
Shahzaib Khan wears a rare Girard-Perregaux GMT model, one of only 88 pieces made. Opposite page: The first vintage watch that he bought, a 1963 Omega Seamaster De Ville, is still in its original box.



► Offshores have become much more popular. On the other hand, my classic 37mm Royal Oak is probably the watch I wear more than any other: even though people immediately recognise it, it's so classical and elegant that you can't go wrong. I like the fact that this size is no longer made and that I can wear it for both day and evening. Of my contemporary watches, it's the last I would ever sell.

I love the sound of mechanical watches, old or new – the ticking heartbeat and the winding of the crown. A lot of people think that old watches are a hassle or will be unreliable, but I find it amazing that there are 200-year-old pieces that still work perfectly. I always enjoy winding my watches: that could never be a hassle. It is a kind of communication that makes it more than simply an object. It's like feeding a baby – giving it the energy it needs to get through the day.

For me, choosing a watch to wear, winding it and, if necessary, re-setting the time, is part of my morning ritual of getting dressed and preparing for the day – just like knotting my tie and choosing my pocket square.

Although I sell contemporary watches, I won't sell my vintage pieces. I learnt the hard way: years ago I had a classic motorbike in Geneva that I will always regret selling because it had a story all of its own. I'm not going to make the same mistake with my watches. 🚗

UNIVERSAL [1953]

Universal was very successful until the 1970s but has now disappeared, unfortunately. This classically elegant piece comes in a 35mm case with its movement signed 332, with 17 jewels.

LE COULTRE FUTUREMATIC [1950s]

Powered by Calibre 497 and produced only for the US market, this amazing model is 100 per cent automatic, with no winding crown. There is a disc on the case-back for adjusting the time.

INTERNATIONAL WATCH Co [1950s]

I love the light, elegant style of this 1950s model, which I bought in the USA – a young kid had inherited it from his grandfather.

BREITLING CADETTE [1963]

Until I found this piece I had never heard of the model – but I loved it instantly. I chose the red strap to match the small seconds hand. It came from the same source in Argentina as the Universal.

GIRARD-PERREGAUX

One of my favourite brands, Girard-Perregaux has a wonderful history. This model, with small seconds indicator, epitomises my idea of elegance.

GIRARD-PERREGAUX GMT

From a limited edition of 88 pieces, this GMT has a beautifully laid out dial (in a special grey colour) and the mechanism makes it very easy to adjust.

ZENITH SPORTO [1950s]

This 34mm model with small seconds display is powered by the manually wound Calibre 40, with 17 jewels. The 1950s was a golden age for Zenith.

OMEGA SEAMASTER DE VILLE

Omega introduced the De Ville line in 1960 and first combined it with Seamaster in 1963, the year of this watch. I bought this piece in its original box.

BREGUET TYPE HH AERONAVALE

A pilot's chronograph is a must in every watch collection. Breguet still produces this model and this flyback model is a particularly elegant example.

SWATCH [LATE 1990s]

The 'king of quartz' introduced mechanical movements in 1997. This one is based on a 1960 Tissot automatic. I love being able to see into the heart of a skeletonised watch.

AUDEMARS PIGUET ROYAL OAK

This 37mm model is no longer made and, to my mind, is the most elegant size of one of the all-time best watches. It is perfect to wear from day to night.

CHOPARD MILLE MIGLIA GRAN TURISMO HL

Still produced, but in quite small quantities, this is sporty and bold without being too flashy. The strap is made from 1960s Dunlop racing tyres.