

FROM CLASSIC DESIGNS TO USEFUL COMPLICATIONS,
THIS YEAR'S STANDOUT WATCHES DELIVER
PERFORMANCE AND STYLE AT A RANGE OF PRICES

BY LAURIE KAHLE \_\_\_\_\_



**Patek Philippe Nautilus Travel Time** 

A. Lange & Söhne Richard Lange Terraluna

**Arnold & Son CTB** 

he thousands of new watch models introduced this year presented no shortage of innovative pieces. Some, such as Richard Mille's \$650,000 RM 36-01 Competition G Sensor Sebastien Loeb with a G-force indicator and Greubel Forsey's stunning Quantième Perpétual à Équation perpetual calendar, priced at 670,000 Swiss francs (about \$750,000), could even be termed extreme. Obviously, such rarities are reserved for the world's premier collectors. But a watch doesn't have to dazzle with esoteric complications or an astronomical price tag to stand apart from the crowd—sometimes, it's simply a matter of a timeless design, a practical function, a novel concept, or a skillful execution. The following timepieces span a variety of functions and prices—from high horology masterpieces to everyday divers—to excite both connoisseurs and regular guys alike.

"People expect beauty, quality, accuracy and also some surprise from Patek Philippe," says Thierry Stern, president of the brand that marks its 175th anniversary this year. While we expect to see some knockout grand complications in this fall's special anniversary collection, Stern also stresses the importance of practicality, as embodied in this year's Nautilus Travel Time Chronograph Ref. 5990/1A-001 (\$53,700 in steel, patek. com) that combines a column-wheel flyback chronograph with a dualtime zone function for today's frequent fliers. "The future is about finding new, useful complications," says Stern, who points to the new stainless steel Ref. 5960 annual calendar chronograph as another example of a practical complicated timepiece. "In my mind, there will be two lines: one with useful complications you need every day, while the other is more complicated—minute repeaters, tourbillons, split-second chronographs—which you may not need, but you enjoy their quality. Those are really the pieces of art."

Meanwhile, **Piaget** added a new chapter to its half-century legacy in ultrathin watchmaking with the **Altiplano 900P** (\$27,800, piaget.com). By integrating the case and movement and utilizing the case back as the

main plate, watchmakers set a new benchmark with the thinnest manual-winding mechanical watch ever made, measuring a mere 3.65 mm. The novel construction required a reversed configuration with the bridges and wheel train visible on the dial side. With the goal of shaving off fractions of millimeters, Piaget's team worked closely to condense the watch's 145 components, including wheels that measure only 0.12 mm in thickness, almost half the dimension of those in a typical movement. "In the last 50 years, we developed 35 calibers of which 23 are ultrathin," says CEO Philippe Leopold-Metzger. "But obviously, there was one record we did not have, and that was for the thinnest manual winding watch. It's always about technique at the service of design, so it is not only very thin, but also very beautiful."

German watchmaker A. Lange & Söhne wowed watch lovers with the Richard Lange Perpetual Calendar Terraluna (\$229,200 in pink gold and \$230,400 in white gold, alange-soehne.com). A tour de force of high horology, the Terraluna combines an orbital moon phase display, perpetual calendar, 14-day power reserve, constant force escapement and oversize date. The regulator dial displays hours, minutes and seconds







Panerai Radiomir 1940 Chronograph

**Bucherer Manero ChronoPerpetual** 

**Oris 110 Years Limited Edition** 

separately with calendar displays in apertures, while on the reverse side, an orbital moon display uses three discs—representing earth, moon and sky—to indicate the position of the moon relative to the earth. "The position of the sun is the balance wheel, the heart of the movement, it makes sense," says Anthony de Haas, director of product development. "We wanted to show, to make it clear, how the moon comes to look the way it does." The mechanics are so accurate that 1,058 years will pass before the display will need correcting by a single day.

Boutique brand **Arnold & Son** channeled the spirit of its founder, John Arnold, who produced watches for King George III and other notable clients in the eighteenth century. The patented **CTB** (\$27,135 in steel, arnoldandson.com), short for Central True Beat, is heralded as the world's first chronograph with a central true-beat seconds hand. A true-beat seconds function, also known as a deadbeat seconds, tracks passing seconds incrementally with tiny jumps rather than a continuous sweeping motion. The watch's classical design incorporates the true-beat seconds hand and the chronograph seconds hand on the same axis, but with different jumping intervals. This impressive achievement is underscored by a mesmerizing

action as the chronograph hand chases the seconds hand around the dial while the chronograph is running.

Panerai capitalized on the chronograph heritage of renowned movement maker Minerva, which Montblanc, Panerai's sister brand, absorbed in 2006. Vintage Minerva 13-22 movements serve as the bases for the

Inset: Not only is the movement visible from the back of A. Lange & Söhne's Richard Lange Terraluna, but so is its orbital moonphase indicator.

manual-wind OP XXV movements that power a trio of limited-edition Radiomir 1940 Chronographs in rose gold (shown, \$58,500, panerai.com), white gold and platinum, each with a different dial design. The watch's vintage character is underscored by crystals made of Plexiglas, a material similar to the polymethyl methacrylate crystal that Panerai used for its original watches produced for the Royal Italian Navy.

"The movement of this watch is exceptional," says Alessandro

Ficarelli, Panerai's product director. "Minerva has had a historical link with Panerai since the 1920s, when Minerva was a supplier to the Orologeria in Florence where we have our boutique."

Carl F. Bucherer combined a chronograph with a perpetual calendar in the limited-edition Manero ChronoPerpetual (\$52,600 in 18-karat rose gold, carl-f-bucherer.com). The design blends tradition with contemporary flair by elegantly integrating the chronograph counters and recessed calendar displays to achieve an easy-to-read dial configuration with different levels and finishes. It is built with a module developed for Bucherer on a movement by Vaucher Manufacture, which has

supplied movements and modules to several prestigious brands including its sister company Parmigiani Fleurier, Hermès, Corum and Richard Mille. Carl F. Bucherer will produce 100 pieces in rose gold (\$52,600) and 150 pieces in stainless steel (\$33,000).

Marking its 110th anniversary this year, **Oris** has launched the **110 Years Limited Edition** (\$6,500 in steel, oris.ch), which is powered by the value-driven brand's first in-house movement in more than three decades. The Caliber 110 delivers an impressive 10-day power reserve with a single barrel, housing a 1.8-meter-long mainspring. The crisp and clean, white







**Cartier Calibre de Cartier Diver** 

**Blancpain Bathyscaphe Chronograph** 

**Breitling Chronomat 44 Airborne** 

dial showcases the arced power reserve display with the days spaced farther apart as the watch winds down to zero. To more accurately represent the depletion of energy in the watch, the power reserve hand speeds up as power is reduced. Oris will produce 110 pieces in stainless steel and 110 pieces in 18-karat rose gold.

Cartier made a splash with its first dive watch, the Calibre de Cartier Diver (\$8,200 in steel, \$28,100 in 18-karat rose gold, cartier.com), which meets the technical requirements of the international standard ISO 6425.

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This serious diving instrument is water-resistant to 300 meters with a screw-down crown and features a unidirectional rotating bezel to protect against any accidental adjustment of the dive time. Visibility is another crucial feature for any dive watch, so luminous Super-LumiNova has been applied to dive-time indicators, hour and minute hands, preselection device and small seconds counter. While many dive watches are big, brawny and utilitarian, Cartier's exudes the aesthetic elegance we expect from the Parisian house, which managed to design a high-performance sport watch that can easily and comfortably be worn with a suit.

Blancpain also took to the sea in style with its Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe Flyback Chronograph (\$17,200, blancpain.com). Shown here in brushed black ceramic, it's also available in brushed steel with your choice of a stylish NATO fabric or sail canvas for the strap. Following up

on last year's three-handed Bathyscaphe, the chronograph debuts the new self-winding F385 movement equipped with a column-wheel chronograph mechanism and a vertical clutch. The flyback function lets you reset and instantly restart the chronograph by pressing the pusher at 4 o'clock, and the chronograph operates down to 300 meters. The movement's silicon balance spring is antimagnetic (see Good Life Guide, page 40), with no need for a protective inner Faraday cage. That means you can admire the mechanism through a sapphire crystal case back. The sleek appearance with a domed dial and lines and dots for indexes is a modern update on the original Bathyscaphe, which launched in the late 1950s to offer a dive watch that was good looking and comfortable enough to wear every day.

With its considerable aviation legacy, Breitling is more oriented to the wild blue yonder. This year's Chronomat 44 Airborne (\$8,030 with strap, breitling.com) marks the 30th anniversary of a collection that was designed for and developed with the Italian Frecce Tricolori aerobatics team. Since then, the flagship model has evolved while remaining true to the original. Specifically designed for pilots, the chronograph's features include an easy-to-grip, satin-brushed, rotating bezel equipped with four raised rider tabs to aid in counting off flight times. This special retro series pays tribute to the original design in 41 mm and 44 mm sizes with a choice of black or silver-toned dials and the option of a fabric strap or metal bracelet. The Manufacture Breitling Caliber 01 automatic movement, which is chronometer-certified by the COSC (Swiss Official Chronometer Testing Institute), beats underneath the case back, which is engraved with the inscription "Edition Spéciale 30e Anniversaire" (Special 30th Anniversary Edition) as well as the outline of an Aermacchi, one of the 10 planes flown by the Italian flight squadron. ❖

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