

STYLE & BEAUTY

• A SEASONAL COMPENDIUM TO SARTORIAL FLAIR, ENCHANTING JEWELS AND HAUTE-HORLOGERIE •



PERFECT TIMING

HOT DATES

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This year's perpetual calendars endow the ultimate timepiece with elegance and ease.

By **Laurie Kahle**

The vagaries of our Gregorian calendar can be traced to 45BC, when Julius Caesar hired the astronomer Sosigenes to devise the Julian version, dividing the year into 12 months of varying lengths with a correction of one day every four years. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII finetuned this by skipping a leap year every hundred years except in centennial years that are divisible by 400. Of course, none of these men could foresee how such inconsistencies would vex watchmakers, who eventually devised a solution with

the perpetual calendar, possessing a mechanical memory of 1,461 days.

One of watchmaking's most demanding complications, the perpetual calendar is designed to adjust for months of differing lengths and leap years until the next skipped one in 2100 without the need for manual correction – that is, provided you keep it running. Because that's unrealistic, horologists have increasingly focused on making these devices easier to use and more convenient to set and read. Naturally,▶



the masters of the craft have a tendency to push the limits and flaunt their skills by combining a perpetual calendar with other challenging complications, such as a tourbillon or chronograph.

Abraham-Louis **Breguet**, inventor of the former at the beginning of the 19th century, was also an early pioneer of the perpetual calendar. This year, his namesake brand beautifully paired both complications in the Classique Tourbillon Quantième Perpétuel 3797 with the hours and minutes raised on a disc of opaque sapphire crystal, a retrograde date display and a one-minute tourbillon at 6 o'clock mounted with a three-pointed small seconds hand.

Patek Philippe, which celebrates its 175th anniversary this year, delivered its first men's perpetual calendar wristwatch to collector Thomas Emery in 1927.

Earlier this year, Patek rolled out several new examples that offer variations of existing models, including a Ref 5270G perpetual calendar chronograph in white gold with a rich blue dial. Even Carl F **Bucherer** has ventured into high horology territory with the limited edition Manero ChronoPerpetual, built with a module developed for Bucherer on a base movement by Vaucher Manufacture. Designers simplified the legibility of the dial displays by smartly integrating the flyback chronograph counters with the recessed date and leap year indicators.

The groundbreaking Caliber UN-32 movement, which allows you to adjust the date backward and forward simply by turning the crown in either direction, powers **Ulysse Nardin's** Perpetual Manufacture, limited to 250 in rose gold

Above: IWC Aquatimer Perpetual Calendar Digital Date-Month, iwc.com, left; H Moser & Cie Perpetual Calendar Black Edition, h-moser.com, right

Previous spread, left to right; Montblanc Meisterstück Heritage Perpetual Calendar, montblanc.com; Breguet Classique Tourbillon Quantième Perpétuel 3797, breguet.com; Patek Philippe Ref 5270G perpetual calendar chronograph patek.com

Ulysse Nardin
Perpetual
Manufacturer,
ulyссе-nardin.com, left;
Bucherer Manero
ChronoPerpetual, carl-f-bucherer.com, right



and 250 in platinum. The practical GMT function for travellers is similarly easy to use with plus and minus push pieces at 4 and 8 o'clock that move the GMT hand forward or backward, while the calendar functions automatically synchronise to the changing hour hand.

Though divers are generally more concerned with minutes than dates, IWC has introduced its Perpetual Calendar Digital Date-Month movement in a new Aquatimer dive watch that is water resistant to 10 bar. The novel in-house automatic 89801 movement taps a little of the energy when the date display advances each night and stores it for future use to power the oversize disc displays. The brawny 49mm, 18kt red

gold with rubber-coated titanium case makes it the second largest timepiece the brand has ever produced.

Montblanc celebrates the 90th anniversary of its popular Meisterstück pen this year with a special collection of Meisterstück Heritage timepieces, including a perpetual calendar. The watch's classical aesthetic with the date at 3 o'clock, day of the week at 9 o'clock, and month at 12 o'clock with an inner scale showing the leap year cycle, plus a moon phase at 6 o'clock will appeal to purists, while its reasonable price tag and the brand's strict quality controls make it a top value of the year.

And for those with modern, minimalist tastes, H Moser & Cie's

Perpetual Calendar Black Edition updates the brand's supremely elegant perpetual calendar in DLC-coated titanium. The clean execution indicates the month with an arrow marker that points to one of the 12 hour indexes, which correspond to the months of the year. The date in a window at 3 o'clock instantly advances at midnight thanks to the brand's Flash Date Calendar mechanism, and the leap year display is revealed through the sapphire crystal case back, making it the most discreet watch of its kind on the market. The straightforward appearance belies the complexity of the movement underneath, much like our ancient, intricate calendar system. ◀