



## Black-Tie Time

**T**his is the season when your social calendar fills with holiday festivities that demand dressing up. Such formal occasions call for refined watches with traditional flair that embody the familiar adage, less is more. Whether you sport a tux or a bespoke suit, your timepiece should tastefully complement your attire rather than scream for attention.

Some of the year's most sophisticated watches drew inspiration from their ancestors. Vacheron Constantin, for example, revisited its tonneau-shaped Malte collection, marking a century since the company produced its first barrel-shaped watch. According to Christian Selmoni, the brand's artistic director, Vacheron has been focused on "elegance, balance and refinement" for the last several years. The 2012 Malte lineup includes a rose gold tourbillon powered by a new hand-wound movement, a rose gold small seconds model, a diamond-splashed rose gold ladies' model and a hand-wound platinum 100th anniversary model (shown) with vintage-style Roman numerals that is limited to 100 pieces (\$51,300). Says Selmoni: "Designers worked quite a lot on offering different lines, different possibilities for the light to play on the surfaces. It was created to look like a classical watch, but in fact, it is not a totally classical watch."

Meanwhile, Van Cleef & Arpels' designers minimally updated its

classically chic PA 49, reborn this year as the Pierre Arpels (\$19,000). Launched into commercial production in 1971, the PA 49 replicated the watch that Pierre Arpels, the nephew of the house's founders, originally designed in 1949 for his personal use. The Pierre Arpels is an expression of purity and refinement. It comes in 38mm and 42mm sizes with or without diamonds in 18-karat white or pink gold. At the center of its clean white lacquer dial, accented with slim baton indexes and elongated Roman numerals, is a textured honeycomb pattern evocative of a crisp white cotton pique tuxedo shirt. The slim, slightly beveled case, which houses sister brand Piaget's 830 P manual movement, allows it to discreetly slide beneath your shirt cuff.

Thin is also in at A. Lange & Söhne, which has added a sleek white gold model (\$25,100) to its Saxonia Thin collection that debuted last year. Measuring just 5.9mm in height, Saxonia Thin is the slimmest timepiece ever produced by the Glashütte, Germany, manufacture. The minimalist dial design with svelte lancet hands and delicate baton markers recalls Coco Chanel's famous quote: "Elegance is refusal."

Visit them at [alange-soehne.com](http://alange-soehne.com), [vacheron-constantin.com](http://vacheron-constantin.com) and [vancleefarpels.com](http://vancleefarpels.com).

—Laurie Kahle