

THE COLLECTORS

60-MINUTE MAN

UTA partner David Park has made a career of following his passions — in clients, projects and a watch collection built on the classics

By Laurie Kahle

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HEN TELEVISION LITERARY agent David Park was promoted to partner at United Talent Agency earlier this year, he marked the milestone with the purchase of a Patek Philippe Nautilus Ref. 5980 chronograph. Park officially represents such names as director Phillip Noyce and Salman Rushdie for TV. But unofficially, his reputation as a watch geek makes him the oracle for watch buying and collecting advice in entertainment industry circles — as much for his expertise as for his “passion,” to cite one of Hollywood’s most unrelenting tropes.

“I only work with clients whom I am passionate about,” says Park, 39. “To collect, you really have to be passionate about it because not only do you have to pay for the watches, you have to maintain them. A number of people call me to ask advice about watches, and it’s often surprising to discover who actually has a passion for them.”

Park now awaits delivery of a special-edition PAM 448 Radiomir California, a faithful reissue of the military model produced during the 1930s by Panerai, the storied Italian watchmaker. He vividly recalls the first time he spotted one on the wrist of an acquaintance.

“I was drawn to the design and to the simplicity of the dial,” says Park. “I couldn’t take my eyes off that watch, and I had to find out more.” In 2004, he bought a PAM 90 Luminor with power reserve (a display that indicates the amount of energy stored in the movement), and a collector was born. Since then, estimates Park, he has bought and sold as many



Park and his Panerai at the UTA offices in Beverly Hills.

as 50 watches, though he has honed his collection to about a dozen, including Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshores, an IWC Portuguese Perpetual Calendar, a few Rolexes and a handful of his beloved Panerai.

“I often get caught up in the history of a certain watch,” says Park, whose interest in Panerai deepened when he learned about the watchmaker’s legacy of supplying the Italian and Egyptian navies. “I also like that mechanical watches are not perfect timekeepers, no matter how pricey. The beating movement of a watch almost makes it feel like it has a soul.”

Everyone in Hollywood longs for an opportunity to tackle the passion project that speaks to their truest values. As he contemplates his next Royal Oak, Park might have found his. But like the power agent he is, he never forgets he is in the business of selling dreams, not squandering them.

“Watch collecting is a passion,” declares Park, “but I try to be smart about it.” **THR**

A SHOW OF HANDS

A selection from Park’s collection. “Watch collecting is not unlike collecting art,” says Park. “Which means you should acquire what you love first and hope that it will appreciate second. Watches can connote sophistication and taste, and I know a lot of executives and agents who wear nice watches for that reason — but only a small percentage are true collectors.”



PAM 449 Radiomir S.L.C. Special Edition



Patek Philippe Nautilus Chrono



Rolex Submariner



Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore “Rubberclad”