



Marking a Milestone

By Keith W. Strandberg

Patek Philippe celebrates 175 years by
introducing the Grandmaster Chime and more.

FEATURE: MARKING A MILESTONE

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Detail of the Chiming Jump Hour's dial

The World Time Moon and its specially engraved caseback



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The history of Patek Philippe has been one of innovation and enduring excellence, so when I heard that the brand was having a 175th birthday bash, I started preparing for the introduction of an amazing timepiece, and I wasn't disappointed.

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The Geneva-based company debuted the Grandmaster Chime, an innovative combination of complications, and the rest of the 175th anniversary collection was just as impressive. No one predicted or expected the incredible breadth of the timepieces that were introduced.

MASTERS IN CHIME

The Grandmaster Chime is the brand's most complicated wristwatch ever (the Graves Supercomplication and the Caliber 89 had more complications, but were

pocket watches). Requiring seven years to develop, the Grandmaster Chime features an ornately hand-engraved, reversible 47 mm 18 karat rose-gold case holding 20 complications, including a Grande and Petite Sonnerie, a minute repeater, an instantaneous perpetual calendar with a four-digit year display, a second time zone, and two never-before-seen chiming complications from Patek Philippe: an acoustic alarm that strikes the alarm time, and a date repeater that sounds the date on demand. A total of

1,580 parts go into this watch and only seven will be made (with one reserved for the brand's museum in Geneva). The price? A cool 2,500,000 CHF (about \$2.6 million).

RARE HANDCRAFTS COLLECTION

One of the highlights at each year's Basel Watch Fair is the display of Patek Philippe's Rare Handcrafts Collection. These pieces rarely—if ever—make it into a retailer, as they are snapped up first by avid collectors and Patek lovers. This year,

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The Multiscale Chronograph in platinum

as part of the 175th celebration, Patek Philippe introduced an impressive variety of timepieces, all utilizing métiers d'art with Swiss motifs.

"In 1989, there were a relatively small number of people interested in métiers d'art," says Larry Pettinelli, president of Patek Philippe USA. "Over the past 10 to 12 years, these old-world artisan pieces have become really interesting to collectors, because they are often one of a kind. Collectors are really looking for that limited production. We debuted so many pieces. We were working on this for many years."

The Rare Handcrafts Collection features 20 wristwatches as well as 20 Dome table clocks and a selection of pocket watches. The pieces employ the techniques of enameling, engraving, marquetry, guilloché, and gemsetting, either individually or in combination.

A DIVERSE NEW COLLECTION

That's not all—not even close.

"This year, the range is broader and the complications are on a different level from what we did for the 150th, caliber 89 aside," states Pettinelli. "Every watch we are putting out has some form of complication."

CHIMING JUMP HOUR

In keeping with the Master Chime, Patek Philippe also introduced the Chiming Jump Hour, which features a beautiful chime when the hour jumps to the next. This sounds simple, but the power demands proved to be quite a challenge. The timepiece requires more energy than is normally used to power the second hand, the minute hand and the jumping hour disk, which is considerably heavier than an hour hand. Four years of research, trial and error, and development resulted in a new movement specifically created to power this timepiece: the manually wound caliber 32-650 HGS PS, which is made up of 438 parts.

Limited to 175 watches in a tonneau-shaped platinum case bearing the engraved inscription "PATEK PHILIPPE 1839-2014" (like all of the brand's anniversary timepieces), the Chiming Jump Hour enhances Patek's already-sterling reputation for chiming watches.

WORLD TIME MOON

The World Time from Patek Philippe has always been a reference in this complication, but this year the brand has taken it a step further, introducing the World Time Moon, which offers a very realistic



ABOVE:
The Chiming Jump Hour in
platinum
The World Time Moon ladies'
version in rose gold

moon-phase display in the center of the dial. The moon phase uses two glass disks. The bottom one shows the night sky and a moon complete with craters created using a unique metalization process that revolves every 29.53 days. The top disk exposes the visible portion of the moon.

The World Time Moon is a limited edition of 1,750 pieces, with 450 of the Ref. 7175 ladies' version and 1,300 of the Ref. 5575 men's version.

MULTISCALE CHRONOGRAPHS

The chronograph is one of the most popular complications in the Patek Philippe collection, so the brand decided to introduce one that displays a number of different scales at the same time.

Patek Philippe currently produces eight chronograph calibers, and the brand developed a new chronograph dial display to showcase three of the most popular scales: tachymeter, telemeter and pulsometer (to compute speeds, distances and heartbeats per minute, respectively).

Watches with these individual scales have been extremely popular for many years, and are often used by professionals. Once again, Patek has achieved a horological masterpiece by combining the three indicators into one dial.

The Ref. 5975 for men comes in a limited edition of 400 watches each in 18 karat yellow, white and rose gold. The brand is also releasing 100 platinum versions. The ladies' versions with baguette-cut diamond hour markers are limited to 150 watches, each in white and rose gold.

A GRAND AFFAIR

The celebration that Patek Philippe hosted in their factory was of course exquisite, but it was eclipsed by the new anniversary pieces themselves.

"The most interesting thing is that while the scale keeps changing—the overall awareness has grown, for sure—the key values of the company have remained the same," says Pettinelli. "We still haven't lost the family feel and the family is still involved in every decision and the culture of the company. Money isn't how Patek makes decisions. Look at the Grandmaster Chime—we are going to make seven of them and we have had the top watchmakers working eight years on it, so we aren't going to make money on it. The idea wasn't to make money, it was to show that a family company can push watchmaking forward."

And that they truly did.

Happy birthday Patek Philippe, and here's to many more!
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