

Collecting Time

The Art of Watch Collecting

Watches are mechanical poetry on the wrist, reflecting a person's personality, interests and tastes. Similar to artwork, rare watches can fetch millions at auction. But when looking to acquire a vintage timepiece or building a collection, how do you ensure that you're making the right purchase?

Thomas Perazzi, Head of Watches at Phillips Asia, recommends three golden rules for every buyer to bear in mind before making a purchase: condition, rarity and provenance, such as the owner and watch history. Thomas spoke about watch appreciation, how to build a collection and recent trends during a conversation with Ken Hui, Managing Director of Private Wealth Management in Asia.

"Collectors are ready to pay premiums for extraordinary pieces," Thomas said. "The attention to quality is growing."

Thomas made the point that the Rolex Daytona, nicknamed "Big Red" by collectors because of its red Daytona lettering, is one of the most popular watches on the market right now because it has a timeless design and can transition from day to evening wear. When launched in the 1970s, Thomas said this model was not in high demand because of its manual mechanism. At the time, collectors preferred self-winding watches.

In watch collecting, defects can make a model more valuable, as is the case with the "Paul Newman" Rolex Daytona (6263), nicknamed "Panda" because of its black



and white dial. Over time, the model's bezel turned brown from its original black, making the watch more covetable.

Trending characteristics in watches include handmade craftsmanship, limited edition releases, larger cases (40–42mm), independent manufacturers and choice of dial colors.

"We are used to seeing watches with white or black-colored dials, but the new trend is the color blue," Thomas said.



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— Thomas Perazzi

He presented a rare Patek Phillip Chronograph (5070) with a blue face cased in platinum. Only 100 were produced. The craftsmanship combined with its rarity (one of the three golden rules) makes it a highly sought-after model. Experts say that chronographs are popular models because of their stopwatch functionality.

In the market for women's watches, Thomas notes that Cartier has been fetching strong prices at auction. "We have noticed that in recent years, we have more and more women joining the market to collect watches," he said.

Among some of the standout watches that have been most popular at auction, Thomas showcased a Patek Phillip (2499) Perpetual Chronograph with a calendar that was made in the 1950s. Over the course of 30 years, the company produced only 300 models, making the watch extremely rare. It recently sold at auction for \$2.6 million.



"Paul Newman" Rolex Daytona

As for the next big trend, Thomas believes that watches from the 1980s and 1990s, once considered undesirable, will soon be popular again. He also suggests there will be brand growth with Omega watches from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. And pocket watches and clocks made by reputable brands will have great growth value.

"You don't have to spend a million dollars," Thomas said. "You can apply the same rules to watches that are more affordable and accessible."

[Click here](#) to watch the discussion on watch collecting.



Patek Phillip Chronograph (5070)

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