

High time

More to it than meets the eye

What do you see in a watch: a status symbol, a family heirloom or a collector's piece? An exclusive wristwatch surely has the appeal of beachfront property – ever increasing in value. So where can you find one worth investing in?

Peter Machlup is a specialist collectable watch dealer who promises to find the unfindable and track down the history behind each fine piece. Peter shared some insider's tips with us:

Bigger is better Nothing suggests status like a sought after brand. Besides being known for making their prestigious owners custodians of a heritage for the next generation, almost all English royals have owned a Patek Philippe in the last century. Other brands worth investing in are Rolex, Officine Panerai, A. Lange & Söhne, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Cartier and Breitling.

Bells and whistles The more advanced the technical wizardry, the higher the value. Combined Swiss skill make the IWC Da Vinci one of the best creations with only one flaw – without enough room to case the complete date-slide, it will only reach 2199. Yet with centuries of life still ticking under its casing, the watch comes with a small phial, sealed with red wax, containing a new slide and note to remind the owner to insert the slide at a jeweller in 2199, allowing the watch to work correctly for the next 300 years. Brilliant.

History is priceless Take the waterproof 1926 Rolex Oyster; its elegant toughness, technical complexity and tailor-made appeal will be remembered for finding fame on the wrist of Mercedes Gleitze, the first woman to swim the English Channel.

Premium quality Peter marks Panerai, made for underwater use by the Italian Navy, as being unmatched in reliability and strict manufacturing standards, their design being unmistakable: large, with simple luminous dial markings, dictated by the need for legibility in poor light underwater. As Peter says, "The Italians may not have been brilliant fighters, but they are the most style-conscious nation and are certainly the most watch obsessed."

Enduring style Timeless, classic shapes see the rise and fall of changing fashions, yet endure with increasing value.

Peter is a trader in wristwatches, yet he does buy and sell at small margins. Even the most jaded customers are captivated by the wealth of knowledge that Peter has built up with his life-long passion for these fine *objets d'art*. We asked Peter for his last word on buying a watch: "You have to enjoy your watch, so buy what you love first and foremost."

For more information, please contact (011) 684 1222, e-mail watches@mweb.co.za or log onto www.investmentwatches.com.