



The Latest Trends in Fine Watchmaking for 2018

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Fondation haute Horlogerie has released a comprehensive report presenting trends and forecasts for the fine watchmaking industry in 2018. Focusing our attention on the trends, we summarise the top five, most important directions being taken in design and mechanisms

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Watchmaking is a highly complex industry. Not many innovations are generated every year. But then it's not easy, especially when the industry has already advanced by leaps and bounds in terms of mechanisms and design crafts in the last few decades. Even then, we never fail to wonder what each year will bring.

With the new year starting with Salon de la Haute Horlogerie, and Baselworld usually being hosted in March, technologists and watch enthusiasts begin their research and thought accumulation on what was new, what was old, and what was simply beautiful.

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Fondation Haute Horlogerie (FHH), a not-for-profit foundation promoting fine watchmaking, has made the job simpler for all by releasing a report on the trends in watchmaking in 2018. We have summarised the full, extensive report, to give a snapshot of what are the most important, five trends which are defining the timepiece industry this year.



1. Connecting to millennials



Appealing to the social media generation, along with the mature, established customers is a challenge that the watch industry will be tackling this year to expand their market.



Jean-Christophe Babin, CEO of the fine watch and jewelry brand Bvlgari, discussed expanding the branding, but also still staying loyal to their mature customers. “We look to balance activity between millennials and more established mature customer,” Mr. Babin said.



Watches such as Ulysse Nardin's 'Marine Torpilleur Military' and Vacheron Constantin's 'Fifty Six Day-Date' use materials such as steel that appeals strongly to millennials. While for mature and established consumers, gold will continue to be the set trend along with platinum and titanium.

2. Versatility

In the late 1990s, versatility in the watch industry was seen by including interchangeable straps in packaging. Unfortunately, this was not well received due to the difficulty of changing the straps.



In 2018, customization is making a comeback. The Piaget Possession and the Hermes Carre H are just a few examples of watches offering new interchangeable straps. But this time, becoming smarter due to experience, the new straps can be hitched with just a few simple moves. In the case of metal straps, watchmakers have made it simpler to remove or add links as per fit.

Many of this year's models are coming with more than one strap, adding convenience, and a touch of personality.

3. Color





Bovet 1822
Château de Motiers 40

the color blue has become almost a staple for cases and dials, green is gaining momentum alongside other vibrant shades.

Vibrant colors are hitting the watch market this year. Cases, dials and straps in a variety of fun shades are being devised, particularly for a woman, who wants a watch that demands attention.

For those who want a change in the predictable combination of a white or black dial inside an inevitably gold or steel case now have a wide range of choices. The new Les Aerostiers collection by Vacheron Constantin and the Bovet 1822 Château de Motiers 40 are just a few examples of how brands are using color. Although



4. Affordability and Classics

When it comes to trends some things never change, a classic. Watches such as the Laurent Ferrier Galet Minute Repeater School Piece and the Panerai Luminor Due 3 Days Automatic 38mm are simple timepieces that can be paired with almost anything. Their styles emphasize elegance or put chic into sportswear.

Some watches or collections have been able to secure their place in the market. In order to maintain their place at the top of the market, starting prices for some of the most prestigious brands are more affordable than ever. Watches have gone from being a symbol of high status to being an extension of the wearer's own personality, which represents a millennial's ideology.

Laurent Ferrier Galet
Minute Repeater School Piece



5. Slim and Precise Movements

With a new generation of watch wearers entering the market, and a plethora of watchmakers vying for their attention, the mechanism and movement of a watch is one way to differentiate yourself from the rest. Slim movements, such as that in Audemars Piguet's Royal Oak Tourbillon Extra-Thin, are gaining traction among buyers, for their simplicity and lightness.



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Regarding precision, Contrôle O ciel Suisse des Chronomètres (COSC), is toughening its standards, leading to increasing popularity of silicon as a material which does away with the need for lubrication and adjustment



With the rapid ascent of the world towards digitalization and a consumer market that is all about 'we want it now', prestigious watchmakers are trying to create a fine balance between traditional crafts and novel creations, amid an uncertain economic environment. Not all is bleak though, as these luxury watch brands move with the times to offer a piece of heritage with the vibrancy that the next generation demands.

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