

Left / Michel Herbelin
Centre / Maurice Lacroix
Right / Timex

Vintage vibes, minimal moods, military overtones... we highlight the strong 2019 watch trends, reveal new models and check the market for key influences.

This Time...



Grand Seiko



Left /Obaku
Right / Mondaine

Form...

"Today, the watch industry tends to come back to the basics – smaller sizes, thinner, standard colours on the 'not too busy' dials. The last five to six years have been very challenging for the watch industry, leading to less creativity and much more pragmatism for the brands in their product development process. Nevertheless, we've remained very consistent by focusing on high-perceived value products, offering a lot of details and quality for a very reasonable price. And today, probably more than aesthetic trends, sizes or colours, watch customers expects to get a lot for what they pay." Thiébaut Bentz, **Maurice Lacroix**

"For men, after years of large diameters, a trend has emerged for smaller sizes and slimline cases – so we've introduced these, especially into our 'Signature' collection. Blue dials with dark coloured plating on case and bracelet is also popular and for men and women the retro trend is important." **Accurist**

"Some of the more trend-led details across the collections include visible balance wheels, rose gold PVD plating and crescent moon date window. For our women's Black Diamond mechanical model, black PVD coating helps to make the stones pop." **Raymond Weil**

"We're not a brand to follow trends... but blue is very strong for us at the moment and we've added a few colourful hints." **Elliot Brown**

Obaku comes from a history of slim, clean, elegant watches. This year it's taking the slimness to a new level with it's ultra-slim Paper lines – 4.9mm at a starting point of £145.



Meister

"Undoubtedly there's been more demand for small watches (around 40mm) and we're seeing that blue is still a very popular colour. And we're experiencing a considerable demand for our high end Limited Edition watches." **Bremont**

The **Junghans** 'max bill' Automatic provides a view of the internal workings for the first time, while embodying the essential aspects envisioned by product designer Max Bill – optimum readability of the time. The Bauhaus influence can be seen in the concrete grey strap, red hands and glass case back.

The **SS19 Missguided** collection takes snippets from all trends this season – combining multi dials, crystal encrusted features and iridescent casing.



Left / Nomos
Centre / Junghans

Plus Function

Maurice Lacroix has launched a Masterpiece, which summarises the brand's core values: the Aikon Mercury. Mercury is a new, patented complication with a double retrograde animation playing with the gravity.

"We've recently developed something that may, at first, sound unspectacular, but is actually revolutionary: an ultra-thin automatic calibre with a bi-directional date function – in-house designed neomatik date calibre." **Nomos**

2019 marks the 20th anniversary of **Grand Seiko's** unique Spring Drive technology, combining mechanical and quartz elements for a high level of precision. The new Grand Seiko Elegance series features designs with a more refined and even slimmer profile.

"At **Rotary** we're finding GMT movements are popular as they finally figure out what they do. 'Henley' features four new GMT models with either a fixed bezel at 40mm or uni-directional bezel at 41.5mm with that all-important second time zone."

The new **Citizen** Promaster Navihawk AT with navigational features combined with a new design, 'for professionals who challenge their limits'. Precision timekeeping is a key feature of the collection, as well as light-powered technology, Eco-Drive.

Raymond Weil's best-selling 'freelancer' collection has a modern twist – a self-winding mechanical movement with a striking half-moon date window.

Independent watchmaker, **Culem Watches**, has launched its first automatic luxury dual-time GMT travel watch. The Swiss-made luxury timepiece correctly displays 24 world time zones in both GMT and BST on an open case back – allowing you to set the local and destination time on a GMT watch accurately.



▶ Epos



▶ Citizen



◀ Rolex





▶ Left / Rotary
Right / Bulova





▶ Left / Zeppelin
Right / Zenith



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Military Service

Tudor introduces the Black Bay P01, a watch based on a legendary prototype developed in the late 1960s and proposed to the US Navy. The project (code name 'Commando') never materialised as the regular Tudor diver's watch was eventually adopted instead. Black Bay P01 with its domed, matt-black dial and luminous hour markers, is inspired by that prototype.

"Our best-seller currently is the Holton Professional, designed with and supplied to a specialist branch of the military as its first issued watch from a British brand in 13 years. This particular watch is purchased by the MOD and issued as a piece of equipment. It's made using anti-reflective matt gunmetal and black with high legible markings by necessity – complete with NATO stock number." **Elliot Brown**

"At **Avi-8** we explore modern as well as vintage inspirations from military aviation for men's watches, which has also shown up in the higher-end Swiss brands."

Zenith's Pilot Type 20 Adventure combines an urban outlook with unparalleled versatility. Expressing reliability, comfort and robustness, it also comes in a chronograph version, the Chronograph Adventure. It offers easy readability along with two fully-interchangeable strap options.

Casio has introduced new G-SHOCK models, including Gravitymaster, an addition to the aviation concept featuring the brand's red colour accents. A new Carbon Core Guard structure gives shock resistance and the tensile strength to withstand harsh conditions.



Avi-8



Bremont





Left / Accurist

Right / Luminox

New retro

Meistersinger's new Vintago might look back to an elegant past, but a contemporary twist is added with curved hour hand rotating over a multi-level, unadorned dial, adding depth to a geometric appearance.

The latest edition to **Fossil's** Archival Series, the Hologram Watch is one of a limited edition collection of re-designs, inspired by models launched in the early 1990s.

Calvin Klein offers a return of vintage feelings – classic with a twist, shapes, rich-touch leather straps and new romantic patina. New ways to read the time create bold, unexpected statements. New classics come to life with curved crystals, layered dials and deep blue hues."

The **Ferragamo** Timepiece collection is vintage-inspired with a contemporary twist and rectangular case/dial. The leather strap comes in a palette of sharp, vibrant tones."

With two feminine styles, **Timex** Waterbury Traditional is a modern update on a classic – it began as an homage to the Waterbury Clock Company in Connecticut in 1854.



G-Shock



Tudor

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Left / Victoria Hyde
Centre / Everswiss
Right / Blancpain



Ferragamo

Versace

What Women Want

"The women's watch space has been largely ignored for mechanical watches, so I can see it growing... for unisex or feminine styles." **Bremont**

"The a-gender trend today offers the opportunity for all to wear the same watch, but we still believe that in our collections some 'specific' women's designs are a strong part of the identity. As a fashion brand, women's styles are a strength of ours." **Calvin Klein**

"Women's watches are evolving and taking on their own DNA or identity. In the fashion segment they are a wardrobe extension; simplicity of silhouette, varying colours, textures and materials offer newness." Vishal Tolani, **Avi-8**

"Our diverse collection of women's watches sells exceptionally well, year-on-year. Sales are weighted towards minimalist styles, with feminine, stone-set models gaining momentum. Spring fashion trends inspire our new ranges with a variety of coloured metals, neutrals and pops of colour. " **Accurist**

"Women's watches have been more about look – Swarovski crystals and minimalism – than the function, but we've also introduced chronographs for women which were received well." **Festina**

"Historic data has shown that smaller, daintier models sell well for women, however, we are seeing a shift in buying habits towards larger cases. We're supporting current fashion trends by incorporating Swarovski crystals and diamonds into more of our ladies' ranges." **Rotary**

"Women tend to spend less on watches than men and yet increasing numbers of women prefer a mechanical, rather than a quartz timepiece. Many of our female customers appreciate our classic unisex sizing of 35-36cm." **Nomos**

"The Kimmeridge women's collection shares Swiss movement, shock protection, 200m water testing, solid strap bars and toughened materials with our other models. Although it's a tough timepiece it's got feminine aesthetics." **Eliott Brown**

"For summer, light colours are always popular – living coral is big now; our nude pink and blues are also on trend. Unisex/ women's watches with 36mm/38mm case sizes were best sellers, but now there's a trend for feminine, smaller designs. We apply new materials on dials and straps – 3-D dials with motifs like hummingbirds and butterflies, crystals or satin embroidery for a feminine aesthetic." **Victoria Hyde**

"Collections designed specifically for women tend to be more popular and successful than smaller versions of gents' watches; it shows the brand identifies with the values of women as core customers, rather than just an afterthought." Amit Mahboobani, **Mode9**



Missguided

Sign of Our Times

Launched last year, **Mondaine's** 'essence' collection marks an eco-conscious era for the brand, as it was built using sustainable materials: castor oil for its case, natural rubber for the strap and recycled PET bottles for its multi-purpose pouch, but retaining the key markers of the brand's DNA. New, easy-change straps are made from woven wool with a natural cork lining.

"Prices are stable, but we've introduced new entry-level watches, like the new duo series, that embodies the Bauhaus principle that less is more." **Nomos**

"The premium market is in far better shape than the fashion watch market, but in the premium space steel seems to be stronger than gold/platinum." **Bremont**



Left / Elliot Brown
Right / Breitling



Raymond Weil

Smart Moves

"We've been monitoring the smart watch market closely. Traditional brands are quite cautious, as technology is moving at such a pace. Consumer research suggests people have multiple timepieces, which may include a smart/fitness watch. We strongly believe there is still a great opportunity to grow the classic watch market at our price point." **Accurist**

"In 2015 we, together with Frederique Constant and Alpina, launched the first Swiss-made smartwatch. The market allows for all types of wristwear, with smart horological developments being an interesting and growing sector. We're proud to straddle both markets." **Mondaine**

"It's a growing trend but a difficult market; most brands offer a hybrid watch, but it's hard to compete with the technology giants like Apple, Samsung and Garmin who offer more functionality." **Festina**



Culem



Left / Fossil
Right / Festina

E-business

Many were canvassed on this thorny subject; a balance of bricks and mortar and online is desirable, is the consensus. Ian Elliot of **Elliot Brown** has plenty to get off his chest:

"Online sales are convenient and unstoppable. There's a customer who feels like a hero, hunter-gathering their latest purchase at the lowest price with a kind of disdain for all retailers. Then there are those who need the reassurance of personalised, expert buying advice or seek the more fulfilling experience received in-store. Sadly the number of really good bricks and mortar retailers with well-trained, courteous, professional staff are relatively few. Some independents might grasp the reins and drive a great business into the current era – we see them thriving and happily we're stocked by many because they're the future. Other factors – such as split retail environments where out-of-town centres have fragmented traditional high street locations – effectively fuel the relentless growth of online trading.

"Controlling and nurturing online customers are challenges that brands face. Is a newsletter sign-up still a big enough incentive to receive the ubiquitous 10 or 15 per cent discount when pretty much every online retailer does it? Not many people really want to sign up to another email database. Why discount at all if the product demand is there (don't get me started on Black Friday... Black November... Black December). People need to buy Christmas presents – so why does the online sector feel it needs to race towards the bottom on price at the busiest time of year? Clear some old lines for a day... sure, then stop.

"If online retailers put effort into creating better content and a more immersive experience, they might become more interesting, gain more traffic, rank higher, gain sales and even consumer loyalty, because the experience is fulfilling. Price discounts alone don't create a sustainable business."



▶ Calvin Clein



▶ Breguet

Market Value

Despite fewer watches being sold in Britain, the value of the market continues to grow, says Paul Mitchell, senior client insight director at GfK

The value of traditional watch sales rose by 2.7% in the year to February 2019, as tracked by GfK, while the number of watches sold fell by -11.6%. Both trends continue those recorded over recent years, with value driven by the strong performance of luxury watch brands, while mass market consumers continue to purchase fewer watches.

GfK's data includes multiple and independent jewellers, department stores and mass merchants.

Within this context, there are two key factors. The first is that the rate of topline market growth has slowed. The luxury market boomed after the EU referendum, then the pound fell in value and foreign visitors drove sales in this sector (but strong growth was seen nationwide, not just in London). Growth rates of approximately 20% were achieved for almost two years, but in the last year this growth has slowed.

Previously, almost all luxury brands were part of that strong growth, but now the high-end landscape is mixed with some brands performing better than others. However, there's still enough growth at the high-end to sustain the overall market, albeit this is now restricted to the gents watch market – sales were up 3.9% in the past 12 months. The ladies market declined -6.6% in the same period.

The second factor is the online market – any sale where the transaction is completed online, from any retailer. Previously those in the mass market (sub-£500) could look to online as an area of growth. However, this is no longer the case. Since November 2017 the online mass market has been shrinking, in line with overall sales trends, across all channels, at this price point. In the year to February 2018 the total online value for the whole market fell by -3.3%, with volumes down -11.2%.

So, if retailers and brands aren't in the luxury market (particularly over £1,000) there are significant challenges – like the growth of smartwatches, the popularity of health and fitness trackers and the ubiquity of smartphones. Younger generations today don't have the same basic need of wristwatches and they have a choice of what kind of device to wear. Brands operating in this market need to build brand appeal, to position themselves for today's multi-channel customer and seek growth where they can.

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