

The greatest show on earth

Over the years Patek Philippe's Grand Exhibitions have acted as an important showcase for the company's rich history and beautiful artistry. In July, the latest event, hosted in New York, unveiled limited editions and rare handcraft models in a spectacular show

STORY Simon de Burton

Patek Philippe has long-standing ties with America. The U.S. has played an important part in the history and prosperity of the company, and, in turn, Patek Philippe has earned a place in the hearts of Americans.

In a country with a population of close to 325 million, it is inevitable that only a tiny percentage will experience, close-up, the remarkable craftsmanship for which this family-owned business based nearly 4,000 miles away on another continent has become renowned.

It is for that reason that Patek Philippe made the decision, in 1969, to display a selection of exceptional watches from its then fledgling Geneva museum at the Linz Brothers jewelry store in Dallas, Texas.

The event was a tremendous success, but it was to be more than 25 years before the first exhibition of contemporary Patek Philippe pieces took place outside of Geneva – again in Texas, but this time at the Sid Richardson Museum in Fort Worth, in association with the retailer Haltom's. Publicized with the title *The Legendary Watches of Patek Philippe*, the 1995 event

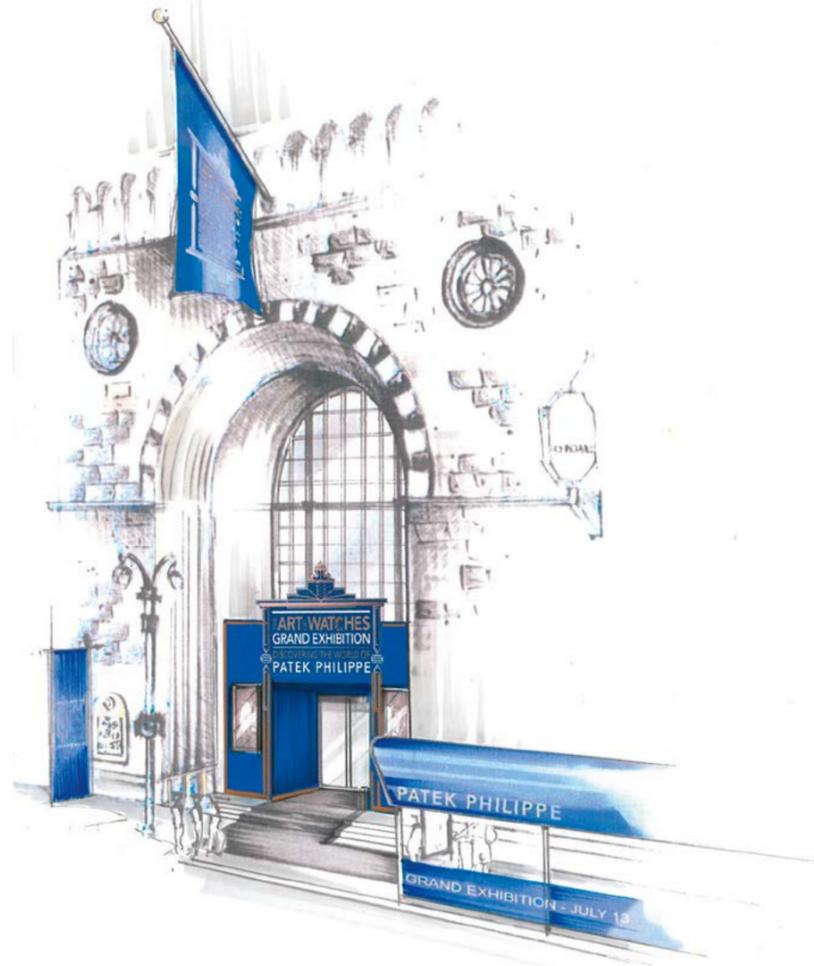
featured a number of specially made pieces, including engraved and enameled pocket watches depicting artwork housed in the Fort Worth museum. Fast forward 17 years and the concept of the Patek Philippe Grand Exhibition – in which the fascinating history



of the company is told, some of its great patrons are revealed, and the extent of its mastery of watchmaking skills is explained – finally comes into being with the Dubai Watch Art Grand Exhibition of 2012.

Comprising four hundred exhibits (including a limited edition "Mecca" version of the World Time REF. 5130), the show attracted 3,500 visitors, who marveled at the array of models that spanned rarities from the Patek Philippe Museum, limited editions, mind-boggling grand complications, and current collection pieces.

The Dubai exhibition clearly proved that there was an appetite for such an event – it led to calls from collectors for something similar in mainland Europe. Munich was chosen as the location, and in 2013 a remarkable 22,000 visitors poured through the doors to see more than 450 horological exhibits, including two limited edition watches, and nine rare handcraft models that demonstrated the skill of Patek Philippe's craftspeople in areas such as enameling, engraving, and marquetry. The company created a special Munich edition of the



2017 New York Limited Editions



REF. 5531
Also shown opposite, this is the first World Time minute repeater made by Patek Philippe – a new grand complication with a patented mechanism that sounds the selected local time as indicated by the center hands. The 40.2 mm rose gold case and slide

piece both feature a hand-guilloché hobnail pattern. The dial is decorated with a cloisonné enamel impression of Manhattan's skyline by day (or night). With 24-hour day/night indication for 24 time zones. In a limited run of 5 pieces for each design



REF. 5230
This 38.5 mm white gold World Time model in a limited edition of 300 has a blue opaline dial with an embossed relief Manhattan skyline motif, gold applied hour markers, and a sapphire crystal caseback engraved with "Patek Philippe New York 2017"



REF. 5522
Inspired by Patek Philippe's early aviator watches, this steel model, in a limited edition of 600, features the caliber 324 s in a 42 mm case. The blue varnished dial is complemented by gold applied numerals with a luminescent coating, and the caseback is engraved with "Patek Philippe New York 2017"



REF. 7000/250
The haute joaillerie Ladies' First Minute Repeater with Flamme®-set diamond bezel in a 33.9 mm white gold Officer's-style case is limited to just 3 pieces. Underneath the blue enamel dial lies the caliber R 27 PS, powering the minute repeater with a chime on two gongs



REF. 7130
This 36 mm white gold ladies' World Time model has a bezel set with 62 diamonds and a prong buckle set with 27 more. The limited edition of 75 watches features the caliber 240 HU, an engraved commemorative caseback, and a Manhattan skyline embossed relief dial



REF. 7130
The rose gold World Time REF. 7130 is available in a limited edition of 75. Like the white gold model, it has a 24-hour day/night indication for the 24 time zones. Both models have a lacquered blue opaline dial with gold applied hour markers and an engraved caseback



REF. 7200/50
The white mother-of-pearl dial version of this 34.6 mm Calatrava Officer's-style ladies' model in white gold, in a limited run of 75, features diamond hour markers and a sapphire crystal caseback engraved with "Patek Philippe New York 2017." The ultra-slim case is home to the self-winding caliber 240



REF. 7200/50
The blue mother-of-pearl dial version of this ladies' Calatrava wristwatch is available in a limited edition of 75. The model's slim white gold case and straight Officer's-style lugs work together to create a pared-down and elegantly styled timepiece

2017 New York Rare Handcrafts



REF. 5089G-077
Inspired by traditional leather carving and embossing originating in Sheridan, Wyoming, this 38.6 mm white gold "Sheridan Style" Calatrava features a gold dial hand-engraved and coated with transparent golden-brown enamel. Fitted with a self-winding caliber 240 movement and in a limited edition of 10



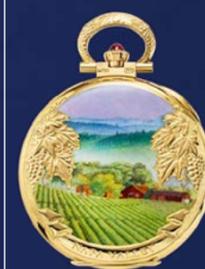
REF. 5089G-066
This 38.6 mm "Grand Canyon" Calatrava in white gold, with a hinged dust cover, features a wood marquetry scene of the canyon on its dial. Each of the 10 pieces is unique due to the handcrafting of hundreds of tiny pieces of wood in different shades. Fitted with the caliber 240



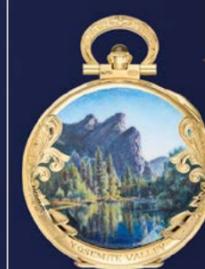
REF. 5089G-070
The white gold "Rodeo" Calatrava features a dial with a highly detailed scene in wood marquetry, using 318 pieces of wood and 40 inlays. Each 38.6 mm watch in this limited edition of 10 is unique. The case, with hinged dust cover, reveals a sapphire crystal display back through which one can admire the caliber 240



REF. 992/115J
Two members of the Crow nation are depicted on watch at the river's edge, in a miniature enamel painting inspired by the work of Martin Grelle, on the case of this one-off "Apsaalooke Sentinels" pocket watch. The unique yellow gold piece measures 44.1 mm in diameter



REF. 992/116J
The handling of perspective in this "Napa Valley" pocket watch's depiction of the winemaking region provides testament to the artist's skill in miniature enamel painting. The unique 44.1 mm yellow gold piece also features low-relief engraving. The gold dial is hand-guilloché and engraved and coated with transparent enamel



REF. 992/121J
The natural beauty of the Californian national park is captured on the case of this unique "Yosemite Valley" pocket watch using miniature enamel painting in 25 pure colors and a number of blended shades. The border of the 44.1 mm yellow gold case is decorated by hand using low-relief engraving and chasing to frame the picture



REF. 5089G-067
New York's legendary Blue Note club is celebrated in this limited edition white gold "Jazz" Calatrava. The model's dial features strikingly realistic portraits of two performers in miniature painting on enamel. The 38.6 mm model is powered by the caliber 240 and is made in a limited run of just 10 pieces



REF. 4898/1450G-010
This haute joaillerie art deco-inspired petite 27.6 mm white gold ladies' "Patek Philippe Diablotine" piece features a striking design that incorporates 2,059 precious stones in an array of colors, totaling approximately 15.08ct



REF. 20045M
A vivid chapter in the history of the American West is illustrated in cloisonné enamel with gold and silver pailons on "The Gold Seekers" unique dome table clock. Prospectors are seen panning for gold in an illustration created by the enameler using a subtle palette of 78 enamel colors



REF. 992/122G
This unique 44.1 mm "Wild Horses" pocket watch in white gold features an energetic scene of a herd of galloping wild horses. Using cloisonné enameling, the artist captures tiny details of each horse's muscles, coat, and expression by building up subtle layers of color. The case's border is hand-engraved



REF. 993/101G
The unique "Manhattan-Brooklyn" pocket watch features two famous skylines created using cloisonné enamel and is enriched with fine details using miniature painting on enamel. The 44.1 mm white gold case features an art deco motif engraved on the bow, enhanced by hand-chasing



REF. 995/102G
"First Steps on the Moon" recreates Neil Armstrong's historic photo in wood marquetry to depict the figure and lunar landscape, while miniature painting on enamel is used for the sky, the view of earth as seen from the moon, and Buzz Aldrin's helmet visor. This 44.1 mm white gold pocket watch is a one-off piece



REF. 20047M
The "Brooklyn Bridge by Night" dome clock is decorated with *grisaille* enamel enriched with gold powder and gold and silver pailons. The very rare technique of *grisaille* enamel *au blanc de Limoges* used for this unique piece involved working with a tiny brush

and a needle on the ground of black and blue enamel and modeling the white Limoges enamel to obtain a subtle monochrome, and using gold powder for the detail. The dial's design, in cloisonné enamel and with luminescent hands, is inspired by the clock at Grand Central station



REF. 992/111G
An elegant monochrome hand engraving depicting a river scene in Pittsburgh celebrates this American city and its important place in the country's industrial history. The master engraver used line-engraving techniques to reproduce the effect of an old print. This one-off white gold "Pittsburgh" pocket watch measures 44.1 mm in diameter



REF. 995/107G
The unique white gold 44.1 mm "Portrait of an American Indian" pocket watch features a design that pays homage to early American peoples. The marquetry maker used 304 pieces of wood and 60 inlays cut from 20 different woods to create the highly detailed image. The bezel and border of the caseback are hand-engraved with a geometric pattern that is enriched with turquoise enamel and set with 32 triangular-cut diamonds



REF. 995/108J
A symbol of America, the bald eagle represents the strength and majesty of the U.S.A. and is depicted in the unusual craft of wood marquetry on the cover of this one-off yellow gold 44.1 mm "Bald Eagle" pocket watch. The marquetry maker cut out and assembled 271 tiny pieces and 40 inlays using 15 different woods of varying shades



REF. 995/109G
This unique white gold 44.1 mm "Mount Rushmore" pocket watch depicts the famous landmark by using miniature enameling for the stormy sky and landscape and low-relief engraving for the portraits. The bow is hand-engraved and hand-chased, with a briolette-cut blue sapphire sitting on the crown

World Time REF. 5130 for the occasion, as well as a cloisonné enamel dome clock celebrating the city's annual Oktoberfest.

By now, word of Patek Philippe's truly grand Grand Exhibitions had spread among the watch community and the wider public, and they were becoming much-anticipated events. In 2015, London's celebrated Saatchi Gallery threw open its doors, inviting visitors into an 18,300-square-foot space spread across themed areas in which 450 exceptional timepieces were displayed.

Every one of Patek Philippe's current movements was on show, alongside watches with royal connections and the company's 175th anniversary collection from 2014, which included the Grandmaster Chime – the double-faced musical watch with 20 complications that was made in just seven examples. There were also special London limited editions and the unique “Tudor Rose” enameled pocket watch. Drawing an unprecedented crowd, it was the biggest and most successful Grand Exhibition of all – until, that is, Patek Philippe decided to take its, by now increasingly famous, show back to America in July 2017, this year staging it in the magical city of New York,

where Antoine Norbert de Patek had first set foot on American soil 163 years earlier in order to spread word of his business around the New World.

Fittingly located at the Renaissance-inspired Cipriani 42nd Street venue, with its towering marble columns, soaring ceilings, magnificent inlaid floors, and sparkling chandeliers, the New York Grand Exhibition was a masterpiece in planning, design, and content. “The challenge was to rebuild the Patek Philippe world within Cipriani, and the people who knew Cipriani could not believe what they had walked in to – no one had seen anything like it,” said Patek Philippe's president, Thierry Stern.

“When you host such an event, you have to do it from the heart. For that reason, there was no admission fee. Everyone should be given the chance to enjoy culture, and an exhibition like this enables people who might not otherwise learn about us to get to know this family-owned company in Switzerland that makes beautiful watches.”

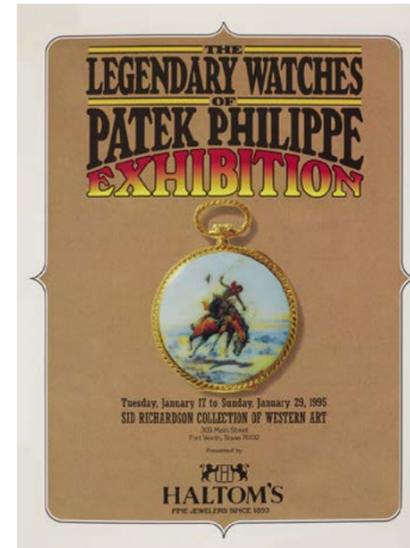
Taking two years to organize, the show featured 10 separate rooms, including a Rare Handcrafts Gallery as well as a Current Collection Room showcasing the entire

2017 catalog; a room dedicated to Patek Philippe's movements; one filled with Grand Complications; and a Museum Room, featuring 104 timepieces from the antique collection – watches from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century – and Patek Philippe models made between 1839 and 1989.

However, what seemed to delight visitors most were the Napoleon Room – designed as a replica of the Napoleon salon in the historic Patek Philippe building in Geneva, complete with a view onto a virtual Lac Léman and the landmark Jet d'Eau – and the U.S. Historic Room.

The latter displayed 24 timepieces from the Patek Philippe Museum collection with ties to America's great and good (taking the total of Patek Philippe Museum pieces to 128 – the most ever shown together outside Geneva). Plus, there were two special pieces on loan: a watch that belonged to the baseball star Joe DiMaggio and John F. Kennedy's personal table clock. Other highlights in the Historic Room included a pocket watch with George Washington's portrait; the jazz legend Duke Ellington's REF. 1563 split-seconds chronograph; and a 1920s minute-repeating watch originally

Top row, from left: made for the Dubai exhibition in 2012, the limited edition REF. 5130-015 World Time “Mecca” wristwatch was available in a limited run of 150 pieces; the REF. 5130 “Munich” World Time model was available in a limited edition of 25 pieces each, in white gold or rose gold and with a dial center featuring hand-guilloché decoration that recreated patterns from the flag of Bavaria; another model made for the 2013 Grand Exhibition in Munich is the REF. 1657M “Oktoberfest” dome clock, decorated in cloisonné enamel with a scene that celebrates the annual Oktoberfest originating in that city. Bottom row, from left: made in a limited edition of 80 pieces to commemorate the London show in 2015, this white gold Officer's-style Calatrava REF. 5153 has a hinged caseback dust cover engraved with “Patek Philippe London 2015.” Other pieces made for this exhibition include the one-off REF. 5089G “London Monuments” Calatrava wristwatch with a view of the city in grisaille enamel, in a 38.6 mm case; and a unique gold REF. 992/102J “Tudor Rose” pocket watch decorated in cloisonné enamel on a hand-guilloché ground. Opposite page: *The Legendary Watches of Patek Philippe* exhibition held in Fort Worth, Texas, featured a pocket watch that was specially made for the 1995 event. Decorated with miniature painting on enamel, it depicted a scene inspired by the U.S. artist Sid Richardson's 1904 painting *The Bucker*; a poster advertising the 2017 Patek Philippe exhibition held in New York



“When you host such an event, you have to do it from the heart,” says Patek Philippe's president, Thierry Stern

owned by Ralph Teetor, the blind inventor of the automobile cruise control system.

The Napoleon Room, however, housed what held many visitors in utter thrall: the nine limited edition wristwatches created to commemorate the Grand Exhibition in New York. The star piece was undoubtedly the REF. 5531, a watch combining two of Patek Philippe's signature complications: the minute repeater and the World Time mechanism. In tribute to the place of its unveiling, this extraordinary watch features a dial decorated with a cloisonné enamel scene of Manhattan, and it is made in a limited edition of 10, with half showing the skyline by day and half by night.

As Thierry Stern says, “The aim of the exhibition was to give pleasure and to inform, but also to demonstrate that Patek Philippe has been in America for a long time. The fact that we chose to launch a completely new movement there – in the form of the World Time Minute Repeater – demonstrates just how important the

country remains to us and how loyal we remain to it.” Another version of the World Time to debut was the REF. 5230 in white gold, its lacquered blue opaline dial embossed with a relief depicting the Manhattan skyline. Available in a limited edition of three hundred examples, it was matched by a women's World Time model, the REF. 7130, made in two editions, each of 75 pieces, in either white or rose gold.

Striking in its simplicity was REF. 5522, the Calatrava Pilot, made in six hundred examples, each with a steel case – a material rarely used by Patek Philippe and usually synonymous with its sporty pieces.

The other three pieces made especially for the New York Grand Exhibition were all for women: a duo of Calatravas, the REF. 7200/50 with a mother-of-pearl dial in white or blue (75 of each), and the Ladies First Minute Repeater, made in just three examples. Combining a white gold case, a blue enamel dial, and Patek Philippe's exclusive Flamme® gem-setting technique

around the bezel, it, like the REF. 5531, features an interchangeable full back and a sapphire crystal caseback engraved with “Patek Philippe New York 2017.”

The Rare Handcrafts Gallery housed a further ladies' model, the haute joaillerie “Patek Philippe Diablotine” REF. 4898/1450G-010. Alongside this were some other remarkable pieces inspired by the company's relationship with the U.S.: the Calatrava REF. 5089G-066 and 5089G-070, which featured wood marquetry on their dials and respectively depicted the Grand Canyon and a detailed rodeo scene, and two further Calatrava watches that showcased the arts of miniature enameling and hand engraving.

One-off pieces that also capture the spirit of the U.S. included two dome table clocks, one with a *grisaille* enamel scene of Brooklyn Bridge by night and a dial with luminescent hands that takes inspiration from the clock at Grand Central station, another depicting gold rush country in cloisonné enamel.

Among the 10 unique pocket watches made for the exhibition is one carrying a view of Mount Rushmore; another showing the Manhattan and Brooklyn skylines; and a third depicting a herd of mustangs realized with hand engraving and cloisonné enamel techniques rendered in subtle, almost monochrome colors. “Pittsburgh” depicts the eponymous city on a hand-engraved case. Further pieces carry startlingly realistic images of Yosemite Valley and Napa Valley, while early American history is celebrated with two models depicting, in wood marquetry, a bald eagle and a Native American, along with a third unique piece showing two Crow people on horseback.

Finally, perhaps the most American image of all is that of the astronaut Buzz Aldrin walking on the moon during the Apollo 11 mission of 1969. Created from a combination of wood marquetry and miniature enamel painting, the image is so detailed that, if one looks closely enough, it is possible to see Neil Armstrong reflected in the visor of Aldrin's helmet...and few of the exhibition's visitors failed to spot him. ♦

For more on this subject, visit Patek Philippe Magazine Extra at patek.com/owners