

STORY *David Rooney*

The Patek Philippe Museum in Geneva is such a rich treasure house of horological history that even the most ardent watch fan welcomes a guiding hand for their visit. Who better to curate a route through the museum's collection than the firm's honorary president, Philippe Stern? Using the Tour Assistant on handheld multimedia tablets, visitors can follow a path around Monsieur Stern's personal highlights, gaining an absorbing and revealing insight into his motivations and passions along the way. Selected stories and exhibits cover everything from Geneva's rise as a global watchmaking center to the city's remarkable tradition of miniature enamel painting. Throughout, Patek Philippe's own contributions to watchmaking history can be understood and studied among the extensive displays. This tour is a synopsis of Mr. Stern's lifetime of discerning collecting. During it, each visitor will see exciting new connections among some of the finest horological artifacts ever made.





1 *Madonna of the Rose*, pocket watch, c. 1640, case Ø: 68 mm (Inv. No. S-476)



1. Jean I Toutin, pioneer of enamel painting
Our selection from Mr. Stern's tour begins with exquisite miniature painting on enamel. A watch made around 1640 is adorned with a scene of the *Madonna of the Rose*, after a painting by the French artist Simon Vouet (1590–1649), which visitors can see in the accompanying multimedia presentation. The many-layered technique of enamel painting is said to have been developed by the French goldsmith Jean I Toutin (1578–1644) early in the seventeenth century. At that time, the Loire Valley city of Blois became the epicenter for enameling, and as a favored royal residence it attracted specialist craftspeople.



2 *Tulips*, pocket watch, c. 1640, case Ø: 58.6 mm (Inv. No. S-1082)

2. Semper Augustus
The precious tulip known as the *Semper Augustus* was one of the rarest in history. White with deep red flames, it fetched huge prices in seventeenth-century Holland during a period of wild financial speculation known as "tulip mania." The second stop on our tour brings visitors to a fine watch made around 1640 in Blois, France. It is decorated with luxurious enameled bouquets including *Semper Augustus* tulips in full bloom, some already wilting as was typical in still life paintings of the time. This watch was one of the finest of its day. Besides its exuberant enamel paintings, it is extensively set with rubies and diamonds.



3 *Roman Charity*, pocket watch, c. 1715, case Ø: 57 mm (Inv. No. S-244)



4 Scent flask with singing bird and an organ, 1787, H: 15.5 cm / W: 63 mm / D: 48 mm (Inv. No. S-1006)

3. The Huauds put their stamp on Europe
The third highlight on this tour reinforces enamel painting as a personal passion of Mr. Stern's. Here, the visitor's attention is drawn to details on some late-seventeenth-century watches painted by the Genevan dynasty of enamellers, the Huauds, who were celebrated across Europe. The *Roman Charity* pocket watch, seen here, far left, was made around 1715 and is an especially fine example of the family's work.

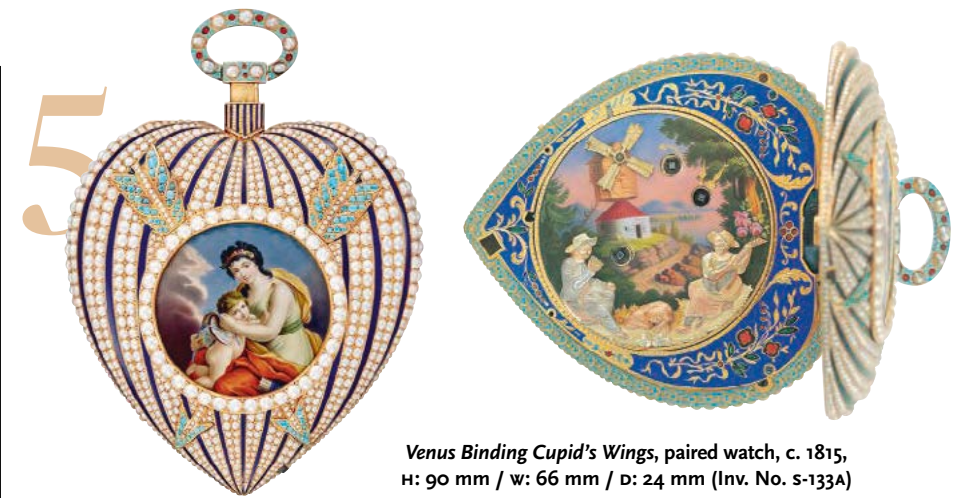
4. Siren song of the Jaquet-Droz androids
The fourth selection from Mr. Stern's tour offers a parade of mechanical marvels made in the eighteenth-century Swiss workshop of Pierre Jaquet-Droz (1721–1790), his son Henri-Louis, and adopted son Jean-Frédéric

Few people ever get to see horology's rarest and most exquisite masterworks

Leschot. Jaquet-Droz specialized in automata, from large-scale humanoids to miniature singing birds. Some were small enough to fit into pocket watch cases or scent bottles, elaborately decorated and jeweled to appeal to the Chinese market. The bird inside the front of this scent flask opens and closes its beak and moves its tail while an organ pipe inside plays realistic birdsong.

5. Yin and yang
The ancient Chinese philosophy of yin and yang, which explores opposing but complementary natural forces, led Chinese clients to prize watches made in pairs, reflecting the significance of this symmetry. Genevan watchmakers became renowned for the sumptuous paired watches that they produced for the Chinese market. Each watch displayed in the fifth showcase on our special tour is part of a pair. One, a musical watch made in about 1815 by the Genevan firm Pignet & Meylan and set in a heart-shaped case, depicts a picturesque lakeside scene with rotating windmill sails.

6. The incredible "Sympathique"
Few people ever get to see one of horology's rarest and most exquisite masterworks: an Abraham-Louis Breguet "Sympathique" clock. Only 12 of these timepieces are known to exist, and two are on show at the Patek Philippe Museum. Each comprises two parts: a finely made clock and a special pocket watch that can be inserted into a cradle on top of the clock at night. By 3 AM, a synchronizing mechanism will have wound the watch and set it exactly to time in a display of technical sophistication that remains hard to match even today.



5 *Venus Binding Cupid's Wings*, paired watch, c. 1815, H: 90 mm / W: 66 mm / D: 24 mm (Inv. No. S-133A)



6 *The Sympathique of the Duke of Orleans*, table clock, 1836, H: 62 cm / W: 28.8 cm / D: 23.6 cm (Inv. No. S-970A)



The Sympathique of the Duke of Orleans, pocket watch, 1835, case Ø: 49 mm (Inv. No. S-970B)



The first perpetual calendar wristwatch, No. 222 033, 1925, case Ø: 34.4 mm (Inv. No. P-72)



Minute repeating pocket watch, No. 25 225, 1864–66, case Ø: 51.3 mm (Inv. No. P-396)

Minute repeaters represent the best watchmaking skill and are highly prized



The first Patek Philippe repeating wristwatch, No. 174 603, 1916, case Ø: 27.1 mm (Inv. No. P-594)

7. Perpetual calendar

Watches can represent our position in a complex universe, and the seventh highlight from Mr. Stern's tour illuminates this fact. The first wristwatch to contain a perpetual calendar – a date indication that remains accurate for months of different lengths, even during leap years – was made by Patek Philippe in 1925, with a movement dating back to 1898. Before this, owners of calendar wristwatches were obliged to correct manually for months shorter than 31 days.

8. The sound of time

Watches do not just show the time; some sound it, too. Mr. Stern's eighth highlight is a Patek Philippe minute repeater made in 1864–66, a watch type produced by the firm since 1845. A repeater is a complication that chimes the time on demand. Some sound only to the nearest hour; others sound the quarters, half-quarters, or even five minutes. Minute repeaters, chiming down to the minute, represent the best watchmaking skill and are highly prized. Today, every Patek Philippe minute repeater is personally approved by the company president, Thierry Stern, before being dispatched to the client.

9. Evolution of the repeater wristwatch

In the early twentieth century, demand for wristwatches was growing. Some complications, such as repeaters, were difficult to miniaturize for wristwatches, especially for those worn by women. Small wristwatch cases are less resonant than those for larger pocket watches, meaning sound quality was a challenge. In 1916, Patek Philippe introduced the very first five-minute repeating wristwatch for women, which is the ninth stop of this tour. The firm was able to draw on almost half a century of experience in making women's wristwatches.

10. The enameler's art

The tenth display from Mr. Stern's personal-highlights tour contains a dress watch made by Patek Philippe in 1976. The back of its case is adorned with an enamel miniature, painted by the Genevan artist Suzanne Rohr,

of a girl beside a lake, based on Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's painting *Ville-d'Avray*. Such scenes could take a year or more to complete and often required a brush with only a single hair. Rohr, who worked for Patek Philippe from 1967 until 2002, was the last graduate of Carlo Poluzzi's famous enamel painting class at Geneva's École des Arts Décoratifs.

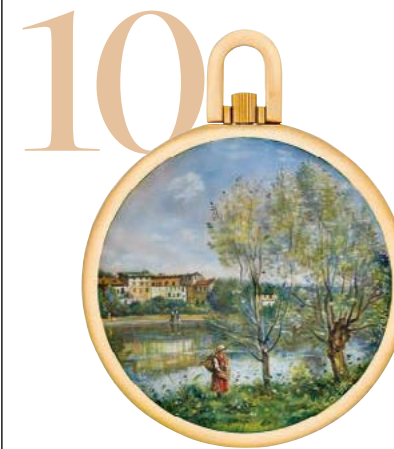
11. Carlo Poluzzi and his students

The miniature enamel portrait, entitled *The Gypsy Girl*, on this circa 1955 watch case was precisely created by Carlo Poluzzi. This piece forms the eleventh stop on our highlights tour. As a teenager in Geneva in the early twentieth century, Poluzzi completed an enameling apprenticeship, later becoming a full-time enamel artist in the city. Alongside creating his own miniature masterpieces, he also trained a younger generation of enamellers. One was Suzanne Rohr, who Poluzzi introduced to Patek Philippe after the then-president, Henri Stern, and his son, Philippe, had decided to rescue the endangered craft.

The Calibre 89 is a powerful statement of the watchmaker's art

12. The miracle of the Calibre 89

When Philippe Stern resolved, in the late 1970s, to meet the existential challenge of quartz watches by making the world's most complicated mechanical watch, the result was the legendary Calibre 89. Created to celebrate Patek Philippe's 150th anniversary, the model secured the company's future and helped to resurrect the mechanical watch. The final display of Mr. Stern's tour is the prototype of this remarkable piece. Comprising 1,728 parts and incorporating 33 complications, the Calibre 89 is a powerful statement of the watchmaker's art – an art that has been refined over centuries and not least by Patek Philippe. ♦



Ville-d'Avray, dress watch, 1976, case Ø: 47.3 mm (Inv. No. P-258)



The Gypsy Girl, watch case, c. 1955, case Ø: 48.5 mm (Inv. No. E-50)



Calibre 89, 1989, case Ø: 88.2 mm (Inv. No. P-1989)