

JEWELRY

## WatchTime returns to New York as Swiss watch industry bounces back

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*Baume et Mercier Baumatic at WatchTime. Image credit: Baume et Mercier*

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By BRIELLE JAEKEL

As the luxury watch industry continues ticking up, WatchTime New York is catering to timepiece aficionados in the United States with its fourth annual event.

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Amongst a tumultuous backdrop for trade shows, with fairs including Baselworld seeing a variety of setbacks, WatchTime is returning with a focus on direct-to-consumer connections, a factor that many others steer away from. Montblanc, Jaeger-LeCoultre and Baume et Mercier are a few of the heritage watch brands showcasing new products, along with others using a new version of the trade show model.

"When you break it down, our approach is as simple as attracting quality collectors by offering up the strongest line-up of watch brands we have ever had in our four years of producing the WatchTime New York show," said Sara Orlando, publisher at **WatchTime**. "By working with the very best watch brands in all categories, we are ensuring that our audience is getting what they need and want at our show."

"Happy customers equal happy watch brands," she said. "The formula of fun, educational elements and the chance to see and handle many incredible, rare and new watches in one place is a win-win for all, appealing to brands and watch enthusiasts alike."

Times they are a changin'

Overseas trade shows in Europe and beyond have made their names as heritage, long-standing events of importance in the watch industry.

But now as the retail industry has changed and consumers are looking to be more interactive with the brands themselves, a direct-to-consumer model approach is vital.



*Vacheron Constantin appears at WatchTime. Image credit: WatchTime*

Swiss watchmaking group Swatch was the latest to officially pull out of Baselworld, the annual Swiss watch show of which it has been a part for decades.

The company cites the soaring expenses of exhibiting at Baselworld as well as the event's growing irrelevance to the way customers buy watches today for its decision. Swatch Group followed a few other high-end watch brands who have all stopped exhibiting at the event ([see story](#)).

WatchTime New York is one of few watch shows in the United States, where not only the luxury market but the timepiece market is growing.

Specifically choosing New York for its importance with fandom and large shows, WatchTime claims it is the only event of its kind in the U.S.



*Jaeger LeCoultre appears at WatchTime. Image credit: WatchTime*

A \$129 admission allows consumers and industry experts alike to interact with important individuals in the industry along with checking out new innovations and releases in the watch world. The doors are open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Oct. 27, with an expected 1,000 attendees.

Watchtime past

Watchmakers such as Omega and Breguet gathered in New York during of October 2016 as well, giving horology enthusiasts an opportunity to mingle with favored watch brands on a one-to-one basis for its third edition.

The industry's leading brands were in New York to attend WatchTime New York, the annual consumer event of WatchTime Magazine, a media brand dedicated to watch collectors and enthusiasts. The watch industry has a devout following, and in-person events ripe with experiential programming heighten consumer interest and may spur high-ticketed purchase ([see story](#)).

"For watch brands, our show it is all about direct-to-consumer engagement and interactions," Ms. Orlando said. "Events like WatchTime New York allow brands to break the barrier between them and their end customer, which enhances the sales experience and ultimately gains more trust from the collector.

"Collectors feel special when they meet the people behind the brand, whether it is an actual watchmaker, CEO or sales executive," she said. "It is quite smart for these brands to participate in events that build relationships with their customers on a more personal level.

"We are also seeing many brands launch products at WatchTime New York for the very first time, as they know there will be a lot of press and buzz surrounding the show in October."