

WATCHES

Watches & Wonders Geneva, formerly SIHH, cancels show, Baselworld on

February 27, 2020



Crowds at SIHH 2019. Image credit: Watches & Wonders Geneva

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The COVID-19 coronavirus scare has taken yet another victim: Watches & Wonders Geneva, formerly known as SIHH, which was canceled for this year.

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The trade show was scheduled for April 25-29, targeting leading watchmakers and industry executives to exchange notes on new timepieces and market strategies. The announcement is a blow to a luxury watch business already suffering the consequences of the Hong Kong protests.

"In view of the latest developments concerning the worldwide spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, it is the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie's duty, as organizer of Watches & Wonders Geneva, to anticipate the potential risks that travels and important international gatherings could entail," the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie said in a statement.

"Therefore, in order to protect the health and wellbeing of all our guests, press, partners and teams, the decision has been taken to cancel the upcoming edition of Watches & Wonders Geneva (formerly known as the SIHH) and its In the City' program, initially due to take place in Geneva from April 25th to 29th 2020.

"The Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie understands the disappointment this year's cancellation may cause, and remains at the disposal of its partners and guests for any queries they may have.

"The FHH is already working on the organization of 2021 edition of Watches & Wonders Geneva."

Last year's SIHH focused on craftsmanship and heritage, even as the watch show saw the need to rebrand to a friendlier Watches & Wonder Geneva moniker ([see story](#)).



The Jaeger-LeCoultre booth at SIHH 2019. Image credit: Watches & Wonders Geneva

Watch out

Exhibitors signed up for this year's **Watches & Wonders** event included Piaget, Roger Dubuis, Hermès, Baume & Mercier, HYT, Montblanc, Bovet, Girard-Perregaux, Panerai, IWC Schaffhausen, Ulysse Nardin, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Cartier, Parmigiani and Vacheron Constantin.

As of now, rival **Baselworld** has not changed plans to host its trade show April 30 to May 5 in Basel, Switzerland, despite the withdrawal of Citizen and Bulova. Similarly, the direct-to-public May 29-30 **WatchTime Los Angeles** and the Oct. 23-24 **WatchTime New York** shows are also on track to run.

"Baselworld 2020 is on track," said Michel Loris-Melikoff, managing director of Baselworld, in a statement. "We are planning the coming show as intended.

"Based on the comprehensive information our monitoring team has collected to-date, we have no reason to doubt it at all," he said.

"The marketing of the halls is now complete, with numerous innovations to showcase the new Baselworld experience. We are also pleased by the growing number of exhibitors, even in the gemstone sector where, for instance, we record an increase of 50 percent.

"Preparations are ongoing in full swing to ensure that we will, in any case, be ready with an excellent show and platform for the entire watch and jewelry community. We intend to provide the perfect setting with numerous innovations to showcase the new Baselworld experience and all the new products the global community is looking forward to discovering.

"We are very closely monitoring the evolution of the Covid-19 situation and are in close contact with the respective health and other authorities.

"In coordination with the most important stakeholders of our industries, we are respecting all official procedures and recommendations to ensure the safety of the exhibitors, visitors and staff. A comprehensive health action plan has been drawn up for rapid deployment if necessary."

Industry insiders at SIHH 2019 on what is at stake for fine watchmaking