

JEWELRY

Bulgari debuts new men's watch inspired by global cities

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By DIANNA DILWORTH



Italian jeweler Bulgari has debuted a new collection of Bulgari Bulgari men's watches inspired by iconic cities around the world in a move to offer a lower-priced piece during a time of global recession.

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The **Bulgari Bulgari Cities Special Edition collection** depicts a well-traveled life. The collection of nine timepieces pays tribute to urban destinations visited by Bulgari founder Sotirios Voulgaris over the years.

"The strategy behind this launch is likely two-fold: The first is to introduce an entry level price-point into Bulgari watches, the second is to explore the brand's watchmaking heritage and connect with local markets," said Donnie Pacheco, founder/CEO of **Donnie P. Consulting**, Seattle, WA.

Rome-based Bulgari is part of the LVMH family of luxury brands.



Cities Special Edition

The Bulgari Bulgari Cities Special Edition collection is designed to show off a well-traveled life.

The collection includes timepieces, each of which was designed by a local artisan in the market that the watch presents: hometown Rome, Paris, Dubai, Tokyo, Milan, London, Ibiza, Mexico City and New York.

Bulgari has created a New York City Special Edition available exclusively online in the United States and Canada.

Each special edition watch is accompanied by a portfolio of illustrations of the city made along with the collection.

"The story is that the watchmaker visited all of the cities represented in the collection and for each they have partnered with a local artist to commission illustrations," Mr. Pacheco said.

"The illustrations help take the idea a bit deeper than simply putting the name of the city on the bezel and work toward fostering a deeper connection," he said.

Each of the Cities Special Edition pieces comes with an interchangeable strap, as well as a complimentary leather travel pouch. The pieces retail for \$4,350, a bit less than other Bulgari Bulgari collections, which go for more than \$5,000.

"Bulgari is likely targeting both new and existing customers with this effort," Mr. Pacheco said.

"With the lower price-point, it allows them to reach out to a customer that may not have been able to jump into the brand at the higher price-points," he said.

"It also is going after existing customers that live in these markets by further exploring their watchmaking history and showing a commitment to the market by partnering with a local artist."

The line launches at a time when many consumers are stuck at home wondering when they will next travel the world. These items might be attractive to consumers looking for a luxurious consolation prize. But this is likely a coincidental detail.

"This is more about trying to connect with customers through the brand's heritage than a statement on current events," Mr. Pacheco said.

"Novelties are planned well in advance and it would be too short of notice to come up with new styles based on current events," he said. "Unfortunately, some of the cities represented in the collection are some of the hardest hit cities by the pandemic."



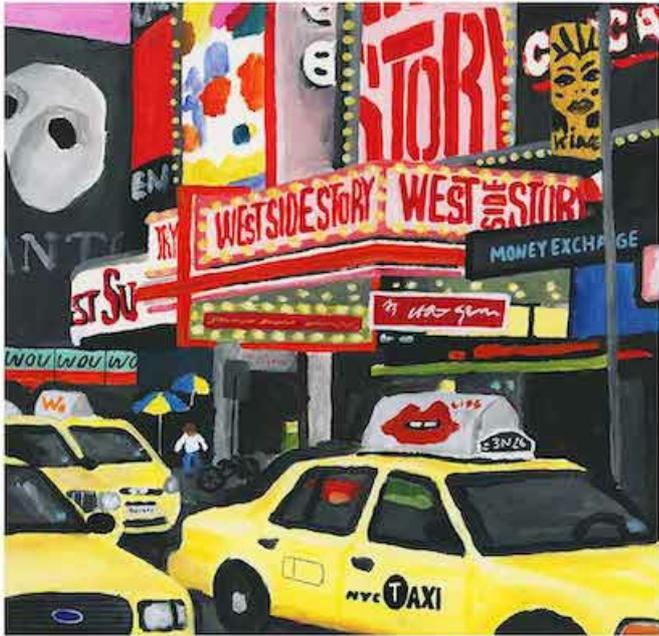
Perfect timing

The watch industry has been turned upside down this year thanks to the global shutdowns of the world's major watch shows where luxury watch brands including Bulgari, Breitling, Ulysse Nardin, Girard-Perregaux, Gerald Genta, Urwerk, H. Moser & Cie and De Bethune, among others, debut new designs.

First, Baselworld and Watches & Wonders were cancelled when the Swiss government banned gatherings of more than 1,000 people as an early precaution to stop the spread of COVID-19. Then the smaller Geneva Watch Days event organized by leading Swiss watchmakers to make up for these losses was pushed back to Aug. 26-29.

"This is more a reflection of timing for the watch industry," Mr. Pacheco said. "The major watch shows usually take place in January through April and this is when brands unveil novelties, then they typically launch starting in April or May and roll out into fall.

"While watches are subject to economic downturns like other product lines, watches are a bit different in the sense that many fine timepieces hold value and tend to be passed down to future generations," he said.



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