

JEWELRY

Brands reeling in younger collectors at Watches and Wonders Geneva 2024

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The programming includes nature-centric spaces, moon phase watches and colorful reimaginings of heritage styles. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Luxury watchmakers from around the world are celebrating innovation at an annual horological event.

From Rolex to Hermès, 54 maisons are showcasing their timepieces at [Watches and Wonders Geneva 2024](#), taking place from April 9 to April 15. Open to the public this weekend from April 13 to April 15, this year's programming is all about bringing in a new generation of collectors while finding ways to hold heritage and the future in each hand.

"Watches and Wonders Geneva significantly showcases not just the mastery of watchmaking professions but also heralding the innovative and dynamic future of this vibrant industry," said Delphine Bachmann, state councilor in charge of the Department of Economy and Labor in Switzerland, in a statement.

Ticking off

At the official inauguration of Watches and Wonders Geneva 2024, economic leaders, politicians and the CEO for each of the 54 exhibiting brands were in attendance.

Taking place at Palexpo-Geneva, the event opened with an address delivered by Guy Parmelin, the head of the Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research. A welcome video was shared with journalists and other guests.

Van Cleef & Arpels is revealing a dreamlike booth at the event

Jean-Frédéric Dufour, president of the Watches and Wonders Geneva Foundation also spoke. He shared his vision of the event, stating that it could promote the industry globally.

"Together we go further," he said. "The younger generation remains a priority."

After his statements, French composer Sébastien Gurive gave an artistic performance, which centered on the metaphor of time through illustration.

Following this interlude, the ceremony eventually ended at 6 p.m. with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Now, various spaces around the event are set up for visitors to engage with. This weekend, for example, young people can head to the lab for Future and Career, where the on-site jobs team will be to guide participants through training courses and share

opportunities in the sector.

Chanel's new J12 Automaton Caliber 6 interprets the couture world of the founder

Meanwhile, the creations of students at the University of Art and Design Lausanne are on display. Guests can browse 15 bracelets forged using 3D printing technology made by those earning their Master of Advanced Studies in Design for Luxury and Craftsmanship.

A full event list can be found [online](#).

The overarching focus on the next generation follows after last year's effort. The 2023 edition of the event likewise focused on appealing to young audiences, offering immersive experiences, virtual reality moments, rainbow-colored product displays and educational resources ([see story](#)).

However, despite this push for futuristic models and contemporary attention, the heritage-centric framing of the event stayed intact.

Hublot highlights craftsmanship for Watches and Wonders

Just as this year's programming seems to be doing, the last version of the giant gathering applied new technologies to old-school timepieces in order to fuse modernity and history ([see story](#)). The move allows maisons, and Watches and Wonders Geneva, to preserve generational know-how and timeless techniques while still providing updated looks, inventions and products that could catch the eye of even the newest of horological fans.

As 54 brands gather in Switzerland at this very moment ([see story](#)), time will tell which of them can achieve this multifaceted feat the most successfully.

Keeping time

Throughout this week, watchmaking labels have been taking to digital channels to advertise the developments that they are exhibiting at Watches and Wonders.

Swiss watch manufacturer Zenith is among them, having revealed an architectural and geometric piece for its Defy Collection. With a one-tenth-second chronograph function, the Skyline features the El Primero automatic high-frequency chronograph calibre within the line, this precise calibre dates back to the 1970s.

#DefySkylineChronograph: The DEFY Skyline constellation is complete. The new DEFY Skyline Chronograph offers a new vessel for the latest iteration of the El Primero with a 1/10th of a second function. [#ZenithWatches](#) [#ElPrimero](#) [#WatchesandWonders](#) [#WatchesandWonders2024](#) pic.twitter.com/JaeU81Eh7

Zenith Watches (@ZenithWatches) [April 9, 2024](#)

This contemporary update includes a steel case, sharp lines, starry sky-patterned dial, various colorways and an integrated quick strap-change mechanism that includes a rubber or three-link steel bracelet.

The brand has also unveiled the Defy Extreme Diver. Its sporty look and functional nature are similar to a recent drop from Swiss watchmaker Tag Heuer ([see story](#)).

Another name from the same country, Breitling, has instead leaned into the adventurous vibe of these reveals.

This week, the brand has landed a capsule in front of its boutique in Geneva for Watches and Wonders. Visitors have been interacting with the Breitling Orbiter, getting a hands-on experience with the maison's love of discovery.

Breitling's taking flight towards a more sustainable future with a pioneering partnership with [@ClimateImpulse](#), championed by clean technology advocate [@bertrandpiccard](#). Together, we're embarking on the first-ever nonstop around-the-world zero-emission flight with a green pic.twitter.com/YJN6JSDGUd

Swiss watchmaker Hublot, which recently showed off its collaboration with another famous band ([see story](#)), has rolled out a new generation of its signature Unico line. Launched in 2010 as its first movement designed by the manufacturer, the collection now boasts reliability, simplicity and modernized styles.

Following its technical upgrades, the series now boasts five patents, per the brand: gentler winding, a faultless display, enhanced performance, greater accuracy and exceptional shock resistance.

"Our aim is to reinvent watchmaking complications," said Ricardo Guadalupe, CEO of Hublot, in a statement.

"On the Unico, having the chronograph mechanism on the dial side is a specific design feature enabling the column wheel to be visible," Mr. Guadalupe said. "The movement the soul of the watch is an integral part of the design and the perceived value of high quality. It is unique."

Hublot is revealing five colorful timepieces

Style is also a sticking point for French fashion and leather goods house Hermès.

The maison states that it is bringing together horology and equestrianism with the piece it is displaying at Watches and Wonders. The Arceau Duc Attel features a triple-axis tourbillon, minute repeater and exposed inner workings.

The Hermès Cut is also on show at the event which, according to the house, embodies the "vocabulary of geometry" and celebrates simple forms to assert a powerful look.

Geometry is also a big part of Swiss watchmaker Vacheron Constantin's programming in Geneva.

Through April 22, the maison is delving into the ways that mechanical instruments can be turned into design objects. "From Geometry to Artistry" will include 1,600 timepieces ranging from rare to ornate designs these will tour the world throughout 2024.

Vacheron Constantin's Grand Lady Kalla piece leans into a huge trend

Form is placed above function, highlighting Vacheron Constantin's dedication to creative pursuits and the work of its artisans, finishers, dial-makers and leather workers. The company states that with this mindset, watchmaking is an "object of contemplation" rather than simply measurement.

The brand has also announced new products, such as the first-ever green-dial watches in the Overseas collection, multiple moon phase timepieces and the Grand Lady Kalla jewelry watch. It is also sharing the Berkley Grand Complication, which took 11 years to develop and is touted as being the world's most complicated watch due to its 63 horological complications and 2,877 components.

Jewelry that tells time is becoming a huge trend in the sector, with many drawn to its multifunctional nature and decorative quality.

Italian jeweler Bulgari is getting in on the action. Though it is not listed as an exhibitor at Watches and Wonders, its new creation odes springtime in Geneva.

Bulgari's new creation has broken world records

In collaboration with Japanese architect Tadao Ando, four limited-edition Serpenti Tubogas designs have been brought to fruition. Inspired by the transformation of snakes, the pieces are joined by the limited-edition Octo Finissimo Ultra COSC, said to be the slimmest mechanical watch ever made.

U.S. jeweler Harry Winston has likewise spent the week lauding jewelry that tells time, nodding to the founder of the brand with its Ultimate Emerald Signature, named after Mr. Winston's favorite cut.

The Ocean Collection is also a highlight, hailed for its sophistication, luxurious versatility and daring look.

Harry Winston presents The Ocean Collection

French jewelry maison Cartier, an exhibitor at Watches and Wonders, has published an [immersive webpage](#) online dedicated to a new creation: the Reflection de Cartier.

A delicate mirror and beveled crystal dial are paired face to face to create an optical illusion.

The Santos de Cartier collection is also given a spot on the landing page, capturing the style and magic of Brazilian aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont. Aside from these, the Tortue watch with a single-push chronograph, Animal Watches and classic favorites from the house are also spotlighted.

Cartier is celebrating the magic of watchmaking in Geneva

Nature shapes French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels's Watches and Wonders leaf-filled exhibit. The brand's Lady Arpels Jour Nuit and the Lady Frie watches are on display, each evoking flora and fauna.

Swiss watchmaker Jaeger Le-Coultré's involvement is focused on precision.

A viewing room is dedicated to the 180 skills needed to create the house's timepieces, from design to ornamentation. At stations inside the booth, master artisans show off their know-how guests can also sign up for workshops.

Gastronomy also has a role in Jaeger Le-Coultré's slot, which includes a culinary experience that revolves around the science of ingredients. Two-Michelin-starred chef Himanshu Saini leads the space, inviting the public to sample four savory bites paired with beverages.

Jaeger Le-Coultré presents the Precision Maker

Another Swiss watchmaker, IWC Schaffhausen, is working with another celebrity on site: Gisele Bündchen.

The model and ambassador is visiting the brand's exhibition, "A Tribute to Eternity," which centers on the moon's journey every night and outer space. The new Portugieser collection has been reworked with fresh designs, color codes and complications, also on view.

"It is a pleasure to be here with IWC at Watches and Wonders and see the beautiful new Portugieser collection," said Ms. Bündchen, in a statement.

"Time is a special gift and using it wisely impacts what we leave behind for future generations," she said. "I chose to use my time to focus on my family, love, learning, health, and friendships."

IWC Schaffhausen presents a sensorial booth

Academy Award-winning film score composer Hans Zimmer, and renowned physicist and professor Brian Cox join in the festivities, creating a musical piece inspired by the new watches the song is being played every hour at the maison's booth in Geneva. The collaboration has resulted in the first secular-perpetual calendar that IWC Schaffhausen has ever engineered.

Richemont-owned watchmaker A. Lange & Söhne is out with two new novelties for Watches and Wonders 2024.

The Datograph Up/Down in white gold with a blue dial and the Datograph Perpetual Tourbillon Honeygold "Lumen" update the original Datograph. Launched 25 years after their namesake piece, they are limited to 125 and 50 models, respectively.

Rolex presents fresh innovations for 2024

Finally, Rolex is out with a range of new products, including the new Sky-Dweller, Cosmograph Daytona, Rolex Deepsea, Perpetual 1908, Day-Date and GMT-Master II.