



2016

This year's model. With the commanding REF. 5930C, it is only the second time in Patek Philippe's history that the company has combined a World Time mechanism with a chronograph: the reworked dial has a 30-minute counter at 6 o'clock; a 24-hour disk indicating whether it is day or night; and a disk with 24 locations. Clever dial design ensures that overall legibility is superb despite the number of indications

Another time, another place

Once we could only dream of far-off lands; these days the race is on to visit every corner of the globe. Fortunately the World Time watch reminds us that there is still romance in distant places – and, says Jean-Philippe Arm, the latest model is making us dream anew

According to conventional metaphor, the dial of a watch is its face and the strongest expression of its personality. This surface, measuring not much more than a square inch, can say far more than we think, going well beyond just the indication of time. But it must have one essential virtue: legibility. Of course, perfect legibility is a basic requirement at Patek Philippe, which has proved its point again this year with the REF. 5930. The newcomer combines two complications that tend to be rather talkative: a universal or world time mechanism and a chronograph. Yet the news relayed by these counters never interferes with the echoes from the world at large.

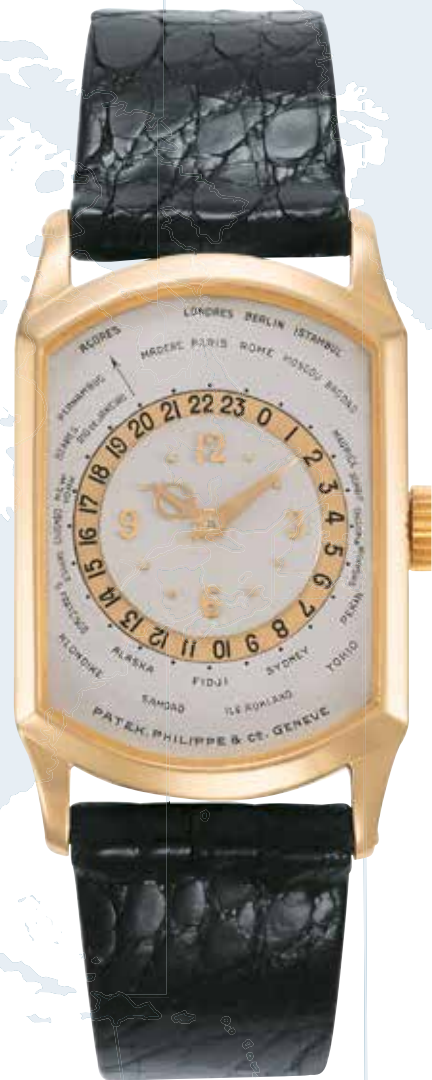
Ever since the early 1930s, thanks to the creative genius of the Genevan watchmaker Louis Cottier, it has been possible for a watch dial to display real time in cities or islands distributed over our planet's 24 time zones. Rio de Janeiro, Adelaide, Tahiti, Mauritius...this string of evocative names was an invitation to travel or simply to dream of far-off places, because the jet age had yet to arrive.

The platinum watch unveiled by Patek Philippe in 1939, and created in collaboration with the ingenious Mr. Cottier, displayed 40 place names. It went on to make headline news in 2002, selling at auction for a record CHF 6.6 million (around US\$4 million at the

time). It is fascinating now to track the changes in the models over the years. Viewed in succession, each dial is like a frame from a film that plunges us into the world's geopolitical history. Consider that famous model introduced in 1939, the REF. 1415. Three cities represented Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) – London, Paris, and Algiers – while the GMT +1 time zone featured Oslo, Geneva, and Rome. REF. 1416 of the same year retained London and Paris for GMT but showed Berlin and Cape Town for GMT +1.

That observation calls for some context. Prior to World War II, Paris and London shared the same time zone. This was logical seeing that solar time for Paris, to the east, is only nine minutes ahead of that of the Greenwich meridian, while part of France is even to the west of it. Paris and London in one and the same time zone? It made sense, though France had balked at the idea and had resisted until 1911, well after the meridian of the Royal Observatory in Greenwich was made the reference for zero degrees longitude. That had been decided at a conference in Washington in 1884, when the globe was officially split into those 24 time zones.

From 1940, however, as in the period of 1914-1918, German time was imposed in the occupied territories. It still prevails today, under the name of Central European



1937
This rare REF. 515 HU is recognized as the earliest Patek Philippe World Time watch. Created in a rose gold rectangular art deco case, it has a fixed time-zone plate showing 28 locations and a 24-hour rotating disk. This timepiece was made for a New York client who may have lived abroad as it is calibrated for the Greenwich time zone

Time. London has retained its throne as the prime meridian of the world, but in the realm of ultimate accuracy Greenwich Mean Time has given way to the coordinated time of four hundred highly precise cesium atomic clocks. In other words, Coordinated Universal Time or UTC has formally replaced GMT. The same corrections occurred on the other side of the globe, though the reason here was the Japanese occupation. Since then, states have continued to change time zones for political or economic reasons, either temporarily or long term, and watch dials have often reflected these moves. But not always. The World Time watch has followed none of the muddles and misgivings that have

accompanied daylight saving time since its introduction in temperate regions in the early twentieth century.

The appearance or disappearance of cities that represent a time zone, meanwhile, may testify to their prestige or actual role at the time. Another factor that explains the occasional surprise name (one that would seem to have little meaning for most observers) is simply restricted choice. To this writer, the most touching case is that of South Georgia.

For a long time, the archipelago of the Azores symbolized the GMT -2 time zone, until that area was moved to GMT -1 to reduce the time difference in relation to the rest of Portugal and the continent. Suddenly a place was vacant, but the great void of the Atlantic Ocean offered few potential candidates. Apart from Fernando de Noronha, a Brazilian island off Recife, about all that was to be found here, out in the middle of nowhere, was the archipelago of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, a British overseas territory administered through the Falkland Islands and claimed by Argentina.

The islands lie about 870 miles southeast of the Falklands. Queen Elizabeth II has some 30 subjects there, along with a military garrison, a scientific station, and thousands of penguins. During the short austral summer, specialized cruise ships make brief stop-offs before heading for the outskirts of the Antarctic. All in all, it is clear that the people directly affected by South Georgia time are nowhere near as numerous as the lovers of World Time watches who have come across its name on a dial. Should it be abandoned in favor of a Brazilian or Argentinian city in the neighboring UTC -3 time zone, using their summer time? A prototype glimpsed at Baselworld did display São Paulo. But having pondered, Patek Philippe resisted. It was too much like opening Pandora's box.

A similar case occurred in the Antipodes and concerns Midway Atoll in the northern Pacific Ocean. Now a marine wildlife sanctuary, Midway was formerly a U.S. naval air base. It was used officially up until the Vietnam War and then secretly until the end of the Cold War. These islands were at the center of a decisive naval battle in 1942, made famous by films, books, and comics. As a result, Midway Atoll and its population of albatrosses have replaced Samoa as the symbol of the

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The world at hand

Long before the jet age, these early World Time watches began to open up the twentieth century and open minds to new thoughts and ideas



1937
One of the earliest and rarest World Time watches, this REF. 96 HU in yellow gold has stylized gold hands and an outer disk with 28 locations in black enamel



1937
This yellow gold gentlemen's wristwatch, REF. 542 HU, with wide, straight lugs, has a 24-hour rotating disk and shows 30 place names on a broad rotating bezel



1938
For the man with interests far and wide, this REF. 1064 HU in yellow gold, made by Louis Cottier, includes a revolving 24-hour disk and shows 33 locations on the case



1939
Thought to be the only platinum version of the reference, this record-breaking REF. 1415 HU has a 24-hour rotating disk and 40 place names on a rotating bezel



1940
A specially commissioned one-of-a-kind piece, this REF. 1415-1 HU yellow gold chronograph with a pulsometric scale, which shows 33 locations on the bezel, inspired the first World Time chronograph in the current collection, the REF. 5930 launched in 2016



1945
An ornate cloisonné enamel dial showing Neptune riding a sea horse sits neatly within a rotating bezel indicating 42 place names on this yellow gold REF. 605 HU



1948
Atop the rose gold case of this REF. 1415 HU model are 41 place names on a rotating bezel. The cloisonné enamel dial shows the Eastern Hemisphere



1954
The REF. 2523 HU was the first World Time watch with two crowns: the crown at 9 o'clock sets the local time via a rotating disk that shows 41 locations. This model in yellow gold is decorated with a cloisonné enamel map of North America and has a 24-hour am/pm revolving disk



1954
This yellow gold REF. 2523-1 HU watch features an engine-turned dial at its center. One revolving disk indicates day and night; another shows 41 place names, which represent the 24 time zones

This is the modern world

Amid the frenetic whirl of twenty-first century life, these sleek pieces from the World Time collection make sure that wherever you are on the planet, the time is right



2000
The modern era of World Time watches was ushered in with the 37 mm diameter REF. 5110, shown here in platinum. A newly patented time-zone mechanism was incorporated into the 240 self-winding movement



2006
With an increased case size of 39.5 mm and the ring-shaped hour hand of earlier models, the self-winding REF. 5130 is considered by some aficionados to be the most elegant World Time. This rose gold version has a silver-white sunburst guilloché dial



2008
Made in yellow gold, the REF. 5131 was the first "new generation" World Time model to feature the much sought-after cloisonné enamel map at the center of its dial. This model shows a map of Europe and the Americas



2011
Set with 62 diamonds, the slender 36 mm diameter REF. 7130, in white or rose gold, was the first ladies' World Time watch and is shown here in white gold with a hand-guilloché ivory-opaline dial



2012
Made in white or rose gold, the updated 39.5 mm REF. 5130/1 is the first World Time model with a metal bracelet: the rose gold version, shown here, features a chocolate guilloché sunburst dial



2014
Created to celebrate Patek Philippe's 175th anniversary, and made in a limited edition of 20, this white gold REF. 5131 has a cloisonné enamel image of Lake Geneva on the dial



2014
Presented on crystal glass on a rotating disk, the moon-phase display is the central feature of this white gold World Time Moon REF. 5575 watch, made in a limited edition of 1,300 for the company's 175th anniversary



2016
The latest World Time model, the 38.5 mm diameter REF. 5230 in rose gold, features a new Calatrava-style case with wingle-style lugs and a narrow, smoothly polished bezel, a design inspired by the 1950s' REF. 2523 models



2016
A basket-weave motif is hand-guilloché at the center of the white gold REF. 5230's dial, while the pierced hour hand and contoured minute hand complete the new look

UTC -11 time zone, a portion of the Pacific containing almost no other land above sea level.

And we could go on, from dial to dial, on a splendid voyage through time and space, without even leaving our chair. Hence the fascination that universal time continues to exercise. But since the 1930s and the advent of widely available commercial air travel, that same voyage has become a reality, and the extraordinary mechanism has followed the trend, developing into a globetrotter's watch.

The basic principle remains unchanged, with the city names circling the periphery of the dial above an inner 24-hour ring that turns counterclockwise. That was the stroke of genius: the ring's movement simultaneously coordinates the times in all the time zones, while the hands indicate the time in the place whose name is displayed at 12 o'clock, which is considered local time. Louis Cottier went further. In 1953 he introduced a second crown, enabling the city disk to be adjusted, and paving the way to more developments with Patek Philippe. In 1958 the manufacture patented a system where the hour hand could be moved without affecting the steady progression of the minute hand. Other refinements followed, always aiming to increase ease of use for the traveler. A patent filed in 1999 ensured a triumphant entry into the third millennium. As from the year 2000, a single pushpiece performs all three functions, simultaneously adjusting the city disk, the 24-hour ring, and the hour hand.

This year, in endowing the World Time watch with a chronograph, the challenge was to prove that the new model need not be bulky, and to retain perfect legibility.

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The movement is less than eight millimeters in height. To achieve that result, working with the slim, dependable 28-520 self-winding movement, the designers had to find the space needed for the World Time components, which require something more than a single plate. The axis of the 30-minute counter had to be shifted; it is now positioned at six o'clock. There is no need for an additional seconds hand, as the chronograph hand can be used as a permanently running seconds hand, too.

On the dial side, all becomes clear. To give the city disk the diameter needed for truly comfortable reading, the designers reduced the seconds scale and placed it around the 24-hour ring. Less legible perhaps? Not a bit of it. The solution, or stroke of genius, was choosing to display fourths of a second, not the usual fifths. All the better as the movement vibrates at a classic frequency of four hertz. Purists appreciate this relation between pulsation and display. And design aficionados from all corners of the globe are said to be over the moon. ♦

Translated by Barbara Caffin
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Legibility is key: the new REF. 5930 sports a blue hand-guilloché dial with white gold index markers encircled by a 24-hour ring, chronograph scale, and city disk. The challenge of integrating a World Time mechanism with a self-winding flyback chronograph movement was made more complex by the need to retain a slim profile. The resulting caliber CH 28-520 HU movement can be seen through the caseback. Made in white gold, this 39.5 mm model has the same case design as the new REF. 5230 (shown on opposite page)