

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S

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TOP WATCH PARADE

AT CHRISTIE'S GENEVA ON MAY 14



IMPORTANT WATCHES

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

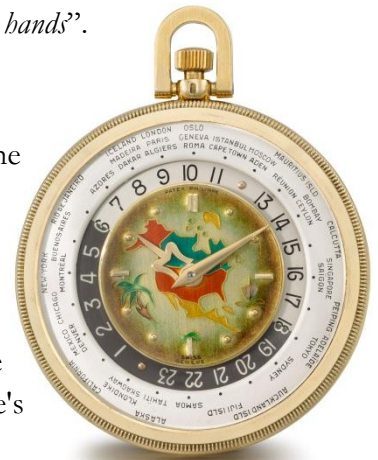
Monday 14 May, at 9am & 2pm

Geneva - Christie's presents a feast of 414 lots, including the finest antique, vintage and modern watches and wristwatches ever made, to be offered at the Geneva auction on 14 May. Estimated in excess of SFr. 16 million in total, the sale features some of the most exciting rediscoveries, rarities and masterpieces. Amongst the star lots of the sale is an incredibly rare gold two crown world time wristwatch with 24 hour indication and cloisonné enamel dial depicting the map of North America, reference 2523, manufactured by Patek Philippe in 1955 (estimate: SFr.1,600,000-2,600,000; *illustrated left*).

Aurel Bacs, International Head of Christie's Watch Department: *"Certain watches are of such rarity and importance that they seldom, if ever, appear on the market, and when they do it is a feast for any watch collector. This is the case of the two 1950s Patek Philippe gold watches decorated with enamelled maps of North America, references 2523 and 605. Both these pieces constitute a perfect synthesis of the renowned watchmakers' cleverly engineered world time mechanism and their most ingenious designs add the rarest flamboyant artistic enamel dials. They indeed express the 'Zeitgeist' of the Post-War 'baby boomer' years, when America was the driving engine of the planet development and economy. In addition to these two masterpieces, Christie's sales will feature many more top watches, such as the stunning Patek Philippe pink gold perpetual calendar chronograph wristwatch with moon phases, reference 2499, and the rare Rolex stainless steel triple calendar wristwatch with moon phases, reference 8171. As rare as a pink diamond or a Picasso painting from the 'pink period', this is one of the only four known examples of this model, and belongs to the elite of the elite of top vintage wristwatches still in private hands".*

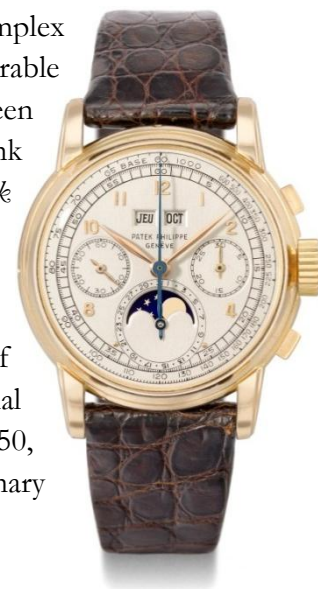
PATEK PHILIPPE 'WORLD TIME' WATCHES

Few wristwatches epitomize the perfect symbiosis between aesthetic design and the finest horological art as much as Patek Philippe's two crown world time wristwatches. Last seen on the market in 1989, when it was chosen to illustrate the catalogue cover of *The Art of Patek Philippe* (the legendary thematic auction held in Geneva to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Patek Philippe), the exceptionally rare 1955 gold two crown world time wristwatch with 24 hour indication and cloisonné enamel dial depicting the map of North America, ref. 2523, will highlight Christie's Geneva auction sale of Important Watches (*illustrated top left*).



Due to the high production costs involved, only a very limited number of this complex timepiece ever left the Patek Philippe factory in the 1950s, and only three other comparable examples have come to the market since the beginning of this century. It has been calculated that only twelve of these survivors were cased in yellow gold, two in pink gold and the only example in white gold is currently exhibited at the prestigious *Patek Philippe Museum* in Geneva.

Few connoisseurs know that Patek Philippe continued to produce pocket-watches with such a world time mechanism after WWII. Equally as rare as their siblings made for the wrist, they are undoubtedly amongst the most beautiful horological treasures of post-war production. The gold openface world time watch with cloisonné enamel dial depicting a map of the Americas, reference 605, is one of those. Manufactured in 1950, this example has only had three owners since new, and is offered in extraordinary condition (estimate: SFr.200,000-400,000; *illustrated on the previous page, below right*).



‘LA VIE EN ROSE’ OF PATEK PHILIPPE

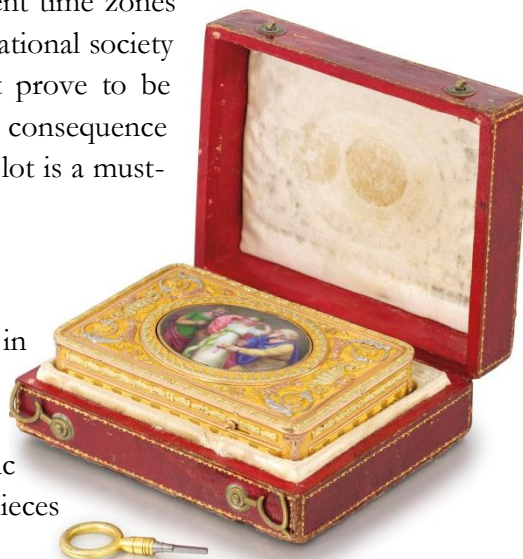


Certain Patek Philippe wristwatches are so rare that in whatever version or condition they come to the market they can be considered as events by themselves. When an ultra-rare rose gold version (corresponding to only some 10% of the entire production) appears it is a sensation. When a pink gold example of the reference 2499 comes to the market in totally original and unrestored condition, and sourced directly from the original owner’s family – it is the opportunity of a lifetime for any collector. This reference 2499 first series in rose gold was never listed, mentioned in literature nor offered at a public auction before and is sold directly from the family of its original owner (estimate: SFr.1,200,000-1,800,000, *illustrated top right*). Reference 2499 is acknowledged as one of the world's ultimate watch models ever created and has greatly influenced the designs of many of the most renowned watchmakers. Introduced to the market in 1950, it replaced the legendary reference 1518, the world's first perpetual calendar wristwatch with chronograph ever made. Over a period of 35 years, reference 2499 was made in four series in a total production of only 349 pieces, the majority cased in yellow gold.

Of similar rarity and beauty is the very desirable pink gold dual time zone wristwatch with additional independently adjustable jumping hour hand, reference 2597, manufactured by Patek Philippe in 1961 (estimate: SFr.350,000-550,000; *illustrated left*). Created in order to show different time zones at the same time, this model is the witness of an era when the international society started travelling across the continents. However the idea did not prove to be popular at the time and the production was promptly dismissed. As a consequence there are very few existing examples from this series and the current lot is a must-have in a top watch collection.

19TH WATCHES AND AUTOMATONS

Probably the most demanding clients in the history of watchmaking, in terms of design and function as well as quality and finishes, were the members of the Chinese Imperial court. Collectors, specialists, and museum curators continue to be amazed by the beauty, artistic intricacy, mechanical and aesthetical elements that characterize the pieces created for those Chinese connoisseurs.



Offering a spectacular combination of lavishly decorated case and highly complex movement, the multi-coloured gold and enamel musical singing bird box by Frères Rochat and Joly & Chenevard is the perfect example of a decorative object possibly made for a Chinese dignitary (estimate: SFr.100,000-150,000; *illustrated on the previous page, below right*). Painted in the style of Jean-François-Victor Dupont, the enamel scene depicts a story from the Book of the Apocrypha, set in Babylon and involving two elders appointed as judges who become enamoured with the beautiful and pious Susanna, wife of the wealthy Joakim. Since it was purchased at Christie's Geneva's *European Silver and Objects of Vertu* auction in 1986, this singing bird box has remained in the same private collection and will be offered with its fitted presentation box.



THE ROLEX STAR LOTS



Holding the world record in the field of Rolex timepieces, Christie's watch department is proud to have been entrusted with the sale of what appears to be the most beautiful and exclusive selection of watches by Rolex to come to the market this season.

The highlight of this section is an extremely rare and large stainless steel triple calendar wristwatch with moon phases, reference 8171, *circa 1955 (illustrated above right)*. This legendary reference in steel is a model regularly available on the international market, however the present lot is famous for being one of the most valuable, best preserved and original example to have survived (estimated: SFr.200,000-300,000).

Equally rare is the Rolex reference 6098, which features the most exclusive dial variant ever seen on such a model, with star indexes mounted on a black enamel dial. This example is coming to the market for the first time from a distinguished private collection, it is unpublished and offered in perfect condition (estimate: SFr.100,000-150,000; *illustrated left*).

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Christie's sale of *Important Watches* will also feature a number of other extraordinary vintage wristwatches. Among the best examples is a very rare white gold minute repeating wristwatch, reference 6448, manufactured by Vacheron Constantin in 1961 (estimate: SFr.150,000-250,000; *illustrated right*). Minute repeating mechanisms are the rarest function one can find in vintage wristwatches and there are only a handful of manufacturers that have ever dared to attempt their production. Made throughout the 1920s to the 1960s their shapes have evolved over time, but scholars are not aware of any other minute repetition wristwatches cased in white gold of such a large scale as the example on offer at Christie's (36 mm.). In fact the combination of masculine yet elegant case proportion, the ultra-rare white gold case and its impeccable condition make this wristwatch one of the most beautiful minute repeater watches ever created by any manufacturer.





Audemars Piguet chronographs are distinguished by their unique designs. Compared to their peers from other renowned Geneva watchmakers from the same period, they add a playful touch to their perfectly masculine proportions. Among them, examples in pink gold are extremely rare: we have actually never seen or handled before an example of a chronograph wristwatch in pink gold created by Audemars Piguet. Manufactured in 1941 and kept in incredible condition, it is estimated at SFr.40,000-60,000 (*illustrated left*).

RICHARD MILLE FOR CHARITY

THE UNIQUE RM33 SENTEBALE WRISTWATCH, No. 01/01

Christie's international watch department has always been particularly keen to support charitable institutions and this season will make no exception. We are honored that Richard Mille has chosen Christie's to offer for sale the unique red gold RM 033 automatic caliber No. 01/01, ref. RM033 AJ RG/000, especially made in 2012 to benefit Sentebale, the charitable institution founded by Prince Harry and by Prince Seeiso of the Lesotho Royal Family in response to the plight of Lesothos neediest children, and Tusk Trust, a 20 year old organization which funds conservation and community development programs across Africa under the patronage of the Duke of Cambridge (*illustrated below; see attached document for additional information*).

CHRISTIE'S

Important Watches

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues - 33 quai des Bergues, Geneva

Auction:

Monday 14 May 2012, at 9am & 2pm

Viewings in Geneva:

Friday 11 May, 10am-6pm
Saturday 12 May, 10am-7pm
Sunday 13 May, 10am-6pm

International Tour:

Christie's New York

20 Rockefeller Plaza
14-15 April, 10am-6pm
16 April 10am-2pm

Beijing

Great Hall, 2nd floor of Hotel, The St. Regis Building, 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie
21-22 April, 10am-6pm

Shanghai

The Peninsula, No. 32, The Bund, 32 Zhongshan Dong Yi Road
24-25 April, 10am-6pm

Christie's Hong Kong

22nd Floor, Alexandra House, 18 Chater Road, Central
27 April, 10am-6pm
28 April, 10am-5.30pm



About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year. Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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Images available on request

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