

CHRISTIE'S

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Christie's Geneva to offer in its upcoming auction of Important Watches
THREE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT PATEK PHILIPPE WRISTWATCHES
to have remained in private hands
Including
THE LEGENDARY REFERENCE 2499/100 IN PLATINUM
FROM THE COLLECTION OF ERIC CLAPTON

IMPORTANT WATCHES

including

A Gentleman's Pursuit for Excellence, Part I

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

12 November 2012

Geneva – Featuring some 310 lots, Christie's Geneva auction of important watches on November 12 is estimated to realise a total of more than SFr.15 million (US\$16 million). The top lot of the sale is an **ultra-rare platinum perpetual calendar chronograph reference 2499/100, from the collection of Eric Clapton** (estimate: SFr.2,500,000-4,000,000 / illustrated right). Two other extraordinary and historically important platinum Patek Philippe masterpieces will be offered. These include a unique platinum wristwatch, ref. 2458, specially made in 1952 for the legendary collector J.B. Champion (estimate: SFr.2,000,000-4,000,000), and the superb platinum chronograph wristwatch, ref. 1579, manufactured in 1946 (estimate: SFr.1,000,000-1,500,000) (both illustrated on the following page). Furthermore the sale will feature one of the finest private collections of antique enamelled watches made for the Chinese market - previously unrecorded and unpublished in literature. Christie's is also particularly honoured to present *A Gentleman's Pursuit for Excellence, Part I*, a phenomenal single-owner collection featuring more than twenty complicated Patek Philippe wrist and pocket watches, to be offered in Geneva at various sales in 2012 and 2013.



Aurel Bacs, International Head of Christie's Watch Department: "Over the past thirty years a combined total of over two million collector's watches have changed hands via the international salerooms, leading the worldwide community of scholars, collectors, specialists, museum curators and dealers to form, in an official / unofficial way, a list of the ten most significant wristwatches, in their opinion. To make it onto this 'all-star list' a wristwatch has to stand out by its historical importance, mechanical complexity, unmatched beauty, original condition, incredible rarity and superior provenance. This autumn we are proud to offer for sale examples which deserve to be placed on that list. These include three extraordinary Patek Philippe platinum wristwatches: the world famous 'J.B. Champion' special order platinum observatory wristwatch, the platinum chronograph wristwatch reference 1579, one of three platinum examples ever made, and the highly important platinum perpetual calendar chronograph reference 2499/100 from the collection of Eric Clapton."

THE PATEK PHILIPPE PLATINUM TRIO

All Patek Philippe, all hyper-rare platinum examples, all of impeccable provenance, the three top lots from Christie's Geneva auction of important watches are to be considered to rank amongst the top ten list of platinum Patek Philippe wristwatches to have remained in private hands.

THE REFERENCE 2499/100P – FROM THE COLLECTION OF ERIC CLAPTON

'Spectacular' is the only word to describe the only reference 2499 cased in platinum by Patek Philippe available to a connoisseur collector (estimate: SFr.2,500,000-4,000,000; illustrated on the previous page). This legendary model displays the most perfect combination of design, functions, mechanical complexity and case proportions. Launched in 1951, reference 2499 was in production for nearly 35 years, during which a total of 349 watches were made. The only two examples ever cased in platinum were most likely never intended for sale. In fact, one of them highlights the wristwatch section of the celebrated Patek Philippe museum in Geneva. The first and last time the other platinum 2499 watch was offered for sale was in 1989 when the firm, celebrating its 150th anniversary, consigned it to the historical "The Art of Patek Philippe" auction, held in Geneva on April 9, 1989. Acquired at the above auction, by one of Europe's most prominent collectors in the field of vintage Patek Philippe wristwatches, it only changed hands once more before being acquired by Eric Clapton. As a consequence, this masterpiece of horology becomes available at auction this year for the first time since its original sale nearly a quarter century ago.

BUILT TO WIN – The 'J.B. Champion Platinum Observatory Chronometer'

Patek Philippe cased only two 30mm. competition chronometer movements which were built to compete in the prestigious Geneva Observatory Precision Contest. Fitted with a superb Guillaume balance, movement No. 861121 meets all the requirements imposed by the observatory rules, boasting absolutely unique features. Created for research purposes, similar movements do not become available for sale, yet it comes as no surprise that the ever demanding J. B. Champion, a successful American lawyer and probably Patek Philippe's most privileged client of the post-war years, commissioned a wristwatch chronometer fitted with such an Observatory movement. A case was designed and built to meet Mr. Champion's exclusive taste as he opted for the most precious of all materials, platinum. Visually, the most evident difference between Mr. Champion's platinum ref. 2458 and examples of the same model of the regular production is the dial design which was completed with the signature "MADE ESPECIALLY FOR J. B. CHAMPION" at the 6 o'clock position. Presented in superbly crisp and overall original condition, the 'J.B. Champion Platinum Observatory

Chronometer' is offered at auction for the first time ever (estimate: SFr. SFr.2,000,000-4,000,000; illustrated right).



ONE OUT OF THREE – REFERENCE 1579

Reference 1579 takes a unique position in Patek Philippe's production of vintage chronograph wristwatches as it is not only one of the largest models, with a diameter of 36 mm., but it is also the only example with the rare faceted lugs. Launched in 1943, the model was predominantly available in yellow and pink gold, with few examples cased in stainless steel. The reference 1579 offered here for sale featuring a platinum case is without a doubt the version with the most evident gravitas. In fact, only three examples cased in this noble metal are known to exist today, interestingly bearing consecutive case numbers. Few 1940s designs radiate so much masculinity yet flamboyance and elegance, and even fewer examples preserved in such good condition can offer so much quality to a discerning collector as the present "spider lug" reference 1579 (estimate SFr.1,000,000-1,500,000; illustrated left).

THE ART OF ENAMEL AT PATEK PHILIPPE



Not only will collectors of Patek Philippe watches be fascinated by the complexity of the mechanism but by the rarity, beauty and craftsmanship of enamel watches which had, and still have today, a prominent role in the production of the celebrated Geneva manufacture. In the 1940s and early 1950s Patek Philippe produced highly detailed and incredibly artistic cloisonné dials to fit either pocket watches, “time only wristwatches” - such as the pink gold reference 1595 with polychrome cloisonné enamel dial depicting a Tahiti forest (estimate: SFr.70,000-100,000; illustrated above left), and “world time wristwatches” - such as the exceedingly rare, only one of four, yellow gold reference 1415 HU with cloisonné enamel dial depicting the Eastern hemisphere (estimate: SFr.700,000-1,200,000; illustrated above right). Later in the 1960s, Patek Philippe re-launched the production of watches with enamel miniatures; one of the most popular enamel miniatures painters is Mrs. Susannah Rohr who was entrusted with the creation of only three pocket watches a year. In her hands, the secret alchemy of the cultured enamels offers a second life, of unequalled depth and finesse, as we can admire in the example offered within the sale with enamel miniature after Jean-Philippe George-Julliard and manufactured in 1981 (estimate: SFr.70,000-100,000; illustrated above centre).

AN EXCEPTIONAL COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE WATCHES MADE FOR THE CHINESE MARKET

Christie's is delighted to present a sensational collection of antique watches, comprising the different styles made for the export to China such as matching pairs, gold and enamelled watches as well as silver gilt and other enamel examples. The

majority of the pieces for sale have been acquired by the present owner and her late husband during their repeated journeys to the Orient between the late 1950s and the 1970s. Together they made a comprehensive selection of timepieces manufactured between the early and the mid-19th century by the most celebrated watchmakers of the time, specialized in this particular domain. Of particular interest to collectors is a pair of duplex watches distinguished by the mirror-inverted enamel motifs and the remarkably rare element of identical numbers, signed Vaucher, Fleurier, *circa* 1830 (estimate: SFr.80,000-120,000; illustrated bottom left). A superb quarter repeating watch by Piguet et Meylan is decorated by an outstanding enamel scene attributed to Lissignol, *circa* 1820 (estimate: SFr.80,000-120,000; illustrated above right).



A GENTLEMAN'S PURSUIT FOR EXCELLENCE, PART I

A RENOWNED COLLECTION OF COMPLICATED PATEK PHILIPPE WATCHES



Christie's is honored to present *A Gentleman's Pursuit For Excellence, Part I*, a superb private collection of more than twenty complicated Patek Philippe wristwatches and pocket watches, ranging from vintage classics to modern production, to be offered at various auctions in Geneva starting from November 12.

The wristwatch section incorporates the complete history of complicated wristwatches and matches the highest level of condition, authenticity, provenance and history. The following typologies and functions are represented: chronographs, including single-button and split-seconds, perpetual calendars, including perpetual calendars with chronographs and further functions, minute repeaters, world time and travel time. The pocket watch selection features the most prominent representatives made after the 1930's and the four parameters set for the wristwatches were also applicable. Among the highlights from *A Gentleman's Pursuit For Excellence, Part I* is a very rare white gold perpetual calendar wristwatch with moon phases, ref. 3448, manufactured by Patek Philippe in 1974 (estimate: SFr.220,000-320,000; illustrated left).

VINTAGE ROLEX

A special section of the Christie's Geneva sale features a number of extraordinary vintage Rolex wristwatches, including a superb yellow gold reference 6265, one of the first Cosmograph Daytona with screw back chronograph buttons introduced to the market in the early 1970s, in close to mint condition and still retaining the original sticker on the back (estimate: SFr.60,000-80,000; illustrated right).

Another highlight from this section is a very rare 1955 Rolex Milgauss, ref. 6543 (estimate: SFr.40,000-60,000; illustrated left).

Designed in the early 1950s by Rolex for specialized personnel such

as scientists,

engineers,

electricians,

technical chemists

and physicists who constantly work in high magnetic fields which effected the regularity of their watches, reference 6543 is the earliest and rarest of the three Milgauss references (ref. 6543, 6541, 1019) ever produced.



IMPORTANT WATCHES

including

A Gentleman's Pursuit for Excellence, Part I

CHRISTIE'S

Auction:

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

12 November 2012

Viewings in Geneva:

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

Friday, November 9 10am - 6pm

Saturday, November 10 10am - 6pm

Sunday, November 11 10am - 6pm

International Tour:

Christie's New York

20 Rockefeller Plaza

Saturday, October 13 10am - 6pm

Sunday, October 14 10am - 6pm

Monday, October 15 10am - 2pm

Christie's Hong Kong

22nd Floor Alexandra House, 18 Chater Road, Central, Hong Kong

Friday, October 19 10am - 6pm

Saturday, October 20 10am - 6pm

Monday, October 22 10am - 5.30pm

Christie's Shanghai

The Peninsula, No. 32, The Bund, 32 Zhongshan Dong Yi Road, Shanghai 200002

Wednesday, October 24 10am - 6pm

Thursday, October 25 10am - 6pm

Christie's Beijing

St. Regis Hotel, Great Hall, 2/F, 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Beijing 100020

Saturday, October 27 10am - 6pm

Sunday, October 28 10am - 6pm

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2012 that totaled £2.2 billion/\$3.5 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 £413.4 million/ \$661.5 million in the first half of 2012, an increase of 53% 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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