

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S GENEVA AUCTION OF IMPORTANT WATCHES PRESENTS

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IMPORTANT WATCHES

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva
09 November 2015

Geneva – Featuring over 366 lots, Christie's Geneva auction of Important Watches on 9 November is estimated between 11M CHF and 18M CHF. The sale is highlights by some of the most important discoveries made in the watch world this year, with several watches coming fresh to this market.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SEASON



The Patek Philippe reference 2497 is a new and significant discovery with imperial provenance. The present timepiece unquestionably belongs to this category of stellar wristwatches. Indeed, this 2497 is the one and only known example of this reference bearing a previously never seen military-style black dial with luminous Arabic numerals and luminous Alfa hands, all these features absolutely unrestored and in original condition. Furthermore, as mentioned before, this timepiece features one of the most distinguished provenances ever seen in an auction room. Gifted to His Majesty during Selassie's official visit to Switzerland in 1954. The watch features the Emperor's crest ornately engraved on the case back. The watch was in possession of the Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia for several years, whose full title was "By the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, King of Kings of Ethiopia, Elect of God" before the Emperor himself presented the timepiece as a gift. The descendent of the recipient of such a remarkable present are now disclosing it to the world and offering it for sale for the first time. This previously-unknown Patek Philippe reference 2497 – "The Emperor Selassie" – is one of the most exciting watch discoveries to date (estimate: SFr. 500,000-1,000,000, *illustrated left*).



The auction will also feature an exceptionally rare 18K pink gold perpetual calendar chronograph wristwatch with moon phases signed Patek Philippe, reference 1518, and manufactured in 1950, which has never been seen before on the market (estimate: SFr.350,000-700,000; *illustrated left*). It was sold on 23 July 1952 and kept in the same family throughout the past 63 years. Consigned by the family of the French original owner, this timepiece is a superb and exciting discovery. Not only is the calendar in French, but it correctly bears the French import marks (the owl) to the inside of case back and the hallmark JG, which stands for Jean Guillermin, prominent French Patek Philippe retailer of the time. Encompassing 5 models starting from 1941 to the present time, it is difficult to find a Patek Philippe watch more representative of the elegance and technical perfection achieved by the firm. Patek Philippe itself regards these models as the true custodians of their heritage, as testified by the fact that the overall design of these pieces, especially of the dial, remained basically unchanged. The earliest Patek Philippe perpetual calendar chronograph wristwatch serially produced (and, as a matter of fact, the first perpetual chronograph wristwatch serially produced by any manufacturer, ever), reference 1518 is also the rarest. In production from 1941 to 1954, the total output is a meager 281 pieces. It is known in yellow and pink gold, as well few examples in steel. Its scarcity frustrated dozens of clients, as it was reserved for the most prominent Patek Philippe patrons such as Henry Graves Jr, the King of Jordan and the King of Egypt. Less than a quarter of the overall production was made in pink gold, making this watch one out of approximately 70 ever produced.

NEVER BEFORE AT AUCTION



Further highlights include Audemars Piguet's perpetual calendar chronograph, reference 5503, which was produced in 1942 and sold in 1945 to Roehrich, Audemars Piguet's distributor in the US at the time. Offered for the first time in public, the present reference 5503 is unquestionably one of Audemars Piguet's most attractive and also rarest full calendar chronograph wristwatches known to exist to date. With a for the period comparatively large size of 36 mm., it exemplifies the perfect combination of mechanical complexity and visually attractive design. In excellent condition, the superb two-tone silvered dial with blue tachymeter scale calibrated for miles has never been cosmetically enhanced and displays a great shine, further enhancing the incredible appeal of this extraordinary watch. Freshness to the market, outstanding original and crisp condition and the extreme rarity render this trophy a must have for the collector of elite 20th century timepieces. Reference 5503, according to the Archives of Audemars Piguet, was produced in an extremely small series of only five examples, all in 1942 and sold between 1945 and 1959. Reference 5503 is believed to be the fourth example of this ultra-rare chronograph to appear in public to date – two are in Audemars Piguet's Heritage Collection, another was sold at Christie's on 12 May 2008 and in private hands, which leaves one to be discovered (estimate: SFr. 80,000-120,000, *illustrated above right*).

THE ROYAL PROVENANCE



Christie's is honored to present an exceptionally fine example of one of Breguet's timepieces made for the Ottoman market, distinguished by an impressive number of rare details, the provenance certainly one of the most important feature.

Although described as "Montre a Répétition Turque" in the records of Breguet, it was apparently sold by his Saint Petersburg branch to Tsar Alexander I on 31 December 1810. Putting into context the political situation at the time, it becomes evident that the watch was not destined for the Tsar, who himself was a faithful and important client of Breguet, but meant as means to end the Russo-Turkish War raging since 1806. In any case regrettable for Alexander I Sultan Ahmud II was well aware of the imminent conflict between Russia and France and was desirous to win the war, thus annihilating Alexander's hope for peace. At this point the watch was no longer needed and was eventually returned to Breguet by General Lewascheff, the adjutant of Alexander I, who took in exchange watch no. 3260. Watch no. 1795 was serviced, the dial was exchanged, and it was sold under new number 4384 on 7 February 1825 to Mr. Villaret de Joyeuse (estimate: SFr.240,000-450,000; *illustrated left*).

ROLEX PAUL NEWMAN MYSTERY CROSS

The present Rolex Paul Newman Mystery Cross, reference 6265, manufactured circa 1971 boasts one of the most rare and appreciated versions ever produced: the so-called "Panda" dial. The Panda dial is characterized by a dichromatic colour scheme: the only colours present on this dial are white and black, indeed like the Asian bear it is named after. The simplicity of the black and white colour scheme coupled with the design complexity of the dial results in a supremely elegant watch, combining masculine, sporty and elegant traits. The present timepiece, however, not only bears the rare Paul Newman dial - furthermore preserved in stunning condition - but it also features on its case back one of the greatest unsolved mystery in the world of vintage watches. Its case back is engraved with an unusual motif: a Swiss (apparently) cross inscribed in what appears to be a marine rope. Such an engraving is well known to the Rolex collectors' community. It appeared on a handful of timepieces from this time. It is agreed that it is an original Rolex engraving, and that these timepieces were specifically ordered with this engraving to the case back. Indeed, the case number is stamped to the inside of the case back, a feature reserved to special order timepieces. The meaning of this engraving, and the original buyer of the series, are however shrouded in mystery, and indeed this engraving is known among collectors as "Mystery Cross" (estimate: SFr. 120,000-220,000, *illustrated right*).



THE EXPLORER'S ROLEX



A special section of the Christie's Geneva sale features a number of extraordinary Rolex timepieces, including reference 114060, a unique and important stainless steel automatic wristwatch with sweep centre seconds, and engraved case back worn by explorer Mike Horn (b. 1966) during his ascent of Mount Makalu in Nepal/Tibet on 17 May 2014 (estimate: SFr.20,000 – 40,000, *illustrated left*). With Rolex Garantie Internationale in the name of Mike Horn stamped by Swiss retailer Yves Jacot S.A. and dated 4 February 2014, the watch was delivered with a carved wooden box with secret slide which was made and presented to Mr. Horn by the Nepalese Sherpas. Rolex timepieces have been the watches of choice for individuals who push the limit of what is considered

achievable, and who need an accurate, reliable and resistant wristwatch onto which their lives depend, most times quite literally. The fact that a Rolex watch has been chosen by Horn, who is undisputedly considered the most successful explorer of contemporary times, underlines how true to their spirit and heritage the company remains until nowadays. The proceeds of this sale will help Mr. Horn to fund his next challenge.

IMPORTANT WATCHES

Auction:

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva
9 November 2015

Viewings in Geneva:

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

Friday November 6	10am -6pm
Saturday November 7	10am - 7pm
Sunday November 8	10am - 4pm
Monday, November 9	10am - 6pm

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