



On September 27, 72 competing watches will be exhibited at the Hotel Imperial, Delhi

Who's the grandest of them all?

The Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève, the Oscars of the watchmaking world, will be held in Switzerland this October. But even if you haven't scored an invitation, you're still in luck. Many of the competing watches will be on display this month in Delhi, says **Varun Godinho**

Come October 31, the majestic Grand Théâtre de Genève will host the 14th edition of the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève. By the end of the evening, 14 watches will have been awarded top prizes in categories including the best Chronograph, Tourbillon, Calendar and Artistic Craft, among others. But don't expect the usual suspects – the high-profile Swiss haute horologists with opulent showings at BaselWorld and SIHH –



to be sure-shot winners. In fact, last year, little-known watchmakers like Habring² and Ressence won top honours. Habring² is a husband-wife duo who run their own Austrian watchmaking unit, while Ressence is just six years old. "The GPHG is one of the best ways for watch collectors to understand up-and-coming brands. →

JURY DUTY



John Mayer

Mayer has a massive stash of vintage Patek Philippe, Rolex and IWC watches



Nick Foulkes

This British historian and author also writes about style and watches for *GQ*

↘
FOUR AVANT-GARDE PARTICIPATING WATCHES YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF (BUT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT)

ArtyA Broken Glass

This wristwatch, shaped like the head of a guitar, is one of ArtyA's saner models. Others include ones made from dinosaur feces, human blood and butterfly wings. The brand's founder Yvan Arpa is the former CEO of Romain Jerome. That explains a lot.



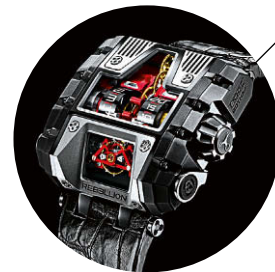
Sarpaneva Kosmos

Finnish watchmaker Stepan Sarpaneva makes only 35 watches a year. If you send yours to be serviced, chances are Stepan himself would take a crack at it. This Kosmos continues the watchmaker's eerie fascination with the moonphase complication.



Rebellion Timepieces T-1000 Gotham

This badass watch from the six-year-old independent Swiss brand is definitely more Bane than Batman. Part of the T-1000 collection – all its watches have a power reserve of 1,000 hours – it's built like a tank.



Konstantin Chaykin Carpe Diem

This Russian haute horologist uses zero Swiss-made parts in its watches. On this dial sits Kronos, the mythological Greek Titan. The minutes are represented in the lower half of the hourglass, which flips over at the end of each hour.



Consider the fact that FP Journe, MB&F and Laurent Ferrier were all early winners of the GPHG. It's a fantastic way to add some weight behind the youngest and most creative minds in watches that might not get the credit they deserve on a commercial level," says Benjamin Clymer, founder of popular watch blog Hodinkee.com and a two-time jurist.

At the GPHG, pedigree doesn't count for much and neither does the tag of being "made in Switzerland" – Finnish, German and Russian watchmakers, among others, will be participating this year. Over 250 watches from more than 40 brands will be evaluated and judged by a 24-member panel of watch enthusiasts, independent of marketing budgets and starry brand ambassadors.

The multi-national jury are a motley crew, with the majority from outside the watchmaking industry. "We've appointed a deliberate mix, including designers, architects, historians, collectors and bloggers, all of whom come from diverse backgrounds. The aim is to judge a watch not only in terms of its technicality but also to look at it as an end product, like a consumer would," explains Aurel Bacs, President of the jury appointed by the Fondation Du Grand Prix d'Horlogerie De Genève, the committee that organizes the awards.

But before we get to that big night in October, you can get in on the action in India. A travelling exhibition of some of the participating watches will stop in Delhi at the Hotel Imperial on September 27. "We've flown down 72 timepieces, six from each of the 12 categories," said Anu Saboo, Head of Marketing at Ethos Watches, which has partnered with the Foundation to bring the exhibition to India.

To whet your appetite, we've rounded up some of the star attractions at this year's GPHG. ☞

Fantastic five

Stellar timepieces from this year's line-up

Bulgari Ammiraglio Del Tempo

This is the only minute repeater in the world without a pusher or slide to activate the chiming mechanism. That's because Bvlgari has worked the actuator into the lower left lug of the timepiece. Pull it away from the strap to set into motion those glorious Westminster chimes.

STRIKING

Omega Dark Side of the Moon

From the manufacturer of the first and only watch that's made it to the moon (to the side that was lit) 45 years ago comes this blacked-out COSC-certified sporty chronograph.

CHRONOGRAPH

Harry Winston Project Z8

The Z stands for Zallium, which has been used to construct its case. This is the material found inside the combustion chamber of a rocket, that can withstand temperatures up to 3,100 degrees Celsius. #JustInCase

MEN'S

TOURBILLON


Jaquet Droz Perpetual Calendar Eclipse Ivory Enamel

It's everything you'd want in a calendar watch: At a single glance you can tell the phase of the moon, day of the week, date of the month, month of the year, whether it is a leap year - and the time. By far one of the most elegantly designed timepieces entered into the competition.

CALENDAR

TAG Heuer Mikropendulum Tourbillon

Conventional wisdom will tell you magnets are the archenemy of mechanical timepieces. Unlearn that. In TAG's double tourbillon watch, one mechanical tourbillon regulates the timekeeping function, while the magnetic one controls the chronograph.

BENJAMIN CLYMER
On his role as a GPHG jurist

I think it's our duty as jurists to treat each watch as if there were no name on the dial – basing our decisions purely on product design, concept and execution and not on what a brand may have done in the past. We care little about brands, and all about individual products. We simply call out the best, irrespective of advertising budgets or ambassadors. I started Hodinkee to make high-end watchmaking as accessible to real people as the 65-year-old millionaire collector and the watch industry. We use the same model to generate interest in the GPHG.