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SOTHEBY'S GENEVA NEW "DAY SALE" OF IMPORTANT WATCHES  
ON 15 MAY 2012 TO CELEBRATE

## *The Founding Fathers and Great Inventions of Modern Horology*



On 15 May 2012, Sotheby's Geneva will inaugurate its new "Day sales" of Important Watches, with a morning and an afternoon session starting at 9am and 2pm respectively. Independent watchmakers, from Breguet to George Daniels, are at the core of Sotheby's international watch sales this year and the May sale will pay tribute to the founding fathers of modern horology, while also celebrating inventions that revolutionised watchmaking, such as the tourbillon. Covering five centuries of watch history, the 388 lots, estimated in excess of CHF 10 million/\$10.9 million comprise iconic pieces from each pivotal era, from a 1540 French table clock (lot 208) to an exceptional grande complication pocket watch Reference 959 by Patek Philippe (illustrated above). The antique pocket watches and the Rolex sections are also highlighted by illustrious provenance, with many timepieces that belonged to great names of the European aristocracy and Rolex models owned by the acclaimed British author, Graham Greene and Ibn Saud, the first King of Saudi Arabia.

Commenting on the sale, **Geoffroy Ader, Head of Sotheby's European Watch Department**, said: *"In a truly globalised watch auction market, our new "Day sales", sitting astride several time zones, will facilitate the participation of collectors from around the world. The May sale has been put together to share with them our knowledge and passion, as well as to pay homage to genius watchmakers. With that view, we are extremely pleased to be able to exhibit in Geneva the lots of the sale alongside highlights of George Daniels' personal collection (to be auctioned in London on 6 November). The most important horologist of the 20th Century, George Daniels represents a link between Masters of the past and contemporary independent watchmakers"*.

## BREGUET

At the core of the May auction will be a section entirely dedicated to the celebrated French watch and clockmaker, Breguet - an absolute reference in the world of horology for the past two centuries. Comprised of 45 timepieces dating from 1785 to 1997, this section reflects the constant search for innovation and the distinguished style that has characterised Breguet's production since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Watchmaker to the European monarchs as well as the scientific, military, financial and diplomatic elites of his time, Abraham-Louis Breguet (1747-1823) designed exceptional timepieces for prestigious clients including King Louis XVI, Queen Marie-Antoinette, Napoléon, the Tsar Alexander I and Caroline Murat, Queen of Naples, for who he famously conceived the world's first wristwatch in 1810.



Testament to Breguet's prestige and reputation among the elite of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the auction will present a large selection of antique clocks and pocket watches, most of them with important provenance. Leading this group are two carriage clocks described in the Breguet archives as **"Pendules à Almanach"**. The first, a **large gilt brass grande et petite sonnerie, quarter repeating carriage clock (No. 3145)** was delivered in 1825 for 6,000 francs, an astronomical price at the time, reflecting the outstanding quality of this piece (lot 365, est. CHF 350,000-450,000/ \$385,000-495,000, illustrated above). One of the largest models of travelling clocks made by the watchmaker, it is identical to a clock sold the Queen of Spain in 1831.

The second, an **exceptionally small gilt brass quarter repeating carriage clock (No. 2497)** was sold in 1810 to Prince Camillio Borghese Aldobrandini (1775-1832), a descendant of the illustrious Florentine family and the second husband of Napoléon's sister, Pauline Bonaparte (lot 364, est. CHF 250,000-350,000/ \$275,000-385,000, illustrated p.2).



Known as the “Watchmaker of Kings and the king of the watchmakers”, Breguet received pocket watch commissions from numerous members of the European aristocracy and wealthy classes. Prestigious names represented in the sale include Baron Hottinguer (1764-1841) (lots 345, 350), George William Campbell, 6th Duke of Argyll (1768-1839) (lot 348), the British diplomat and politician Lord Clanwilliam (lot 351), Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein (1760-1836) (lot 357), the Russian Prince André de Galitzine (Lot 363) and the Hungarian Count Batthyany who bought a **very fine yellow gold souscription à tact watch (No. 3561)** in 1821 (lot 354, est. CHF 60,000-80,000/ \$66,000-88,000, illustrated left).

A piece of supreme horological art revealing Breguet's unique ability to incorporate innovations is to be found in a highly complicated 18 carat pink gold minute repeating keyless lever watch, with a Brassus calibre gilt movement by Louis Audemars. Sold in 1908, the **“Louis Audemars Grande Complication” (No. 3700)** carries an estimate of CHF 150,000-250,000 /\$165,000-275,000 (lot 366, illustrated right).



The Breguet section also comprises modern watches, including an **extremely rare pink gold minute repeating perpetual calendar tourbillon wristwatch dating from circa 1997 (ref. 3857)** appearing for the first time at auction. Featuring Breguet's classic aesthetic, it is part of a limited edition of three pieces produced to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Abraham-Louis Breguet's birth (lot 388, est. CHF 200,000-300,000/ \$220,000-330,000, illustrated left).

## HOURIET & HIS DISCIPLES

The May sale will pay tribute to another horological genius: Jacques-Frédéric Houriet (1743-1830). “Father of Swiss Chronometry”, Houriet spent most of his career producing watches for eminent horologists of his time,



including his close friend Abraham-Louis Breguet and Ferdinand Berthoud. The sale will comprise examples of the very few watches signed by Houriet, including a **yellow gold, enamel and pearl-set centre second watch made for the Chinese market circa 1820** (lot 336, est. CHF 30,000-50,000/ \$33,000-55,000, illustrated left).

Houriet's considerable influence on the work of his students and their successors is illustrated by watches signed by Urban Jürgensen, Sylvain Mairat and Frédéric Louis Favre-Bulle. **Favre-Bulle** (1770-1849) is represented by an **exceptional and rare yellow gold tourbillon with thermometer dating from circa 1820**. Almost identical to a piece made by Houriet, the present watch is a very good example of the best pocket chronometers ever produced in Switzerland (lot 343, est. CHF 250,000-350,000 / \$275,000-385,000, illustrated right).



## THE TOURBILLON



A section of the sale will be dedicated to an invention that revolutionised modern horology: the tourbillon, developed by Abraham-Louis Breguet in 1795 to nullify the effects of gravity in pocket watches and increase their precision. The evolution of the tourbillon over the past two centuries is illustrated in the catalogue by rare timepieces, including an **18 carat yellow gold open-faced keyless chronometer watch made in 1882 by the London horologist, S. Smith & Son** (lot 179, est. CHF 15,000-25,000/ \$16,500-27,500). This watch is equipped with what is almost certainly the first of the "No. 239" series of Karrusel with a detent chronometer escapement, a device patented in 1893 by the Danish watchmaker Bahne Bonniksen to augment the robustness and accuracy of the tourbillon regulator.

In the early 1920s, the German horologist Alfred Helwig invented what is now commonly known as the flying tourbillon. In 1931, together with his student Woldemar Fleck, he produced a **silver open-faced keyless pocket chronometer with flying tourbillon** which will be offered for sale with an estimate of CHF 150,000-200,000 (\$165,000-220,000) (lot 186, illustrated above).

A further highlight of this section is a **rare Patek Philippe Reference 5101 "Tourbillon" dating from 2005**. Paying tribute to the firm's legendary Art Deco designs, this platinum rectangular wristwatch boasts a combination of two rare



complications, the tourbillon and a 10-day power reserve (lot 187, est. CHF 200,000-250,000/ \$220,000-275,000, illustrated p.4).

## PATEK PHILIPPE

Patek Philippe is celebrated for its highly complicated watches, combining a timing function with a large number of indications. The top lot of the sale is a **unique keyless 18 carat yellow gold grand complication pocket watch ref. 959** with petite and grande sonnerie, minute repeating, perpetual calendar, moon phases, split seconds chronograph and 24 hour indication. Dating from 1992, this exquisite piece is one of the few examples of grand complication pocket watches produced by the company in the early 1990s. (lot 141, CHF 500,000-800,000/ \$550,000-880,000, illustrated right and p.1).



The Patek Philippe section will also feature **the Reference 3979HP Beyer**, an extremely rare platinum automatic minute repeating wristwatch dating from 1995. The reference 3979, now discontinued, was the first automatic minute repeating wristwatch produced by Patek Philippe. Only three models in platinum are known on the market and the present one is the only which has been retailed by Beyer, the oldest watch retailer in Switzerland (lot 118, est. 500,000-700,000/ \$550,000-770,000, illustrated left).

Patek Philippe's extraordinary craftsmanship will also be represented by a group of superb antique and vintage pieces. Among them is **the Reference 1436 "Sena Ltd Singapore"**, a 18 carat yellow gold chronograph dating from 1959 and which is one of the rare examples of Reference 1436 retailed by an Asian agent of the brand. Manufactured between 1938 and 1971, this reference was the first split second chronograph wristwatch produced in series by the company (lot 252, est. CHF 300,000-400,000/\$330,000-440,000, illustrated right).



## ROLEX



Rolex features strongly in the sale. Leading this group is **the exceptional Reference 6062 “Star Dial”**. Dating from *circa* 1950, this rare 18 carat pink gold triple calendar wristwatch with moon phases is said to have belonged to the late Ibn Saud, the founder of the modern state of Saudi Arabia and the country’s first King. One of the most beautiful examples of the legendary reference 6062 of which only few models were made, the present watch is fitted with the highly sought after “Star Dial” or “Stelline Dial” and preserved in its original condition (lot 307, est. CHF 200,000-300,000/ \$220,000-330,000, illustrated left).

In addition to a wide array of Daytona vintage models covering different references and dial combinations, this section will present **a rare Rolex Submariner Reference 6538 “Tropical”**. Made *circa* 1958 and featuring a Tropical dial, this stainless steel automatic centre seconds wristwatch is an attractive version of the famous reference 6538, also known as the “Big Crown James Bond” (lot 260, est. CHF 60,000-80,000/ \$66,000-88,000, illustrated right).



Another undoubted highlight of this section is **a Rolex reference 18038 Day-Date** that belonged to the acclaimed British writer **Graham Greene** (lot 294, est. CHF 6,000-8,000/ \$6,600-8,800, illustrated left). Dating from 1981 and coming from the Estate of Yvonne Cloetta who shared his life from 1959 until his death in Vevey, Switzerland in 1991, this 18 carat yellow gold automatic centre seconds wristwatch with day and date is engraved with the inscription “*To an English brother of General Torrijos from General Paredes, Panama, 1983*” at the case back. In 1976, Greene, aged 72, was invited to visit Panama by the then ruler General Omar Torrijos Herrar. Within the next seven years, he was to travel four other times to Panama, forging an unusual and enduring friendship with Torrijos and the head of the military at the time, General Ruben Paredes from who he most certainly received this watch. Greene’s close relationships with the heads of the Panama regime inspired him a fascinating book, *Getting to the Know the General: The Story of an Involvement*, published in 1984.



## ANTIQUÉ POCKET WATCHES

Recent sales have been marked by a considerable interest from international collectors in historic timepieces and most notably antique pocket watches. At the heart of this section are rare timepieces from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries coming from the collection of Adolphe Chapiro, the famous watch historian. Among them is a **very fine yellow gold oignon watch made circa 1695 by Isaac Thuret**, clockmaker to Louis XIV (lot 224, est. CHF15,000-25,000/ \$16,500-27,500, illustrated right). The French royal emblem on the watch's bow is most probably the crest of Philippe d'Orléans (1624-1723) who served as regent of the Kingdom of France until Louis XV reached the age of majority.



The subject of an ever-increasing demand on the international auction market, enamel pocket watches made for the Chinese, Ottoman and Indian markets are also largely represented. At the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Swiss watchmakers, goldsmiths, engravers and enamellers worked together to create pieces of extraordinary craftsmanship for the lucrative Chinese market, as shown in **an 18 carat yellow gold, enamel and pearl-set centre seconds watch dating from circa 1820** (lot 226, est. CHF 80,000-120,000/ \$88,000-132,000, illustrated left). This exceptional watch is the result of the work of three leading craftsmen: Bovet, an eminent Swiss watchmaker, Jean-Louis Richter, one of the best enamel painters in Geneva and Ilbery, the main retailer of Chinese watches at the time.

Another undeniable highlight of this group is a **luxurious 18 carat yellow gold and enamel hunting case minute repeating clock watch made in 1890 for the Indian market and signed F. White & Co., Bombay** (lot 269, est. CHF 60,000-80,000/ \$66,000-88,000, illustrated right). Typical of the "Rajah watches" which were made in Geneva for Indian high dignitaries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, both sides of the watch case are decorated with enamel portraits. Featuring the Maharaja Thakore saheb Dajiraj of Wadhwan and his younger brother His Highness Thakore saheb Basingh Chandrasingh, these portraits are signed by John Graff (1836-1902), one of the few and most esteemed Geneva enamel portraitists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.





Complementing this historical panorama are **rare pocket watches with automata** (lots 151,178) and a **yellow gold open-faced watch with a concealed portrait of King Charles IV of Spain made circa 1790** by the French watchmaker François-Louis Godon (1755-1800) - the official clockmaker to “his Catholic Majesty” (lot 256, est. CHF 20,000-30,000/ \$22,000-33,000, illustrated left).

French historical and cultural patrimony is illustrated by a **silver hunting cased verge watch with “French revolutionary time”** (dividing the day into ten decimal hours) made in Geneva in 1795 by J.J. Pattay (lot 161, est. CHF 6,000-8,000/ \$6,600-8,800, illustrated right) and a **yellow gold open-faced keyless lever chronograph watch by A.H. Rodanet that Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923), the famous architect of the eponymous Parisian tower and the Statue of Liberty, offered to his grandson in 1909** (lot 191, est. CHF 6,000-8,000/ \$6,600-8,800, illustrated below).



## AUCTION DETAILS

### Sale:

Hôtel Beau-Rivage, Genève  
13 Quai du Mont-Blanc  
Tuesday 15 May 2012, Session 1 at 9am (lots 1-252),  
Session 2 at 2pm (lots 253-388)

### Public Exhibition:

Hôtel Beau-Rivage, Genève  
11-13 mai, 10am-6pm  
Private views on 14 May, 10am-6pm

*Highlights of George Daniels' Personal Collection of Clocks and Watches (to be auction on 6 November 2012) will be exhibited alongside the sale's lots.*

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\* Pre-sale estimates do not include buyer's premium

Vente dirigée par le Ministère de Maîtres Claude Naville et Marco Breitenmoser, Huissiers Judiciaires.