or four decades, Mr. Patrick Getreide collected wristwatches in relative secrecy, even from most of his closest friends. A childhood fascination with mechanical timepieces sprouted into a purchasing obsession when the ambitious collector first started to earn the kind of money needed to acquire his wrist-worn dreams. Every occasion worth celebrating in Getreide’s life earned him a new wristwatch. In fact, his first fine watch purchase (a style of Cartier Tank that was en vogue at the time) was with money he won from betting on a horse race. His collection of pieces (at least what has been disclosed) now spans at least several hundred watches that he has purchased at retail, from auctions, and through a network of trusted confidants who have enabled his acquisitions through a clandestine web of sources. The resulting watch collection was a mostly private hobby until recently. Then, “the collector” decided it was time to debut his passion to the world. The result was the OAK Collection, and it begins its march around the world with a 10-day exhibition at the Design Museum in London in late May, 2022.

The OAK Collection is meant to stand for “one of a kind,” and the idea is that the pieces represented in it are either unique or so exceptionally rare as to have an identity all their own. These watches represent some of the more mainstream, crowd-pleasing items in Mr. Getreide’s collection, not to mention some of the most valuable. His favorite brand, Patek Philippe, is also heavily emphasized in the collection, as are some of the world’s loveliest steel-cased Rolex sports watches and historic complications. In all, the OAK Collection exhibition is a careful selection of 168 watches taken from the larger body of Getreide’s horological assets. It comes complete with an audio tour and a wealth of information about the watches themselves. It’s an absolute delight to see as a member of the watch intelligentsia because these are all considered museum-grade, truly historic timepieces that celebrate the zenith of 20th-century personal mechanical timekeeping, as well as the intent passions of a single, highly-dedicated enthusiast who crawled as deep as probably anyone ever has down the rabbit hole of vintage Patek Philippe collecting. To put things in further perspective, experts who are widely familiar with the matter of today’s major spenders on watches consider Patrick Getreide’s collection to be in the top five or even top three in the world. While calculating a precise dollar value would be tricky, few would disagree that the OAK Collection’s current 168 pieces together would be worth anything less than 300 or 400 million dollars.

That introduction alone is probably enough to get even the most casual of watch-interested consumers to visit the OAK Collection if the opportunity arose for them. To experience, in public and for free, this assembly of truly remarkable works of mechanical and design art is a rare and awesome thing to behold. It also comes with a lot of questions and curiosity because exhibitions like this haven’t really happened before. Most people who see the OAK Collection might benefit from a bit of a primer on why Patrick Getreide wanted to embark on sharing his collection and what he personally hopes the average visitor will take away from it.

The fashionable question to ask during the opening of the OAK Collection was, “Does he intend to sell many of these watches afterwards for profit?” It is a brash prediction, but my industry colleagues are correct to ask economic questions related to why someone would both invest in creating an exhibition of this nature, and then also fly in a bunch of industry opinion leaders to experience it. A smart business person might use such an opportunity to inflate the popularity of an object they own, only to later sell that item at market for what would probably be a higher price given greater awareness. In theory, this argument might be correct. Dig deeper, however, and you see that, in reality, the likelihood of Mr. Getreide organizing the OAK Collection as a scheme to further inflate the value of the world’s most collectible watches is unlikely. This is because any gains potentially realized in temporary wristwatch value increase would be offset by the cost of the exhibition itself. More so, Patrick Getreide has made it perfectly clear that he has spent fortunes many times over on watches out of passion and as a hobby — not as a vehicle to earn money or store value. The network of collectors like him who have the disposable income to spend yacht money on a single old wristwatch is relatively small (albeit highly competitive). If the purpose of the OAK Collection was to alert more ultra-wealthy timepiece aficionados that such treasures exist, it would be in folly since the majority of the displayed watches are famous enough in said social and collecting circles. So, we return to the important question: What does Patrick Getreide intend to accomplish with his OAK Collection of watches?

While visiting the OAK Collection, I got to spend time with Patrick Getreide and some of his family. He credits the genesis of making his collecting public to his son, Roland, who adores his father but admittedly doesn’t share the same passion for watches. Getreide is comfortable with this fact and makes it clear he will not lose any sleep thinking that his children might sell his collection after he departs. This is probably because Patrick Getreide knows his watches, and ones like them, should be owned by people who love them and will take care of them. Patrick is quite proud of the fact that he personally wears all of his watches, and he shudders at the thought of a collection like his being locked away in a safe and hidden from view. If his family after him does not share his passion for these priceless wearables, then it is better that they be tendered to someone who does.

And yet there is, perhaps, a third or middle option to this interesting dilemma of what to do with a posthumous wristwatch collection. Why not do with watches what many so far have done with art? Why not admit the collection to a glorious afterlife as a museum exhibit for future generations to learn something from (or to just be wowed by)? There might not be very many people who have the problem of how to convey a priceless object collection after their passing, but it is a very real dilemma for history’s men and women who have had the good fortune, taste, and tenacity to put together something like a collection of hundreds of the world’s most celebrated collectible timepieces. How will future generations perceive the work? Will people appreciate the objects like the original owner will? Will the personality and character of the original collector somehow maintain with the body of watches or will the individual pieces in the collection become more famous than the original curator?

Each of these questions has been asked and answered throughout history as people with authentic legacies to pass on use their capabilities and power to create substance behind their accomplishments. Following the footsteps of many of his likely heroes, Patrick Getreide continues a long tradition of creating academic meaning behind the chaos which is a passionate person’s purchasing behavior.

Getreide seems to particularly relish doing things people tell him cannot be done. The OAK Collection concept is in part a reaction to the fact that no one has done it before. Watch collectors today often groan about the fact that the general public doesn’t always see what they do in beautiful timepieces. The answer of course is to educate the general public so that their “watch culture” is a bit more closely matched to that of a serious connoisseur. Exhibitions like the OAK Collection serve the important purpose of injecting wristwatches into today’s culture, helping a more general audience to participate in the once esoteric talk of timepiece enthusiasm.

What members of the public should not receive as a take-away message from the OAK Collection is what watches to purchase themselves or where the boundaries of good taste begin and end. If you saw the larger assortment of all the watches owned by Patrick Getreide, they would simply represent the frenetic consumption of one specific character. Each of us has a different character with different tastes and experiences in life that we want watches to help us remember. Getreide is very vocal about the fact that his watches represent his own taste and character. The curated selection of watches that make up the OAK Collection is just one attempt to create structure and some organization to what is a truly prolific set of watches. He just happens to like (and be able to afford) watches so remarkable that they have set records or are particularly important to the last 100 years of mechanical watch history. Anyone inspired to collect watches after viewing the OAK Collection is advised to follow their own hearts and taste. Not to mention the fact that pretty much everything displayed in the OAK Collection is otherwise impossible to get.

What advice does Getreide have for other collectors? As the OAK Collection is not a rubric for how to collect but rather an incredible example of one man’s journey as a well-funded watch hobbyist, what is there to learn for those seeking to build up a collection of their own? When Mr. Getreide purchases a serious watch (probably much like he purchases anything else serious) he evaluates three criteria in this particular order; quality, rarity, and provenance.

To be even considered as something to purchase a watch or item must have a requisite level of quality and standing. The veteran collector cannot be bothered with anything that isn’t on par with the high standards an accomplished aficionado no doubt naturally develops. Quality is both a subjective and objective standard depending on how you look at it. The key is that each person sets standards for themselves as to what qualities they value in a watch. Mr. Getreide would say that you should first get to know and identify the qualities you personally value most in appreciating watches, and then after that apply the discipline to stay in your lane and only pursue the watches with the qualities you are searching for. Doing so is also a good way to narrow down your choices.

Inevitably, the world presents you with many items of high quality when you start to know what to look for. The seasoned collector knows that even the largest budget is not sufficient to purchase everything they like that is of high quality. Thus, the second criterion of rarity is then applied to help further reduce those items which a collector considers for acquisition. High-quality, rare items are compelling because collectors rarely need to fear that someone else in the room might also have one. Being able to assert an increased sense of individuality is among the more important values expressed by the most accomplished collectors. Rarity, and ideally absolute uniqueness, is incredibly valued for Getreide and collectors like him because it allows them to feel a more complete sense of ownership of a theme.

Unfortunately, there are still so many high-quality, rare items in the world that these two criteria alone are not enough to help refine nuanced acquisitions to a collection of timepieces. The third criterion is the most important and least tangible, something Getreide calls “provenance.” The implication is that the origin of a watch has a large impact on its value. This is often manifested by investigating who produced a watch or who owned it. In reality, the concept of provenance is simply a measure of the subjective emotional value of the story behind a watch. This value can come from who produced it, why it was produced, what it was made of, how it was designed, who owned it, what they did while wearing it, or how culture has interpreted the popularity of an aesthetic. The value of provenance, just like taste, is inherently personal. It can be interesting to learn what stories appeal to someone else, while at the same moment identifying that those stories mean nothing to us personally.

That said, provenance is the driving before behind why people collect. The people who collect watches almost always assign specific, personal meaning to each individual watch. Memories, ideas, people, experiences, and hopes can be injected into a physical object — a practice commonly done with wristwatches. Getreide, like many other watch collectors, really just wants more people to be excited about watches like he is. If there were one simple reason why the OAK Collection exists, it is because one very determined man decided that more people would get pleasure out of getting to know his hobby a little bit better. There is no better way to do it than merely showing everyone what personally gets you so very excited. This exact vein of logic and emotion is what inspired me to create aBlogtoWatch, and it is a common thread amongst watch lovers that in their own way they seek to evangelize the hobby.

From an academic standpoint, the OAK Collection represents some of the most important timepieces from the last 100 years. Studying them and their nuances is a surefire way to kickstart a serious education in the watch collecting hobby. For this reason alone, Getreide’s watches belong in a museum for people to admire and study. To the watch industry, the OAK Collection is a blessing. Patek Philippe and Rolex alone are the beneficiaries of truly priceless good will. It begs the question whether we are soon embarking on a new era in the watch industry where major trends and events are shaped not by corporate interests but by mega collectors.

I encourage you to read the reports by my colleagues that go into more detail about some of the more specific watches in the OAK Collection. I wanted to discuss the nature of the exhibition, the special man behind it, and what the entire exercise in passion should mean to the overall watch industry. The intention for the OAK Collection is that it travel from location to location. Next on the agenda is New York City. If the OAK Collection of watches comes to a place near you, then please try to experience this truly unparalleled opportunity to see watches that aren’t just famous for their value, but truly emblematic of beauty in their respective space. The companion to reading this article is my SUPERLATIVE Podcast interview with Patrick Getreide who was very generous with his time. That episode should come out in a few weeks. Let us know what you think about the OAK Collection or any particular watches display in it via the comments below.

The first thing I can say about these square-cased Big Bang watches is that they don’t actually look too much like a Cartier Santos when you see them in the flesh. When the aBlogtoWatch team first saw images, we thought, “Cool, Hublot designed a Santos Bang.” Indeed, there are some design similarities between the two popular timepiece collections, from the shape of the bezel to lugs. But the Big Bang part of the personality entirely overshadows the Santos part of the personality when you view these watches in person. I think the message Hublot was going for was an expression that the Big Bang is more than just a case shape. Rather, the Big Bang is a brand DNA concept that can be rendered in a round, tonneau, or square case, which are all things Hublot has done. In square form, the Big Bang is simply another flavor of the same delicacy that is the Big Bang collection, which started back in 2004. Hublot and brands like it have a duty to assert the timelessness of their most popular models. Offering these “icons” in various colors, materials, styles, and shapes is a solid and time-honored way to assert the important of their particular products.

That’s exactly the point of the Square Bang, and it’s actually really satisfying on the wrist. The 43mm-wide case is 14.5mm-thick, which sounds rather big until you put it on. Hublot has big watches but also puts in big effort into ergonomics. I really can’t remember the last time I wore a large Hublot and thought to myself that it was anything but really comfortable to wear given how the strap and lugs are designed. Hublot, of course, includes all the features that you’d expect from a modern Big Bang, including the easy strap release system and the modular case concept that comes in a variety of forms. Accordingly, the debut collection of Hublot Square Bang watches includes versions that have a mixture of case materials, including titanium, black ceramic, and 18k King (red) gold. Also very important is that the Square Bang is water resistant to 100 meters, which is a feat that is somewhat challenging with square-cased watches.

What Hublot was likely hoping for in the design of the Square Bang is the emotional reaction of, “Has the Big Bang always been square?” This is one sign of a good watch design — when you see something novel that looks as though it has always been there. There is no guttural reaction of sheer novelty from the watch. Rather, you put on the Square Bang and it feels like something that has been part of the collection all along, just in a different form. In fact, the Square Bang is so much like the Big Bang, but I want Hublot to branch off in a new direction when it comes to dial design as the Square Bang continues to develop. The case is excellent — now I want to see a dial design language that is something Hublot could never really do with a round design. I feel that this is a good idea to experiment with as the Square and round Big Bang are otherwise actually pretty similar in poise and emotion (which is exactly what Hublot was going for this round).

We will see exactly what happens since product sales performance is going to be the biggest measure of how much Hublot wants to continue extending the Square Bang collection. If the Square Bang is a success, then more variations will no doubt come. If not, then Hublot will say that this was just an experimental limited edition (all of the first five versions are produced as a limited edition) and then release interesting and sometimes quirky Square Bang watches as it does with the Spirit of Big Bang models (the name of Hublot’s tonneau-shaped Big Bang models).

Square watches are much harder to get right than round watches. For that reason, the watch market has far fewer square (versus round) popular timepieces. Hublot has never really made a mark with a square-shaped watch, and the Square Bang does that well. So, in some regards, this is Hublot simply flexing its design skills and ability to compete with other brands in this space. Consumers win because there are those people who just really like square watches. I have a few (such as the Santos) and can easily say that the boldness of wearing an angular watch case is real. Perhaps not for everyday, but it is a fun and visually interesting alternative to round watches. Hublot’s strategy may very well be to offer Big Bang fans a new way to enjoy something they already like but in a manner that offers more than just new colors or materials.

Inside the Square Bang watches is Hublot’s round-shaped in-house UNICO family of automatic chronograph movements. The 354-part mechanisms operate at 4Hz with 72 hours of power reserve and feature the time, date, and, in this instance, 60-minute column-wheel-controlled chronograph. You can view the movement through the rear of the case, and the dial is a typical open-work of viewing the movement while hour markers and indexes are placed on the periphery. As I said above, I think this is where Hublot could do the most with a new square case in terms of making it look distinctive from the standard Big Bang. My hope is that if the Square Bang watch has a long future, Hublot will experiment with on-brand ways of offering a square dial design that is distinct from the rest of the collection.

Now that we are a week out of Watches & Wonders, I’ve finally had the chance to slow down and take a more clearheaded inventory of which brands released what. Going through everything in my mind, it’s honestly hard to have knocks against Cartier this year. Without make too much of a fuss, [Cartier](https://www.ablogtowatch.com/watch-brands/cartier/) posted a host of excellent releases like the new lacquered Santos-Dumonts, the Coussin collection, a pair of stunning Tank Louis watches, and, of course, that Masse Mystérieuse with the entire movement housed within the rotor. For me, though, it was the two [new Privé Tank Chinoise](https://www.ablogtowatch.com/first-look-cartier-prive-collection-renews-the-tank-chinoise-with-rectangular-dial-skeleton-movement/) models that stood out above all others.

The Tank Chinoise has always been something of an outlier for the brand, especially in contemporary times. The first Tank Chinoise dates back to exactly a century ago in 1922 — though, these days, I can’t think of the last time a new version was released. (I just looked into this and — wow — it’s been eighteen years since a new Tank Chinoise was released, back in 2004). For those unfamiliar with the history of the Chinoise, it was actually traditionally done in a square case until this year, when the whole collection went rectangular. It’s a design decision that definitely makes sense, especially when one considers that it’s basically in Modern Cartier Design 101 that “Tank=Rectangle” and “Santos=Square.” Still, it would have been cool to just have one in the original square case, but I’m really not hung up on this.

Of course, it’s not the case shape but rather the brancards that characterize the Tank Chinoise. Those parallel stylized bars running across the top and bottom of the case were inspired by Chinese and East Asian temple porticos (though these jutting covered entryways are ubiquitous in many architectural styles throughout world history). As with just about everything having to do with design, the aesthetic is a matter of taste. If you couldn’t tell, I love the two horizontal brancards, always have. They give the case additional flare but in a very substantive, almost stabilizing way that also serves as a partial frame that avoids boxing the dial in by having “open” sides.

Now, onto the watches at hand. First off, keep in mind these are Privé pieces, which means they are designed to pay tribute to iconic Cartier pieces from the past. It also means they are very limited in production and significantly pricier than standard production Cartier watches. There are two models of the new Tank Chinoise, each with a couple of sub-variants. Obviously, the models with open-worked dials and skeletonized movements grabbed me immediately. These pieces go all-in with the dial design inspired by traditional Chinese window designs that, while a bit on-the-nose, are executed incredibly well. The open-worked dials are finished with black and red lacquer on the yellow gold model (which has matching black lacquer done on the brancards) and blue and red on the platinum model (two versions of this one with either polished platinum brancards or diamond-set).

Though the differences in case size between these open-worked Tank Chinoise and the trio of more traditional pieces isn’t huge, there are differences. The open-worked cases measure 39.5mm-tall, 29.2mm-wide, and 7.7mm-thick. Looking from the caseback, you can see the new manufacture 9627 MC manual-wind movement that was specially developed for this watch. A gold echo of the lacquered pattern on the front of the dial, this is Cartier at its best and a true object of desire for people like myself. Manually wound, the 9627 MC operates at 21,600 vph and has a 38-hour power reserve.

In what felt like a blast to the past, the watch industry found itself flocking to the window display of the [Rolex](https://www.ablogtowatch.com/watch-brands/rolex/)booth on opening day of the biggest trade show in years. The big release from the crown this year was undoubtedly the [left-handed GMT-Master II](https://www.ablogtowatch.com/first-look-rolex-debuts-gmt-master-ii-with-left-hand-crown-and-green-black-bezel/) with a new green and black bezel. Met with a mixed yet generally positive response to the actual product, the underlying feeling of “another great watch nobody will be able to get” has taken hold so strongly that I worry the cynicism may eclipse the, you know, fun of this entire hobby. With a cool new green/black bezel and a truly unexpected layout, here’s a hands-on look at the new Rolex GMT-Master II Ref. 126720 VTNR ‘Destro’ debuted at Watches & Wonders 2022.

Rolex made a couple (literally something like two or three pieces) lefty GMTs way back in the day, but other than little sibling [Tudor’s Pelagos LHD](https://www.ablogtowatch.com/tudor-pelagos-lhd-m25610tnl-0001-watch-review/), this is new territory. Watch nerds will refer to a watch worn on the right wrist by lefties as a “destro,” by the way, so if that phrasing is unfamiliar to you, I’m sure you’ll have seen the word dozens of times by the end of this week. Simply put, this is really just another GMT-Master II, albeit one with the crown on the left side of the case, which makes for an initially disorienting though otherwise handsome and classic watch.

The other big talking point is going to be that new green and black bezel, obviously. Rolex uses the same color of green on half of the ceramic bezel here as you see on the Submariner “Cermit” which is done in full green. I suppose the early nickname for this is the “Sprite,” which doesn’t really make much sense to me since there’s no black to be found anywhere on a can or bottle of Sprite. Green and yellow or green and blue would make for a hell of a GMT “Sprite,” though. I’m a little over the try-hard nicknames, anyway.

Other than the crown layout and bezel color scheme, we are looking at a standard GMT-Master II. A 40mm-wide steel case with 100m of water resistance, it is outfitted with the Calibre 3285, which was introduced back in 2018 and has a 70-hour power reserve.

There is one thing I keep coming back to that I just cannot make up my mind about. The reconfiguration of the movement here, unlike with the Tudor, means that the cyclops date window shifts to that side, as well. It just wouldn’t work or make sense on the right side of the case in any way. I know and recognize this fact but really can’t make up my mind on what I think of it. I suppose this is actually just a product for lefties (not me), and it doesn’t really matter what I think because the product wasn’t intended for me.

A somewhat quirky (for Rolex, at least) and definitely unexpected release, the GMT-Master II Ref. 126720 VTNR is certainly going to be the most talked about Rolex coming out of Watches & Wonders 2022. I won’t speculate on availability/waitlist times or egregiously greedy flipping prices, but I suspect they will not be any more favorable than the standard GMT-Master II watches out there. It will be available on either Oyster or Jubliee bracelet, priced at ***$10,050*** and ***$10,250***, respectively. You can learn more at [rolex.com](https://www.rolex.com/).

The Cartier Masse Mystérieuse’s 43.5mm 950 platinum case takes a classical, dressy approach in images, with a fully polished finish, simple straight lugs, and an elegantly featureless smooth bezel. Cartier gives this minimal presentation a touch of character with its traditional crown, topped with a brilliantly polished ruby cabochon. Overall, however, Cartier keeps things simple for the case and allows its mystery dial concept to take center stage.

Strictly speaking, very little of what is visible underneath the Cartier Masse Mystérieuse’s sapphire crystal is a dial. The platinum outer chapter ring continues the traditional design sensibilities of the case but showcases an impressive range of finishing in images, including raised polished Roman numerals, heavily grained sunburst finishing for the hours ring, and a razor-sharp transition to radial brushing for the beveled chemin-de-fer minutes scale. It’s a design that feels at once both luxuriously modern and eminently familiar to fans of the Cartier brand and remains minimal enough in images not to detract from the main event – the sapphire disk spanning most of the overall dial area. This disk is the core of the mystery dial concept, allowing a full view of the Masse Mystérieuse’s one-of-a-kind movement design while acting as a crucial part of the gear train by connecting the movement to the crown via a hidden set of gears inside the outer hours ring. The slim polished Roman sword hands are pure classic Cartier as well, creating a refined and minimal look that allows the movement’s intricacy to shine through unimpeded.

Cartier claims the in-house 9801 MC automatic movement inside the Masse Mystérieuse is the product of eight years of design and development, and the end result is undeniably dramatic. The entirety of the movement — the gear train, mainspring, escapement, bridges, and all else except for the few hidden gears connected to the crown — is encased within its own skeleton winding rotor, meaning the whole movement rotates on a central axis. Although this undoubtedly creates a conversation-starting spectacle as the wearer turns their wrist and the entire movement repositions itself, it also creates several unique engineering challenges. In order to ensure that the hands do not spin out of position when the movement rotates, Cartier has created a unique limited-slip differential system, not unlike that in a modern performance car. The 9801 MC’s solution to the issue of the spinning movement affecting the accuracy of the balance wheel is arguably even more complex, as the movement rotates at an irregular speed in both directions to ensure the balance wheel always maintains the same vertical position. From an aesthetic standpoint, the 9801 MC offers a cleanly futuristic look, with intricate web-like skeleton bridges finished with radial brushing and anglage above radially brushed wheels and a frosted matte mainplate. Despite its wild appearance, the 9801 MC offers firmly middle-of-the-road performance, with a 42-hour power reserve at a 28,800 bph beat rate. Cartier finishes the Masse Mystérieuse with a handsome alligator leather strap in charcoal gray.