

EXTRAORDINARY CHESS PLAYERS ALSO HAVE EXTRAORDINARY TASTES IN LUXURY WATCHES

WHO IS INTO ROLEX?

IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC, CHESS PLAYERS ARE OFTEN SEEN AS ASCETICS WHO ARE SO DEEPLY ENGROSSED IN THE 64 SQUARES THAT THEY DO NOT PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THE EVERYDAY PLEASURES OF LIFE. BUT IS THIS MOSTLY THE CASE? THE ACM FELT DUTY BOUND TO CARRY OUT A LITTLE RESEARCH...

by OYVIND VON DOREN ASBJORNSEN

First and foremost, we were curious to learn who in the chess community are wearing Rolex watches. And to our surprise we discovered that extraordinary chess players also have extraordinary tastes in luxury items, which go beyond merely being an iconic symbol of a successful life.

Our expert in this field is Oyvind Von Doren, who is not only an avid chess player and enthusiast but a manufacturer of one of today's most fashionable watch brands: "Von Doren Timepieces". In fact Oyvind's company is currently sponsoring the world junior champion, fellow Norwegian, GM Aryan Tari. He also directed and produced *The Prince of Chess* (2005) about Magnus Carlsen and was Executive Producer and Photographer on the Tribeca nominated feature film *Magnus* (2016). It says much for Oyvind's own fascination with chess that one of his exclusive designs is dedicated to the royal game – many of whose elite grandmasters he knows personally...

? Themed watches are often designed for those engaged in nautical or aerial pursuits, due to their practical application in these fields as well as the obvious marketing opportunities. Could chess, with all its mystery, become a significant zone of influence where different brands will one day compete against each other?

I am an avid amateur player and have had a great interest in chess from my childhood, I was inspired both as a former filmmaker and a spectator to create a customized no-nonsense watch for chess players. There are a lot of watches around with many complicated features like chronograph and even split-second flyback chronograph, alarm repeaters and equation of time, just to mention a few. But here we believe in a

clean elegant design displaying simply the hour, minutes and seconds, as a chessplayer does not really need more than that. That said, in my opinion it is also very elegant with moon phase too, so we will be experimenting a bit more with that on our next model.

? Wearing a wristwatch is not only about time but also about fashion and status. To which category do you think chess stars belong? Have you personally been surprised with the results of your own research?

The top players are definitely celebrities and many of them are also very fashion conscious, but if I had to choose one category then my research indicates that there is a lot of status involved too. It seems to



▲ Oyvind Von Doren Asbjornsen

me that these grandmasters do not just buy some random watch at an airport or shopping mall but give serious consideration to their choice of timepiece and that pleases me a great deal. Also I know some GMs who are using my watches like a daily beater. That also makes me very happy. And as one Norwegian GM said half-jokingly to me: "I am really worthy of wearing my Grandmaster watch since I am a GM!" Let's meet some of the "most fashionable" chess players!

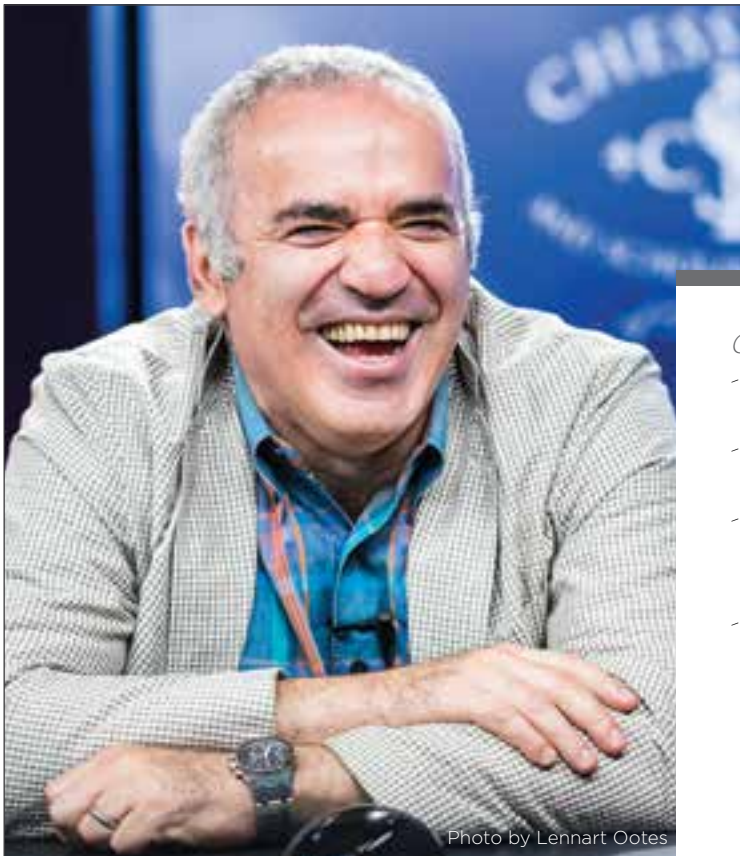


Photo by Lennart Ootes

GARRY KASPAROV

Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Chronograph

A traditional, exquisite and expensive watch.

Price: From approx. \$27,000

Audemars Piguet was founded in 1875 in Le Brassus, Switzerland, and is one of the oldest manufacturers of exclusive watches. Together with Patek Philippe and Vacheron Constantin, they are considered to be one of the “Big Three/Holy Trinity”.

Garry Kasparov has a very special relationship with Audemars Piguet as they created a 18 Karat Yellow Gold Millenary Limited Edition Wristwatch in honour of him. A well-known watch among chess lovers and watch geeks. Limited to 150 pieces, the watch has a special “chessboard” dial, with Roman numbers, yellow gold hands, and sub-dials for date and second time zone, and fan-form power reserve retrograde indicator. Interestingly, it came with a special edition box, consisting of a wooden chess board and carved chess pieces. The timepiece is no longer available for sale.

Later Garry Kasparov had been spotted with his Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Chronograph. (The one he is wearing in the photo) This watch is the ultimate dream for many watch aficionados all over the world. A masculine, expensive and exquisite watch that also might reflect the personality of Kasparov.

HISTORY

The first Royal Oak Offshore was launched in 1993 with its sizeable 42 mm diameter. The watch was considered to set the trend for oversized watches.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- Who like watches with sporty and masculine features on the watch
- Who are fans of the Audemars Piguet brand or those who are interested in AP's commitment to technical progress
- Who are interested in showing their status since the watch is expensive with advanced details and luxurious metals in some of the variations.
- Who are interested in watches and horology.



SPECIFICATIONS

- Movement: Audemars Piguet calibre 3126/3840
- 60-hour power reserve, a stop-seconds mechanism for the main timekeeping train, and a solid 22k gold rotor for automatic winding
- Case Diameter: 42-44mm
- Pushpiece-guards
- In 2014, AP launched new variations of the watches. It comes with various cases (stainless steel, yellow gold, platinum, ceramic, pink gold, and titanium)

HIKARU NAKAMURA

Rolex Sea Dweller Deepsea

Sporty ultra resistant diver from one of the world's most famous brands.

Price: From approx. \$13,000

Hikaru Nakamura has been spotted with different types of watches and it seems he is very fond of them and in particular his Rolex Sea Dweller Deepsea, with an impressive waterproof of up to more than 12,000 feet. He was awarded the watch at the Central Chess Club in Moscow in 2017, for winning the Zurich Chess Challenge three times in a row. He is obviously very happy with this watch as he was wearing it every day when he played the Fischer Random Match against Magnus Carlsen in Oslo earlier this year.

The Sea Dweller is a very masculine and quite heavy watch that can also show some status as Rolex is a luxury watch brand. He has also been spotted with other watches in a classical style with a white dial too.

HISTORY

Rolex is one of, if not the most recognisable watch names today. But the Rolex company is rather young compared to other wrist and pocket watch makers such as Patek Philippe (founded in 1839), Omega (founded in 1848), Audemars Piguet (founded in 1875) and the very long history of Vacheron Constantin (founded in 1755).

However the founders Wilsdorf and Davis did not settle for being just another watch company. In just over 20 years, Rolex had achieved over 20 world records. These included the now infamous Rolex Oyster case, the world's first truly waterproof watch thanks to the screw back and screw lock crown – an innovation still in use today, and the first true perpetually wound (automatic) watch, which became the now highly sought after “bubble back watch”

Designed for divers and deep-water activities.



SPECIFICATIONS

- Movement: Rolex caliber 3235
- Perpetual, mechanical, self-winding movement
- Case diameter: 44mm
- Waterproof to a depth of 3900 meters
- Power reserve: approx. 70 hours
- Watch case: oystersteel



Photo by Lennart Ootes

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- Those who are interested in diving or water activities
- Those who want to show their status as Rolex has always profiled themselves as a luxury brand, used by the champions in different sports.
- Those interested in watches and horology.



GAWAIN JONES

TISSOT HERITAGE VISODATE
AUTOMATIC

Elegant, classic and reliable.

Price: From approx. \$ 680

A classic and reliable vintage looking automatic watch with day and date at 3 o'clock. This is Tissot going back to its heritage from the 50's. Tissot was founded in 1853 by Charles-Félicien Tissot and his son Charles-Émile Tissot in the Swiss city of Le Locle, Switzerland.

Tissot introduced the first mass-produced pocket watch as well as the first pocket watch with two time zones in 1853 and the first anti-magnetic watch in 1929-30. Tissot merged with Omega in 1930 and Tissot-Omega watches from this era are highly sought after by collectors. Tissot has been a member of The Swatch Group Ltd. since 1983, the largest watch producer and distributor in the world.

A solid choice that reflects reliability, solidity and an eye for vintage. A watch that will make you look great either with a suit or sporty casual wear.

HISTORY (FROM TISSOT'S WEBSITE)

Back in the 1950s, Tissot celebrated its centenary with a series of innovations – one of which was the integration of a date function to the automatic mechanism in a watch called Visodate. The Tissot Heritage Visodate translates nostalgia into contemporary timepieces dedicated to detail. A gently curved dial mirrors the domed sapphire glass, both geared to showcasing a clearly visible day and date.



SPECIFICATIONS

- Movement: ETA 2836-2 Swiss automatic
- Power reserve of 38 hours, 25 jewels
- Water resistant up to 30M
- 316L stainless steel case
- Case Diameter: 40mm

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- Who like elegant, vintage design, perfect for those who usually wear suits/formal clothes
- Who prefer to own a well-known automatic Swiss watch at an affordable price



Photo by Lennart Ootes

ANISH GIRI

VON DOREN GRANDMASTER, CAISSA AUTOMATIC

Classic elegance with a hint of vintage, made for the world's best players.

Price: From approx. \$ 2,900 (sold out)

This watch was designed by the young Norwegian watch company Von Doren. It is a Swiss Made automatic watch made specially for The Norway Chess tournament in the city of Stavanger last year, where the ten highest rated players in the world competed. At the prize ceremony all contestants were awarded a Von Doren Grandmaster by founder Oyvind Von Doren Asbjørnsen, a keen chess fan and former filmmaker – now watchmaker, who made the two films about Magnus Carlsen.

Anish Giri has been spotted numerous times with the Von Doren Grandmaster on his wrist.

VESELIN TOPALOV

JORG HYSEK KILADA

A cool choice from a “young brand” with a revolutionary design

Price: From approx. \$2,000 and upwards (depending on quartz or mechanical)

This watch was from the first collection of Jorg Hysek, as a watch brand. In 2000 they even made a rare tourbillon watch in only 30 pieces. The watch looks good, is comfortable to wear and has great quality.

HISTORY

Launched in 1997. This was the first collection of Jorg Hysek as a watch brand.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- The watch has a really special design and shape. It is suitable for those who want different and unique watches. This watch can make the wearer stand out of the crowd and we think it really fits great with Topalov's personality.



Photo by Lennart Ootes



SPECIFICATIONS

- Movement: available with both quartz movement and automatic movement. For automatic watches, the power reserve is 44 hours with 51 jewels
- Case diameter: 44mm
- Water resistance: 50M
- Dial: exclusive HYSEK Stamping
- Rubber bracelet



SPECIFICATIONS

- Watch diameter: 43 mm
- Swiss made – assembled by hand
- Movement: Automatic STP 5-15 self-winding movement
- 26 Jewels, 28 800 vibrations 4Hz
- Glass: Double-domed sapphire crystal, flat sapphire crystal on case back
- Watch case: Polished stainless steel
- Power reserve: 44 hours
- Strap: Italian handcrafted leather
- Lug width: 20mm

HISTORY

A young up-and-coming Norwegian brand that makes limited edition watches with clean lines and classic Scandinavian design. Founded in 2016 they have already put their name on the map by releasing 8 different models and 3 Mechanical watches.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- Those who value the unique and rare. Vintage design with a twist.
- Those who prefer to own a watch not too many others own
- Those who like the clean design language and vintage items.





VLADIMIR KRAMNIK

BLANCPAIN FIFTY FATHOMS 5015-1130-52

An iconic, non-mainstream and unique watch.*Price: From approx. \$12,000*

Blancpain, founded in Villeret, Switzerland in 1735, make high-quality mechanical watches and the Fifty Fathoms was conceived even before the Rolex Submariner and the Omega Seamaster.

Kramnik too has a special relationship with the manufacturers of his watch, as he has been doing promotionals for Blancpain for many years now. They even made a special watch with his portrait engraved on the winding rotor of the automatic edition. Blancpain proudly stated that there had never been such a thing as a Blancpain quartz watch. And none will exist in the future. The special one they made for Kramnik in 2005 is a Villeret Time Zone in white gold. Outfitted with two time displays, one for local time, the other for home time. The 254 individual component automatic movement delivers 100 hour power reserve. The hand decoration and polish of the movement's components can all be admired through the sapphire case back.

The one he is wearing on the photo is the Fifty Fathoms 5015-1130-52.

The Fifty Fathoms was originally designed in 1953 by Captain "Bob" Maloubier for Blancpain, a real hero of the Allied army and French Military Forces in World War II, he was chosen to design military equipment for the most selected closed group of French military, the Combat Divers.

Maloubier designed the Fifty Fathoms according to Combat Divers' standards and asked Blancpain to execute his design. In 1953 the Fifty Fathoms was born and introduced in Basel, one year before the Rolex Submariner.



SPECIFICATIONS

- Movement: Calibre 1315, self-winding
- Power reserve: 120 hours, 35 jewels
- Case diameter: 45mm
- Water resistance: 30 bar

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- Those who like a tough, sporty and masculine watch, as well as outdoor activities.
- Those interested in watches and horology.

HISTORY

The success of the Fifty Fathoms with Combat Divers was soon followed by other military units. The Israeli, Spanish, German and US armed forces also included it in their military equipment.



Photo by Lennart Ootes

VARUZHAN AKOBIAN

THE MOVADO MUSEUM WATCH – MODERN CLASSIC

A design watch with style. Modern classic. A different and non-traditional choice.*Price: from approx \$850*

Akobian has been spotted with different kinds of watches. It seems he is very fond of the iconic watch brand Movado. The watch was featured in a permanent collection of Museum of Modern Art in New York. That's why it was called the Museum watch.

This is a watch for those who enjoy minimalistic design. Buyers prefer the appearance over the functionality and movement of the watch. It is a bit harder to read the exact time on the dial, which might just be the meaning. You get the time more or less exact up to a minute or two since there are no minute or hour markers. This might reflect a casual and laid back attitude and more attention to design and style than telling the exact time.

HISTORY

The dial was designed by Nathan George Horwitt, an American Jewish-Russian immigrant. He said: "We do not know time as a number sequence but by the position of the sun as the earth rotates". The design of the watch is special since it does not have any markers but only a single dot at the top to signal the sun at its highest point.

The watch was featured in a permanent collection of Museum of Modern Art in New York. That's why it was called the Museum watch.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Movement: Swiss Quartz movement with analog display
- Battery: 2-3 years
- Stainless steel watch featuring round minimalist dial with signature museum dot at 12 o'clock and dauphine hands
- Case Diameter (mm): 40mm
- Synthetic-sapphire crystal dial window
- Features stainless steel buckle closure and leather band
- Water resistant to 30 M



Photo by Lennart Ootes

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYERS

- Those who are in love with the minimalistic design. The buyers prefer the design over the functionality and the movement of the watch. It is almost impossible to see the correct time with this watch dial. At the same time, it has a quartz movement, which means buyers only need to change the battery after 2-3 years.

