

Wristwatches Were First Designed For Women (1600's) It Was After WWI That Men Wore Wristwatches



On June 19th, National Watch Day recognizes an industry that has been around for more than 500 years and is steadily evolving. Choosing a watch is very personal as the choices are vast and numerous. Even with the advent of smartphones and smartwatches, the classic wristwatch signals individual taste, culture, and a rich history that cannot be disputed.

- Wristwatches were actually first designed for women. At the time watches were created it was the fashion for men to have a pocket watch. The first woman to wear a wristwatch was in fact Elizabeth I, which was gifted to her by Robert Dudley, her suspected lover.
- Pocket watches were first worn in the Tudor times and by Henry VIII himself however there were only single hour markers, the minute hand did not become part of a pocket watch until the 17th century.
- Although watches come in a variety of colors, the most popular color for a watch is black. We believe the reason black is the most popular color is because of it's versatility. Black can be styled for both formal and casual occasions as well as a variety of different types of watches such as dress watches, divers watches and more.
- Rolex was created as a brand in 1905. Not in Switzerland But Great Britain in London. Rolex eventually moved to Geneva in 1920, a city well known for watch making.
- In 1790, Geneva was already exporting more than 60,000 watches according to the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry FH.

- The most complicated mechanical watch ever created is Vacheron Constantin reference 57260 pocket watch. The numbers behind the creation of this unique masterpiece are astonishing.
 - The creation process took eight years of research, prototyping, manufacturing, and assembly. 85 prototypes were created before the final product.
 - The watch has 2,826 components, 57 complications, and 242 jewels.
 - The watch has 33 hands and two faces (there's just not enough space to fit all of the hands and scales on just one face). The diameter of the case is 10 cm, and the thickness is 5 cm., and the watch weighs almost a kilo (957 grams).
 - The price of the watch, agreed between the undisclosed owner and the company, is confidential, but it is believed to exceed \$10 million.
- The first "modern" wristwatch was made for another noble woman, Countess Koscowicz of Hungary, by Patek Philippe & Co. in 1868. Although it was the first timekeeping device to be designed specifically for use on the wrist, it was intended primarily as a piece of decorative jewelry.
- Recent research has shown that it was in fact Girard-Perregaux who first mass-produced a wrist-worn watch, in 1880 - 2,000 pieces in total, at the behest of Kaiser Wilhelm I for his German naval officers, all adorned with a cross-hatched grill to protect the glass.
- Modern wristwatches did not become popular among men until the aftermath of the First World War. It was there, in the trenches, that soldiers had taken to crudely soldering wire loops to the top and bottom of their pocket watches, to attach fabric straps and allow more freedom of movement.
- During the Second World War, the MoD needed watches to issue to army personnel - civilian watches just didn't quite make the mark. With British watchmaking on the wane, and Switzerland firmly neutral, they invited any Swiss manufacturer who could build their rigidly specified "Watch. Wrist. Waterproof" or "W.W.W.".
- Twelve brands were accepted: Buren, Cyma, Eterna, Grana, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Lemania, Longines, IWC, Omega, Record, Timor and Vertex. Finding all 12 is a collector's Holy Grail, known as the Dirty Dozen.
- In 1926, Rolex created the first watch with a water-resistant case - the Oyster. It was achieved with a screwed-in caseback and screwed-down crown, both sealed with rubber gaskets. To prove its water resistance, Hans Wilsdorf asked Mercedes Gleitze to wear it when she attempted to swim the Channel a year later. She obliged and made the front page of the Daily Mail.
- The fake watch industry isn't anything new. In the late 1700s to early 1800s, there were manufacturers along the Swiss-French border towns who made a living knocking off British watch designs at a lower quality and price. It was actually one of the things that contributed to the killing off of the British watch industry.
- The Sturmanskie watch manufactured by the First Moscow Watch Company was worn by Yuri Gagarin when he became the first person in space in 1951.
- Seiko is such a complete watchmaker that they even grow their own quartz crystals, in towering multistorey autoclaves that look like something from the film Alien.
- AFTER YEARS OF FAILED OR RAPIDLY OBSOLETE ATTEMPTS IN ELECTRONIC TIMEKEEPING, IT WAS JAPAN'S SEIKO WHO SUCCEEDED IN MINIATURIZING ELECTRICAL TIMEKEEPING AS REGULATED BY A VIBRATING QUARTZ CRYSTAL - 1969'S ASTRON COSTING ABOUT THE SAME AS A MEDIUM-SIZED CAR.

- Most of us are well aware of the Omega Speedmaster's ubiquitous role throughout NASA's Apollo program – hell, it's even known as 'the Moon watch' – but most fail to appreciate how critical was its role on Apollo 13. With all his instrumentation shut down following the rupture of a service module oxygen tank, Commander Jack Swigert was reduced to using his NASA-issue Speedmaster's precise chronograph function to accurately time the 14-second thruster burn that corrected their course and allowed for the crew's safe re-entry. In recognition of its instrument's sterling performance under critical conditions, Omega was awarded NASA's coveted Snoopy Award
- According to [SalonQP](#), the expression "on the ball" stems, in fact, from a 19th-century Ohio jeweler by the name of Webster Clay Ball, who kept America's burgeoning rail network on time
- Bond's wristwatch has always played a starring role in his outlandish exploits, whether it's dissecting a train or unzipping a woman's dress – all despite the famous story of producer Cubby Broccoli having to provide Sean Connery with his own Rolex Submariner in Dr No (1962) after Rolex shortsightedly refused to loan a single watch.
- For 2001: A Space Odyssey, Stanley Kubrick requested then-American-now-Swiss brand Hamilton design a suitably futuristic watch, according to [Watches in Movies](#). The prop was finally released as a working limited edition in 2009, called "X-01".
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- The most inexpensive Swiss automatic mechanical watch is Swatch's Sistem51, at just over £100. Like the original Swatch Watch of 1983 it contains just 51 parts, and unlike any other mechanical watch, is made and assembled entirely by robots.
- Watches on display in shops are often pre-set to ten minutes past ten or ten minutes to two. This is known as 'happy time' due to the watch's face resembling a smiley face. This is to subliminally improve your mood while perusing the watches.
- Though historians believe the Sumerians were the first to record time in 2000 BC, the earliest evidence of using a physical object to keep time comes from the ancient Egyptians. What they did was carve a large, stone obelisk that would be placed in a specific location. As the sun moved, so did the stone's shadow. They estimated the time from the length and direction of this shadow.
- The Casio G-Shock models are known throughout the industry as being nearly indestructible. They are waterproof to great depths, shock resistant, and as reliable as a watch can be. When Casio was testing this watch, they did not conduct experiments in some stuffy laboratory. Instead, they tested shock resistance using the most logical method possible: Dropping prototypes out of a 4th story window.

Sources

National Day Calendar

First Class Watches

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