

PIAGET



Piaget's SIHH collection unites core watchmaking strengths with a celestial touch

Three new Altiplano timepieces, each featuring iconic areas of Piaget expertise, comprise this year's SIHH models. Ultra-thin watchmaking, exceptional gem-setting and an expanded focus on hard stones, illustrated with meteorite, enliven these three models, which will be formally presented at the 2019 Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie in Geneva.

From the heart of the earth to the heart of a galaxy

One of the key areas of savoir-faire associated with the Maison Piaget is the technique of gem-setting. As one of the very few traditional watchmaking manufactures with an equally strong focus on jewellery, Piaget is uniquely placed to create pieces that blend watchmaking with the precise skills associated with working in precious stones. These stones, formed under tremendous heat and pressure and extracted from deep beneath the earth's surface, highlight the eternal brilliance of a Piaget timepiece.

The 36mm Altiplano High Jewellery is an essential model in the elegant collection of Piaget, speaking to the feminine wearer and those who appreciate classic watch proportions alike. For the first time, it comes set with baguette diamonds on the bezel and dial, and a sunray-brushed dial in Piaget Blue, limited to an edition of 88 pieces.

The baguette cut is known for its discretion and refinement. In the **SIHH** 36mm Altiplano High Jewellery, the baguette diamonds frame the watch and mark out the dial quarters, allowing the intense dial hue to truly shine. This particular shade of deep blue, somewhere between cobalt and midnight blue, has defined the maison through the decades and most recently anchored the anniversary collection of Piaget Altiplano watches shown

at the 2017 SIHH. Like the sky itself, the dial reveals different aspects of appearance under varying levels of illumination, the sunray finish creating a hypnotic play of light and shade that is almost alive in its brilliance.

The celestial influence becomes even more pronounced in the 41mm white-gold Altiplano Tourbillon, distinguished by a blue meteorite dial encircled by diamonds. Hours and minutes are indicated via the hallmark Piaget Altiplano baton hands and indices at eight o'clock, while the whirling dance of the flying tourbillon at the two o'clock position recalls the rotation of planetary bodies in a dark blue firmament.

The distinctive lines on the surface of the meteorite are known as Widmanstätten patterns, typical of the crystallised nickel-iron structures found within iron meteorites. This type of meteorite is speculated to date from the very beginnings of the cataclysmic events that result in the creation of solar systems. Just as diamonds are crystallised records of conditions deep within the earth, meteorites are crystallised records of the birth of galaxies.

The 41mm Altiplano Tourbillon, limited to 28 pieces, represents the height of Piaget's prowess in gem-setting, decorative stone dials and ultra-thin high watchmaking. Completing the trio of Piaget's **SIHH** creations is, fittingly, a watch that embodies the purest expressions of essential Piaget — the pink-gold 40mm Altiplano with grey meteorite dial and a simple distillation of time told in hours and minutes, with a date window at three o'clock.

The combination of pink gold with the grey meteorite and pink-gold indices is a step removed from the high-contrast beauty of the 36mm and 41mm models, but more fully showcases the subtle nuances of the meteorite as a material. The 40mm Piaget Altiplano in pink gold with grey meteorite dial is limited to an edition of 300 pieces.

The strength of an original watchmaking manufacture

The history of Piaget is inextricably linked with the history of innovative fine watchmaking, particularly in the area of ultra-thin movements. Milestone records include the hand-wound calibre 9P of 1957, the self-winding calibre 12P of 1960, and more recently the 1200P of 2010 and the extraordinary 2mm-thick Piaget Altiplano Ultimate Concept presented at the 2018 SIHH.

Ultra-thin watchmaking is so specific in its scope and the technical skills required that it is frequently compared to complicated watchmaking in terms of the level of challenge involved. In this way, it is similar to skeletonising, a technique that Piaget has also shown considerable mastery in via the 1200S ultra-thin openworked movement.

At manufacture Piaget, ultra-thin watchmaking is not seen only as an end goal in and of itself. It is a highly developed expertise that is parlayed into some of the most aesthetically adventurous and artisanal timepieces created in the history of fine watchmaking.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Piaget was acclaimed for its bold use of hard stones in the decorative dials that adorned its stylish designs. This was enabled by the manufacture's considerable savoir-faire in ultra-thin watchmaking, since hard stone dials as a rule are significantly thicker than conventional metal dials. In keeping with that period's watch design conventions of slimmness and elegance, watches with hard stone dials were paired only with thin movements in order to keep the final thinness of the watch as low as possible.

The restraint and severely strict needs of ultra-thin watchmaking, as thoroughly conquered by Piaget, is what allowed the Manufacture to create timepieces of great aesthetic exuberance in the 1960s and 1970s, pieces which are still highly sought after today in the vintage watch scene. The movements that inhabit the **SIHH** models, the hand-wound 430P, the hand-wound tourbillon calibre 670P and the self-winding 1203P, are examples of this, demonstrating how at Piaget, technical fine watchmaking, exceptional artistic crafts and outstanding design are combined to delineate a Maison like no other.

About Piaget

It was in La Côte-aux-Fées that Georges-Edouard Piaget set up his first workshop in the family farmhouse and devoted himself to producing high-precision movements. This was back in 1874 and marked the start of an ever-growing reputation. In 1943, the company took a decision that would prove crucial to its future by registering its brand name.

Faithful to its pioneering spirit, Piaget in the late 1950s set about designing and manufacturing the ultra-thin movements that would become one of the Maison's signatures and leave a lasting impression on watchmaking.

But Piaget was also a style: a marriage of gold and an explosion of color, new shapes, precious gems, and dials made of hard stones. Carried along on the wave of extraordinary creativity driven by Yves G. Piaget, the brand's jewelry collection grew in an original direction with a resolute emphasis on color. Rich of more than 140 years of history, the ever-bold brand, innovated by offering jewels in motion, extravagant *Haute Joaillerie* collections, and incredible watches to become today one of the world's most prestigious watchmaker-jewelers.

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