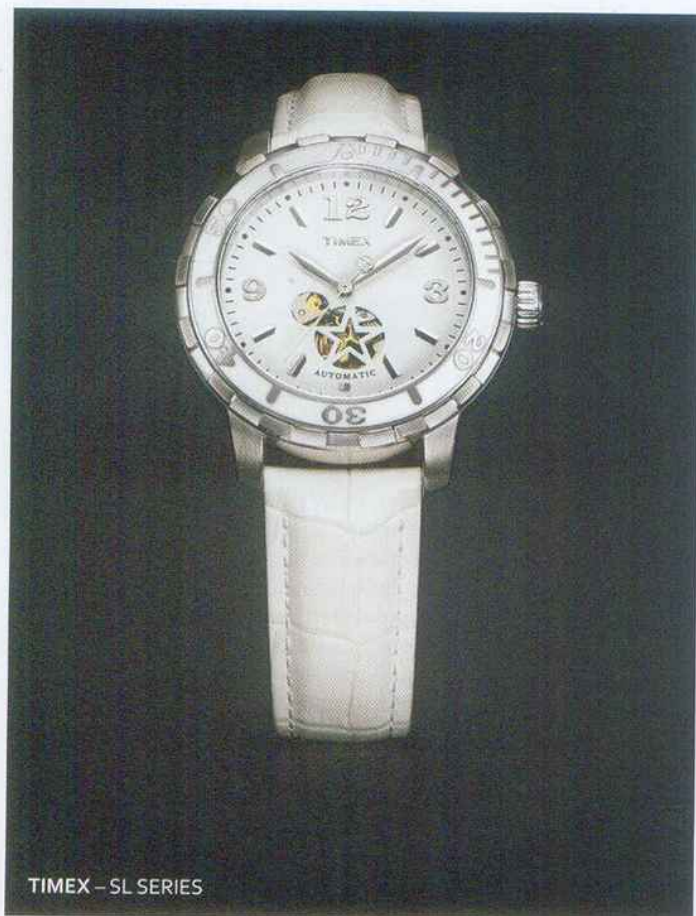




GALLI-re!

He may have designed only for expensive brands the world over, but **Giorgio Galli's** watches are truly meant for everyone, finds SAURAV BHANOT



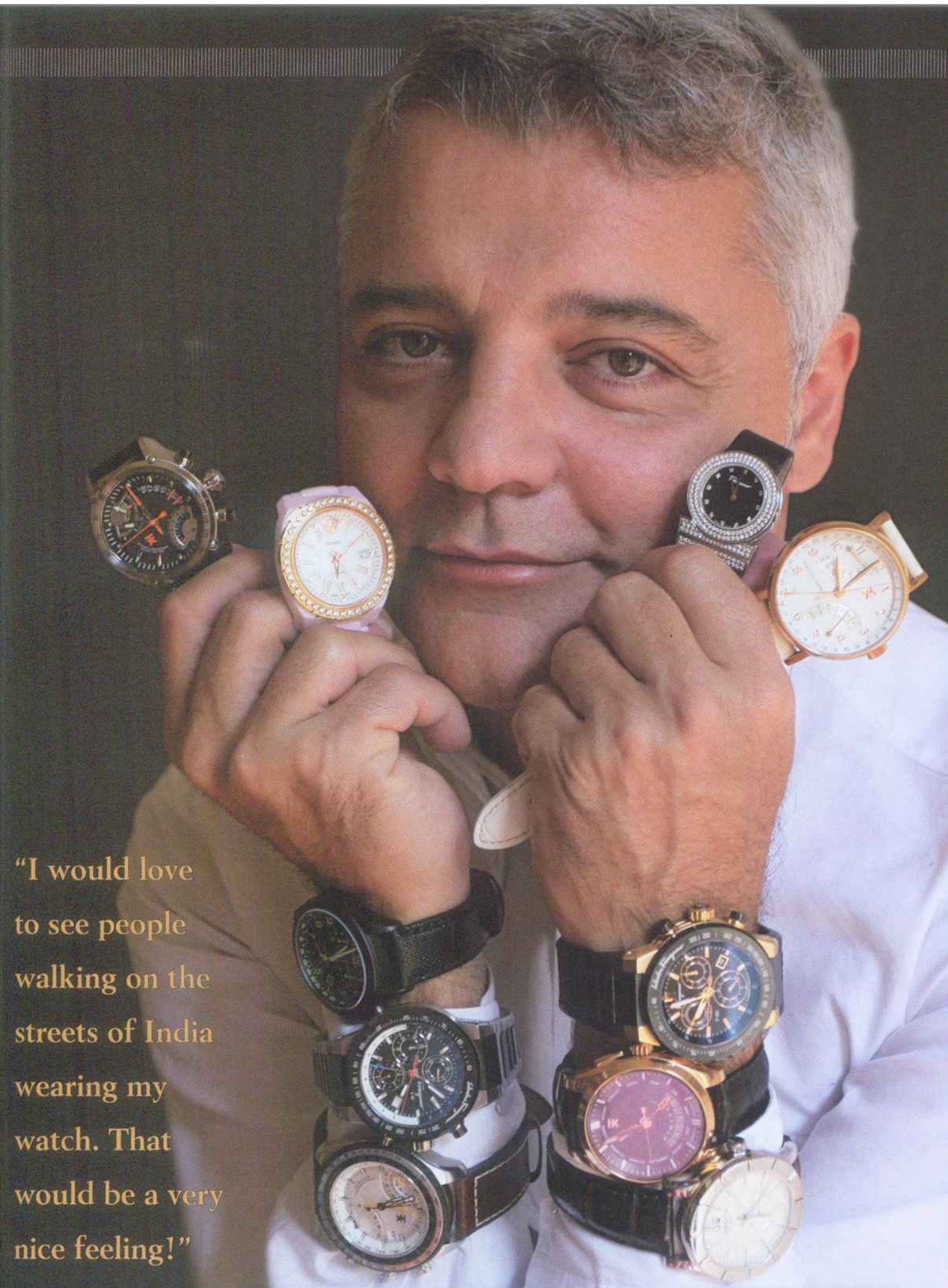
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"I DO NOT HAVE AN IDEAL TARGET as each target is very interesting for me. Beyond the word 'target' is the word 'person' and I design for that person. I like to create what a person is going to see, like and then wear with pride and pleasure," says International watch designer Giorgio Galli when asked about the kind of customers he aims to target with his design. This passion is, perhaps, what defines Galli, the designer and his designs that have adorned numerous wrists worldwide.

Born in Varese, Italy and having graduated from the prestigious Art Institute of Florence, Galli first started work in San Francisco. But working for someone else was not his cup of tea and within a span of two years he returned to Italy and started his own company - Giorgio Galli and partners. And within a short span he also managed to gain 100 percent ownership of the company which was started in partnership with '21 Invetimenti' Merchant Bank. During his career, he has also worked as the youngest ever art director with the Swatch

group and has designed more than 250 watches for them ranging from chronos to scubas and automatics to Pop Swatch. "I design and have designed for almost every kind of customer. From luxury brands to mass ones, I have covered all. And each different customer is a new challenge, something I thoroughly enjoy," he adds. Today he boasts of having designed for the biggest of brands worldwide- Versace, Timex, Swatch, Salvatore Ferragamo, Nautica and many more.

Watches have always been a big passion for him. He prides in not being one of those designers who are only concerned with the design aspect of the watch. He likes to be a part of the complete journey of a watch right from its designing until the very end when it embraces the wrist of his customer. "The proportions are the key to watch design. They make all the difference between a great watch and the other options available." He defines the proportions, positioning, strategy and reasons for his design choices in direct relation to the



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VERSACE



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brand involved. And once the design is completed, he keenly follows its development process, too. Such is his knowledge and involvement in each of his designs that he is often asked to provide expertise on the communication strategies of his designs, as well.

Having worked with many different brands, he makes sure that his designs for all the brands are different and exclusive to each. "Each brand has its own specific DNA and brand value. Before I start designing, I set my focus on who I am designing for. I try and get inside the brand's DNA and try to become that

brand itself. By doing so, I cannot get confused." He further adds, "Ferragamo and Versace have a very different image and style, so creativity is automatically different for each of them. Each design I create reflects the specific brand value behind it."

His penchant for detail resulted in Galli starting his own studio where he meticulously worked in creating the many masterpieces of his career. And in 2007, he collaborated with the Timex group to come up with Giorgio Galli Design Lab.

"Giorgio Galli Design Lab is the design center for Timex Group Worldwide. It is there that we take care of most of the brands in the group, with dedicated teams for each brand. The idea was to create a Timex Creative Center to gather creativity and talent; a centre to build each brand's design history. The Lab is an expression of design culture, with the intention to make it a strong asset for the group."

As part of his collaboration with Timex, he has also designed a whole new brand targeted at the effervescent youth of today. The brand Helix, he says, "has been thought to be 'out of the box'. We haven't set any limits

for this project and want it to go beyond the usual." With this initiative, he is targeting a segment of customers, he always wanted to. "All the designs are specifically made for a young customer who knows how to express himself, who has a strong personality and who is open-minded. Through the designs, I wish to reach out to the free-spirited youth of today. I want to give to young people what they look for in terms of shapes, colours and style."

A passionate man with a unique drive for creating, Galli has also ventured into jewellery designing. While the difference between the two can be quite intimidating, he seems to be enjoying the challenge that comes his way. "Designing jewellery is actually very different. While designing a watch is much more technical, with jewels you have more freedom in terms of shapes. The creativity is also wider in a way as you have less technical and space limits."

After having established himself in major parts of the world, Galli has now set his eyes on India. "I would love to see people walking on the streets of India wearing my watch. That would be a very nice feeling!" While he admits to not being aware of other Indian designers, he plans to understand the people and culture of India in a much more deeper way. "I am spending more and more time in India now in order to immerse myself in the Indian culture. It is so rich and fascinating and the more I get into it, the better I will be able to understand the needs of Indian customers."

He is man of passion and undying creative lust. Having been associated with some of the most luxurious brands the world over, he still designs for someone who "wants to absolutely love the watch he has bought." And luxury and money are not what define his work. "A good design does not need to be expensive. I am glad that I can make pieces for people across monetary divides because my watches are for everyone." ■