

# THE WEEK

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## Brilliant timing



Watchful: Designer Giorgio Galli is possessive about his passion

### LIFESTYLE

Renowned Italian watch designer Giorgio Galli discusses his quirks and collections

By Neha S. Bajpai

Be it a week-long trip or an hour-long drive to his office in Milan, Giorgio Galli never leaves home without his bag of watches. "I have a collection of 400 watches and I carry them in a bag whenever I'm travelling," he says. "I change watches every hour or so. It all

depends on my look, mood and work, of course." His profession gives him the liberty to indulge his obsession. Galli, 48, is the founder of the Giorgio Galli Design Lab that creates watches for Timex Group brands including Versace, Salvatore Ferragamo, Nautica and TX.

The designer was in Delhi recently to launch 12 watches from Timex's sporty ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 collection. "I have been creating watches for the Timex Group for over a decade and I'm particularly excited about this new collection that utilises a lot of elements from cricket," he said. "The dial has an impression of a cricket field and the strap is inspired by the contours of a cricket ball."

Over the last two decades, Galli has developed a unique expertise in horology, creating many bestsellers for brands like Ferragamo and Versace. He is renowned for his chic designs and technological wizardry. As the youngest-ever art director for the Swatch Group, he was instrumental in creating their Swatch Lab in Milan.

"The making of a watch isn't very simple," says Galli. "It begins with a brief and we develop that brief according to the positioning of a product. One requires a lot of discipline in creation. Motivation, perhaps, is the most important factor in design. I like to look for a story and then build around that."

Galli's job as a watch designer is not limited to developing a concept. He follows each project from A to Z, managing every detail of the process. "It's a very intimate process, as you virtually transfer an identity to a watch," he says. "Coming up with the concept doesn't take more than a day but everything else takes much longer. It takes almost nine months to a year for the approval, engineering and marketing of a watch."

Galli is excited about the changing trends in the watch industry and feels his customers in India are now quite similar to those in America.

"Things are changing quite dramatically," he says. "Most watch enthusiasts across the world are going in for watches that are classic and understated. Flashy designs are on their way out. Heritage has always played a very important role in our designs. We have brought back some of the old styles with Timex. Designing for a brand like Timex involves a lot of challenge."

Galli's latest design for Timex, the TX, is positioned as a premium product. He believes the TX will be the brand's USP over Titan, their biggest competitor in India.

"It's a sports watch with a lot of functions and is priced between 818,000 and 835,000," he says. "Each design from Timex has a different DNA, so we listen to what the brand essence is, and try to amplify it and translate it into watches. I hope this one is as popular as the other watches."

Of the 400 watches Galli owns—250 from Swatch and a mix of classical and sporty designs from Versace, Ferragamo and Patek Philippe—there's none that he has particularly designed for himself. "I would love to design a watch for myself and it would be very tough as I'm never pleased with what I do," he says. "My favourite watch is always the most recent one that I have designed. I really look up to Gerald Genta, who has been designing watches for Girard Perregaux. I hope I can do something like him." He also admires brands like Hermes and Apple for their unmistakable style and quality.

"A watch is not just a beautiful instrument," says Galli. "It's really an accessory that tells you a lot about someone. Especially for men, because it's the only way a man can express himself, other than clothing."

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