

**TALK**

**It's About Time**

*Giorgio Galli, Art Director, Timex, talks about watch design and what to watch out for when buying a piece of time*



A watch is no more just a device you use to check time. It's evolved over the years, both in the technology it takes to give you accurate time and their designs. It's a constantly evolving market. At Timex, we have many brands, each proposing a different personality, essence and heritage. Even within the brands, all of them have a unique excitement of their own – you could have a sporty watch on your wrist, or it could be inspired by fashion. What is important is that we can play a lot with technology and that is what keeps evolving. We at Timex have always aspired to give our customers the best in technology and a proof of that is the interesting line-up of technical watches, like the Ultimage Barometer, that we plan to introduce soon. There is, however, no specific trend that one could speak about in the watch industry. Every brand delves into its roots, and that is what is the basic essence of their products. Timex, for instance, has a 150-year-old history and we try to stay true to our heritage in every product we introduce. We value the idea, the concept behind the brand.

What are the five things a man must keep in mind while buying a timepiece?

1. A watch is an extension of your personality. Does it add to your presence?
2. Do you feel comfortable wearing it on your wrist?
3. Is it readable?
4. Are you excited about how it looks? Remember, you wear a watch not just to see time: You want to show it to the world too. Ask yourself if you like the

minimalistic aesthetics of the watch or do you want your timepiece to pack-in a world of functionalities.

5. Keep in mind the occasion you would want to wear the watch.

When you are designing a new line, are you conscious of the current trends in art, fashion or lifestyle and try to incorporate them in the final product? I think it's part of the process. It depends on the values you have imbibed over the years and somewhere they find an expression in your final design. But then, if you are, say, designing a \$50 watch, there isn't much that you can play around with. Before we start anything, there is always a briefing with regards to the brand. So, even before you begin, you have a fairly clear idea of how to go about designing the product and where it would end. Consequently, those elements influence the design more than my own personality. For more high-end brands such as the TX by Timex, I can put more of myself into the design. When I design for Versace or Ferragamo, I put away my own personality and try to maintain the brand identity and essence. Interpret their philosophy while keeping in mind the technology available to make a watch is always a challenge. So there are ways to play the game and, of course, discipline is the key word here.

It's a very small piece of work that has to incorporate everything. It's the most difficult thing to be original in watches.

Why do you say so? Watches incorporate many components

on a small surface and each one is expected to function as an entity: From the movement to the case to the straps. And anyway there are so many watches around that it is confusing sometimes. So it's not easy to make *that* one watch which stands out from the rest. The essence is very important and also the communication. The discipline behind watch design is not mere designing but creating something that will support the concept. Sometimes we have great ideas but they get lost if they're not supported or if they are not in the right environment. The consumer needs to have the motivation to buy a watch. This is different from aspiration, which too is very important. But if it's not well communicated, it's a waste of time. The work that goes behind making a watch work is much more complex than just the design itself. Design takes the shortest time.

Who are your favourite watch designers? I admire the work of Gerald Genta. He is the designer behind my favourite watches: Audemars Piguet's 'Royal Oak' and Patek Philippe's 'Nautilus'. I consider Genta to be a genius; At 85, he is a wonderful, fascinating man with a great sense of product design.

If you wanted to be gifted a watch, which one would you want it to be? The 'Royal Oak' by Audemars Piguet – the 1st luxury sports watch. It has great innovation and considering that it was designed in 1972, it's brilliant. It was a breakthrough in the industry and there are not many breakthroughs in the watch industry.

Chronograph or single dial? Chronograph.

Diamonds or no diamonds? For men, no diamonds.

Gold or platinum? Platinum.

Leather or metal? Leather.

What is time for you? It's a part of my life. I am fortunate to have time to do what I love. I work very closely with time.

*Interview by Navkirat Sodhi*



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