



Q&A



Carson Chan has been the Bonhams Hong Kong Managing Director since 2007. Previously he was the Asian General Manager for Richard Mille. He has a love of Porsche cars and likes to keep his watch collection diverse.

Omega Speedmaster.

What was the first watch you ever owned?

An Omega Speed Master, it was given as graduation gift from my parents.

How did you start in the watch industry?

It really began from a love of mechanics. I soon realised that my place in Hong Kong was not appropriately sized for dismantling cars, so I turned to tinkering with watches. Much more manageable dimensions, but still managing to scratch the mechanical itch!

Did this personal passion develop into a collection?

I have a collection of forty to forty five watches. At one point I had sixty and found it unmanageable, constantly forgetting where I had put one or another!

And its not restricted by brand or era, I have a really wide range of watches. Of late I have become very interested by the emerging independent brands, and currently I'm excited by the collections from 'Manufacture Contemporaine du Temps' and 'Maximilian Busser and Friends'.

What watch are you wearing now?

A Rolex Daytona from 2000 - a classic!

Patek-Philippe dominate the top spots of most watch auctions; can you see this reign challenged by any other brand in the future?

The Patek Phillip era has certainly raised the awareness of watch collecting, however, in Asia auctions continue to be very diverse.



The watch industry has grown and diversified enormously over the last 20 years, how has this affected the auction scene?

It's Geographical. Asia Pacific is a vastly different market to Europe. Hong Kong has an insatiable appetite for independent brands.

The taste of the client and the watch industry grow hand in hand. Singapore especially craves the newest 'funkiest' watch. This quick turn-around traffics auction sales.

Record sales are still being reported, have you seen any significant change in auction results or buying habits over the last 12 months?

I have never recommended buying a watch as an investment. Buy the watch because you like it and want it. Don't buy it to leave it in a draw or catalogue it away - it kills the meaning of watch collecting.

The current economic climate reminds me of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, intensified particularly in Hong Kong by the outbreak of SARS in 2003. Many collectors wished they had been brave enough to take the plunge [on which ever bid].

For a serious collector, who has a clear vision, now is a good time to buy.

Prices are not as crazy as they had been.

Do you believe the watch industry in its current state will weather the financial storm and continue to grow at the rate it has been?

Today, more than ever, watch companies need to have a clear vision of what the brand represents. A clear message will survive [the downturn].

If you have a good, unique product people take notice. Without a message it [a timepiece] becomes a gimmick. ☹



Rolex Daytona.
Opposite page: Carson Chan, Bonhams Hong Kong.