

# Watchismo's

# TIMEWARP



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## #1. Sideview Watches

To kick-off this new series on retro gems, we're looking at the sideview, or 'driver's' watch, which rethinks the arm-twisting mechanics of checking the time. Theoretically, these have been ergonomically designed, freeing the wearer to view the readout while clutching the steering wheel. In practice however, like the ones featured here, they're designed to be different for different's sake. Though relatively obscure in watchmaking history, such calculated distinction breeds truly unique engineering solutions. With the face pushed to the side, traditional hands are replaced with innovative features like rollers, mirrors, and digital displays. The current burst of independent watchmakers and automotive-inspired timepieces is again leading to new impressions of side-viewing wristwear - not least Parmigiani's Bugatti and Urwerk's 103 collection (see p.55). Here are some of my vintage highlights...



### Patek Philippe 'Cobra', 1958

A prototype designed by the renowned Louis Cottier features a futuristic angular case with an integrated bracelet and two graduated linear openings showing the hour and minute marks, which are printed in a spiral on rollers. Far ahead of its time, even today, the unfamiliar time display, advanced design and high cost of production prevented it from ever being made.



### Amida Digitrend, 1970s

One of the most off-beat, 'retro-futuristic' timepieces I've ever seen is a sideview jump-hour, the Amida Digitrend, also seen by the brand names Hudson and Crehor. The numbers are printed in reverse on two discs (minutes and hours) projected sideways through a prism that reflects and corrects the digits to the viewer. This manual-wind mechanical emulated and competed with the newly developed LED digital watches of the time.



### Jaz Derby Swissonic, 1974

The Jaz Derby Swissonic introduced an entirely new way to display time. Rolling, numbered drums, powered by a transistorised system created a very tall timepiece, sitting over 15 mm off the wrist. A wheel next to the digital readout is marked with gradually sized dashes (thin to thick) rotating out the seconds.



### Benrus Pop-Up LED, 1976

One of a variety of white whales in the sea of LED collections. Little is known about this rare sideview digital but it has a feature unlike any other watch in the world. With a press of a button, an embedded inner case 'pops up' to flash its LED display.

**Further information:** The Watchismo Times, <http://watchismo.blogspot.com>