



# Bullseye

## Patek's ref. 5960 hits the spot

While it might seem an obscure and rarefied desire, many enthusiasts have feverishly awaited the day when Patek Philippe would announce its own *manufacture* automatic chronograph movement. Clearly not content with launching a new movement in a model with basic functions, Patek Philippe has answered its followers' prayers by adding a host of novel details to the ref. 5960P Annual Calendar Chronograph - the first watch to house the new calibre. *QP* admires its innovative clutch system, modular calendar arrangement and, of course, the dial's elegantly garish 'target' totaliser.

Ken Kessler

Inarguable to the value of ref. 5960 (£32,330) is the patented Patek Philippe Annual Calendar function - a full calendar that, providing that the watch is kept running, need only be manually corrected once a year on March 1st. The day of the week, date and month are displayed in three apertures in the upper half of the dial.

The ref. 5960's push button at 2 o'clock starts and stops the chronograph function, while the 4 o'clock button can be used to reset the stopped chronograph hand or to activate the flyback function when the chronograph hand is running. The left side of the case contains the tiny push buttons for setting the date functions.



The ref. 5960 follows confidently in the wake of last year's big release from the Genevois watch house, the world's thinnest split-seconds chronograph. After years of producing chronographs based on a truly classic Lemania ébauche, Patek Philippe found itself in a position similar to that of Rolex when it moved from using the Zenith El Primero movement in the Daytona to its own in-house design. In keeping with the consensus of what a true-pedigree chronograph should feature, Patek Philippe has developed a new movement using the venerable column-wheel system. This will please purists, as the column-wheel is always the preferred technology amongst the cognoscenti, and features in nearly every truly classic chronograph.

Mere plagiarism, however, will not do. So Patek ensured that it differed from other column-wheel manufacturers "by virtue of a remarkable innovation." Unlike normal chronograph mechanisms, calibre CH 28-520 IRM QA 24H's clamps do not engage a lever-mounted clutch wheel with the chronograph train, but instead act on a disk clutch that transmits (chronograph running) or interrupts (chronograph stopped) the power between the fourth wheel and the chronograph hand. Patek Philippe believes that this is a more reliable solution; one that is able to eliminate the occurrence of backlash-induced hand jitter or 'bouncing', because it does not involve the sudden meshing of teeth when the chronograph is started.

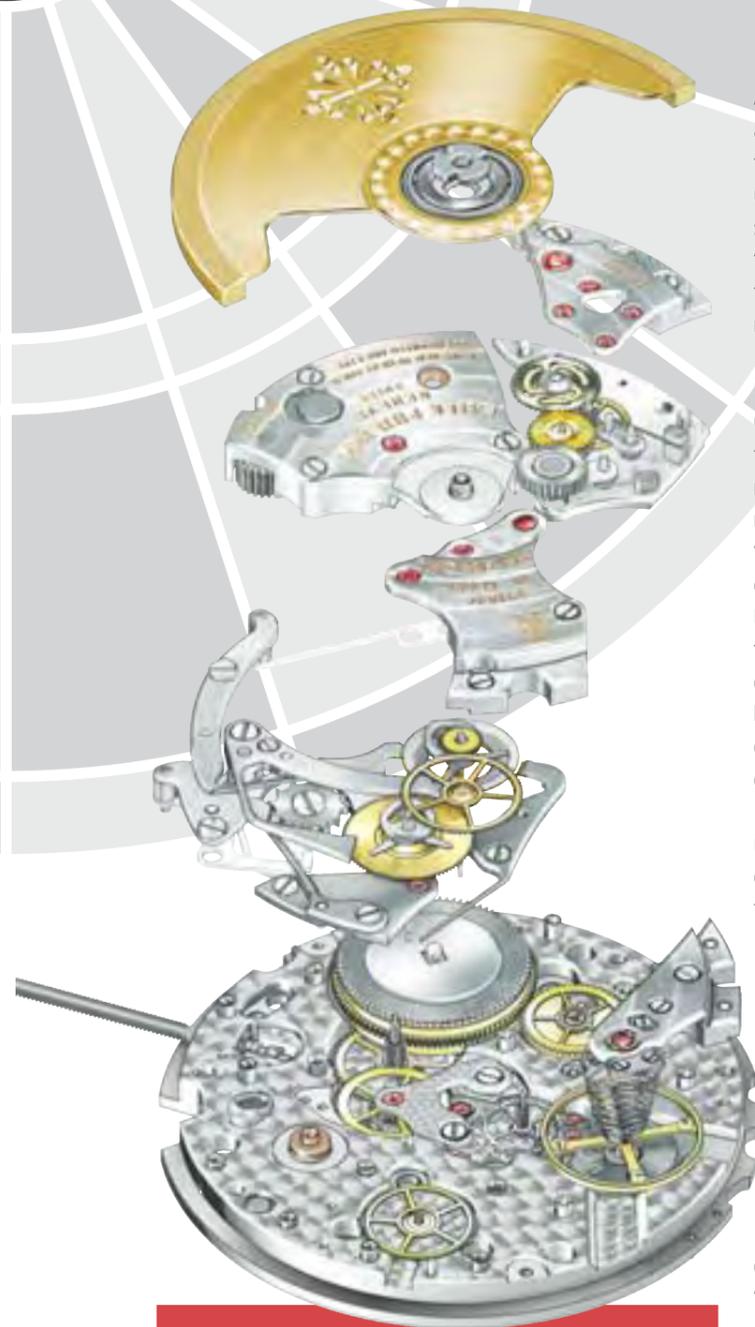
Another benefit is that it also replaces the conventional three-wheel chronograph train, which would normally forbid a constant-running chronograph for reasons of wear. In the new movement, therefore, the chronograph hand can be used without hesitation as a continuously running seconds hand - the mode preferred by many chronograph aficionados. Patek states that this will have no negative impact on the rate accuracy of the watch.

An important by-product of this is greater legibility - a key design criterion. Because of the continuously sweeping central seconds hand, the subsidiary seconds dial found on the majority of chronographs is no longer required. However, here is where Patek Philippe courts controversy. For some would argue that you might want to keep the two registers (real-time seconds and chronograph seconds) separated, because you are not observing real-time seconds when the chronograph is in actual use.



(Top) Like all Patek Philippe mechanical movements, the new CH 28-520 IRM QA 24H calibre carries the prestigious Geneva Seal, proving its superior level of finish. The 12 criteria for this certificate include polished angles, polished and chamfered screw heads and chamfered going-train wheels.

(Above) Diagram showing the 12-hour counter's interaction with its hammer, reset lever and interlock.



Again, with the chronograph's flyback function, Patek has challenged a certain type of user; in this case one who would argue that the flyback facility was only of use to pilots in the pre-computer days. Its use requires the wearer to memorise the previous timing, unlike with, say, a split-seconds chronograph. Moreover, it is easy to accidentally 'zero' a flyback chronograph when it's not intended. Even so, this feature will be - for watch collectors and gadget freaks alike - another neat touch that ups the ante.

### On target

One area where Patek Philippe has undisputedly worked miracles is the minimalism of the dial layout - especially given how complicated ref. 5960 is, even squeezing-in Patek's patented annual calendar module. The two-tone charcoal and silvery grey dial doesn't scream "Chronograph!" at the user, unlike the many conventional chronographs that display a plethora of confusing subsidiary dials. Defying convention, it does away with three subsidiary dials by featuring a combined minute and hour 'totaliser' instead, with a single circular subsidiary dial at 6 o'clock. This target-shaped feature nicely balances the annual calendar's three windows in the top half of the dial, and imparts an aesthetic elegance that combines Patek's sober classicism with a rare streak of (almost) garish modernism.

For the 60-minute totaliser, the longer red hand counts the minutes on the two outer concentric scales graduated from 0 to 30 in red and from 30 to 60 in blue. The shorter blue hand and the inner scale indicate the duration of up to 12 hours for events lasting longer than 60 minutes. At the 6 o'clock point within that dial is a tiny day/night display - a small aperture that progressively changes colour from white for daytime, to dark blue for night, during each 24-hour cycle. Patek feels that this is useful "when the time and calendar displays need to be resynchronised after a longer standstill period."

### Latitude

All of this is housed in a classic 40.5 mm case, the first platinum edition featuring a small diamond between the lugs at 6 o'clock - "the discreet identifier of all of the manufacture's platinum cases." Any remaining doubt about this watch's pedigree is dismissed by a glance at the flipside. The sapphire caseback reveals a 21-carat rotor and Patek's perfectionist level of finish - up to the Poinçon de Genève standard as usual.

We can confidently expect the ref. 5960 to be one of the hottest high-end watches of 2006, even with a price-tag of £32,330. But perhaps most enticing is the watch-house's claim that the new movement is modular, "providing future latitude for extra functions." Patek fetishists can now safely dream of further proprietary complications in the future - perhaps a split-seconds chrono, tourbillons, minute repeaters... Personally, I can't wait. ○

### Technical Specs

**Model:** Ref. 5960P Annual Calendar Chronograph

**Movement:** Calibre CH 28-520 IRM QA 24H; 28,800 vph; auto-winding; column-wheel chronograph

**Functions:** Chronograph, annual calendar, power-reserve indicator, 24-hour display, sweep seconds

**Movement dimensions:** Diameter 33 mm; height 7.68 mm (movement 5.20 mm, annual calendar module 2.48 mm)

**Case dimensions:** Diameter 40.5 mm; diameter including crown 43.25 mm; height 13.55 mm

**Power reserve:** 55 hours

**Water resistance:** 25 m