

# Equal Rights

How often does a man covet something that belongs to his wife? “Not often,” would be the reply of most sensible, red-blooded males. But with Patek Philippe’s new Annual Calendar for women, things could change. *QP’s* ‘Montre des Femmes’ section continues with another sugar-sweet taste of hardcore horology.

Maria Doulton



The white-gold ref. 4936 (€17,500) features a rare black Tahitian mother-of-pearl dial while the yellow-gold case is paired with a more traditional white mother-of-pearl dial (€16,750). The softly tapered lugs embrace straps in either luminous grey or champagne.

Before we get carried away and envisage legions of men ditching their chunky black-dialled Nautilus for sorbet-hued, sparkling timepieces, let me clarify that it is not the mother-of-pearl dials, glossy cabochons or pastel straps of Patek’s new ladies’ line that are catching men’s eyes – rather, the mechanical rigour. They might be beautiful and indulgent, but this in no way detracts from the ingenious mechanics that lie beneath.

The reference 4936 is the house’s very first annual calendar with moonphase made specifically for women. “This watch is the answer to a growing demand for women’s self-winding watches with

additional functions,” explains Patek’s Press Officer, Jasmina Steele. “We found that women were actually buying the complicated models for men, so we decided to make one for them.”

Not that complications for women are new to the brand. There are numerous lady’s pendant watches with complications from Patek’s early days, such as the 1909 minute repeater made for the wife of Tsar Alexander II, Katherina Dolgoruka. The first lady’s wristwatch complication was the minute-repeating model sold in 1916. Recently however, the spotlight on Patek’s feminine side has been firmly focused on the Twenty~4 – a dress watch

commonly driven by quartz (apart from the fully paved version equipped with the caliber 16-250), which has made no attempt to enter the realms of complication.

With the increased interest amongst men in ‘useful’ complications – as opposed to all-singing, all-dancing Grand Complications – it is not surprising that the Annual Calendar, a Patek speciality, should be one of the first women’s models. It is based on the men’s ref. 5035, which, incidentally, has now been upgraded to a 39 mm case. But as many will remind you, size does not matter. This is as much about aesthetics. The 4936’s case is adorned with 156 diamonds, cut in two sizes to

ensure a smooth and perfect setting, while the crown has been made more feminine by replacing the short fingernail-unfriendly ridges with a band of diamonds.

But beyond such superficialities, the differences end. The functions of the both the women’s and men’s Annual Calendars are identical, with the trifling exception of a power-reserve indicator on the latter. Underneath lies the same base movement (the Geneva Seal self-winding calibre 315), which can be admired through the crystal caseback. Gone are

the days, it seems, when all a woman had to look forward to was a pretty watch. The entrance of the men’s and women’s version of the Annual Calendar – both on an equally sound mechanical footing – heralds an era of equality. If Patek is embracing the idea that women can have the best of both worlds, then the rest of the watch world is sure to take note.

But who does *QP’s* Style Council consider to be a fitting ambassador for this brave new watch? Condoleezza Rice may well be up to scratch with the boys, but

someone more glamorous and indulgent is needed to carry off the lady’s Annual Calendar. Nigella Lawson perhaps? Having proven her intellectual worth as Deputy Literary Editor of *The Sunday Times*, she has embraced the world of domesticity and made it sexy. Not afraid to elevate herself to the realm of Domestic Goddess she may well admire the new Annual Calendar as much for its luscious looks as its intellectual bravado. But Nigella, please take it off before plunging your hands into a bowl of chocolate cake batter. ◉

Further information: Patek Philippe Salon, 15 New Bond Street, London W1S 3ST. Tel: 020 7493 8866, [www.patekphilippe.com](http://www.patekphilippe.com)