

Condé Nast Traveller

WATCH SPECIAL



AROUND THE WORLD
IN 80 WATCHES

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WATCHES GREAT BRITAIN



HOWZAT FOR TOP-NOTCH?

The components of a mechanical watch are usually made by several different people and then finally assembled by one. Watchmaker Roger W Smith is among only a few worldwide who create and put together every component by hand, which he does in a small workshop on the Isle of Man. He learnt his craft from the late Dr George Daniels, with whom he was an apprentice. Such fastidiousness does not make it a quick process (he produces approximately 10 watches per year), but it ensures that his timepieces are some of the most desirable in the world. It comes as no surprise then that the organisers of the Great Britain campaign, designed to showcase 'the very best of what Britain has to offer', asked Smith to produce a watch that the Prime Minister could take overseas as the ultimate example of this country's craftsmanship. The resulting platinum timepiece houses the Daniels Co-axial escapement, invented by Daniels in the 1970s and now adopted by Omega on a large commercial scale. The solid-silver dial, made of 34 separate components, is decorated with three engine-turned motifs that form the pattern of the Union Jack. And if all of this isn't making you burst with patriotic pride, the presentation box is made by Linley from English oak, with another Union Flag (this time inlaid) on the lid. Catch a glimpse of it at the Watch Club in the Royal Arcade in Mayfair, London which is curating it for the duration of the campaign. More flag waving comes from Vacheron Constantin, which has made an exceptional one-off watch to mark the opening of its Bond Street boutique. The Patrimony Traditionnelle calibre 2755 London Edition has a hand-guilloch  dial featuring a motif based on the Union Jack, along with a movement that contains 602 parts which power a trio of Haute Horlogerie complications: a tourbillon, perpetual calendar and minute repeater.

We're also rather taken by the box, crafted out of rare brown oak from the Althorp estate by furniture makers Method Studio. A chance meeting between the Swiss watchmakers and Method at Crafted 2013 spawned the collaboration, and the furniture company lavished the box with the same amount of attention as Vacheron's watchmakers did the timepiece. This included fuming the oak with ammonia to accelerate the ageing process by 400 years and create its deep-chocolate colour. Specialist watch tools are housed in individual drawers that run on brass sliders, all lockable with a British-made solid-brass lock. JD



FROM TOP: TRADITIONNELLE LONDON EDITION WATCH IN PINK GOLD WITH ALLIGATOR STRAP (£542,450, VACHERON CONSTANTIN (WWW.VACHERON-CONSTANTIN.COM)). THE CUSTOM-MADE BOX BY METHOD STUDIO. GREAT BRITAIN WATCH IN PLATINUM WITH A SILVER GUILLOCH  DIAL, £180,000, ROGER W SMITH FOR THE GREAT BRITAIN CAMPAIGN (WWW.RWSMITH-WATCHES.COM). WATCH TEMPORARILY CURATED AT WATCH CLUB (WWW.WATCHCLUB.COM). THE PRESENTATION BOX BY LINLEY