

Farewell to three watch greats

Three leading figures in the watch world left us in 2011. George Daniels MBE CBE, died, aged 85, on October 21. Edware-born Daniels was hailed as one of the most important watchmakers since Abraham-Louis Breguet.

He created the groundbreaking co-axial escapement which was adopted in 1999 by Omega, and which the brand now proudly promotes as a unique technical advantage in its mechanical watches. While Daniels was celebrated for his technical prowess, Charles Grald Genta was



considered one of the most influential watch designers of the 20th century.

Of his many designs, two will remain firm favourites of collectors and enthusiasts. The Audemars Piguet Royal Oak (above) and the Patek Philippe Nautilus created the now-dominant genre of oversized, stainless-steel sport watches that possess enough panache to be worn on dressy occasions. Genta died at the age of 80 on August 17.

Another pioneer of the watch world, the British writer Michael Balfour, was one of the first to specialise in watches long before the revival in interest in the early Nineties. Among his earliest efforts was the seminal title, *The Classic Watch*, published in 1989. He died on August 11, two months before his 72nd birthday.