

FASHION

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**CANADA'S
MOST
STYLISH
THRIFTER**

**ECO-FRIENDLY
EXTENSIONS
and WIGS**

**BEST VINTAGE
SHOPS**



**TREASURE
HUNTING TIPS**

AURORA
JAMES

THE FASHION WORLD'S #1 DISRUPTER
(and she's Canadian!)



Art Class

Texas-based gallery owner Reyne Hirsch talks about her favourite watches—including the \$5 garage-sale find that kicked off a lifelong passion.

As told to **LAURIE BROOKINS**

Every watch in my collection comes with a story or memory I appreciate. That goes back to my first, which I've had since I was 20 or 21 years old. I had moved to New York City for work, and my next-door neighbour was having a garage sale. In a box of costume jewellery, I noticed this cool-looking watch—a Tissot. I didn't own a watch at the time; this one didn't work, but I thought it was really pretty. It was only \$5, so I figured that even if nobody could fix it, it was still worth it.

Not long after, I took it to a jewellery store that did watch repairs. The guy took it in the back, and a few minutes and \$3 later, my watch was working and he'd cleaned it up so it looked all sparkly. He also told me it was worth about \$250—maybe not an expensive watch but pretty good for an \$8 investment. After that, I started going to estate sales and yard sales more often, and it really kicked off my interest in wristwatches. That's how I found a 1920s art deco watch that I love; it's platinum with a rectangular case. Another fun one is a LeCoultre, but unfortunately it has an unusual faceted crystal that I know would be impossible to replace. That's the only downside of vintage watches—finding replacement parts when needed.

Today I have about 15 or 18 pieces in my collection, and I'll trade one out if I come across something I really like. I'm fine with letting go of some pieces; I think that comes from my years of being a dealer and from doing *Antiques Roadshow* for 13 seasons. I do it with things like furniture and artwork in my home as well; if I fall in love with something, I can let go of something else to make room for it. But there are certain watches I'll never part with—my grandmother's watch being the best example. Her name is Alice, and she's still with us and very active. At 102 years old, she's living her best life.

Several years ago, she gave me some of her more valuable things ("Just leave me some costume jewellery in case I go to

lunch with a friend"). Among them was her beautiful watch. It's solid gold on a gold band and has a small rectangular case, a diamond bezel and a white dial, and it was made sometime in the 1950s. The dial is marked Walzel. In Houston, there's a jeweller named Walzel that's been around since the 1940s; in those days, it was very common for jewellers to sell watches under their own brand.

I absolutely treasure this piece, of course, and would never think of selling it. I also know its value is largely sentimental. In the current marketplace, this is the kind of watch that sadly would be scrapped for its gold and diamond value, but for me, you can't put a price tag on its meaning. And I still wear it once in a great while, especially if I'm going to a cocktail event and wearing a simple black dress.

Other pieces in my collection might be termed "more serious" among watch collectors. I own a Chopard Happy Sport watch with the floating diamonds that dance across the dial; it was given to me by a friend who has since passed away, and I like to wear it because it makes me think of her and how proud she

was to own that watch. My partner and I run a pair of galleries in Dallas and Austin, and we're both big collectors of Louis Comfort Tiffany; when Rolex debuted an Oyster Perpetual with a dial that is so similar to that beautiful Tiffany blue, I bought one for myself as a nod to our being Tiffany collectors and dealers for many years. It definitely gets noticed.

The Rolex is my current favourite, but the watch I wear most often is by Gucci. I'm a very casual girl who wears jeans a lot, and this is a wide-cuff model that, similar to a Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso, has a dial you can turn over so it looks like a piece of jewellery. I certainly appreciate the craft of fine watchmaking and a complicated movement, but I don't take it too seriously with respect to the things I love and like to wear.

Because of my collection and because of what I do, people ask me all the time "What should I buy?" And my advice is the same for watches as it is with so many things: Buy what you love. But if it's so expensive that you're afraid to wear it, then why have it? Ultimately, a great watch is something that you enjoy wearing and that puts a smile on your face. ■

Four Watches With Vintage Inspirations



CARTIER

The latest update on Cartier's Tank Française, introduced in 1996, offers a sportier feel while still exuding the details beloved by fans of the house. Available in three sizes in either yellow gold or stainless steel, the small-model Tank (\$36,600, at cartier.com) is seen here in gold with diamond accents and features a quartz movement.



TISSOT

Founded in 1853, Tissot has classic styling that extends to this Bellissima Small Lady (\$625, at tissotwatches.com), a quartz timepiece that features a 26-millimetre round steel case on a two-tone steel interchangeable quick-release bracelet. Roman numerals adorn the guilloché-patterned dial.



GUCCI

In a diminutive rectangular case, the iconic Gucci stripes—employed by the brand since 1951—are highlighted on the mother-of-pearl dial on this G-Frame watch (\$1,885, at gucci.com) with an interchangeable yellow gold PVD mesh bracelet.



ROLEX

The latest version of the Rolex Datejust 31 (\$12,200, at rolex.com), which debuted in 1945, features a floral-motif dial in a hue the brand has dubbed "azzurro blue," with diamond accents that do double duty as indices on the dial's outer perimeter. The 31-millimetre case also showcases Rolex's signature fluted bezel and is placed on an Oyster bracelet.



Prized Possessions

Reyne Hirsch wears a Cardinal lapel watch given to her by a friend and a 1970 Jaeger-LeCoultre model made for Pierre Cardin that she bought at auction.

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