

PRESS RELEASE

Classics Redefined: Watch Trends 2026

Short-lived trends have never been the watch industry's domain, and yet a quiet consensus on timelessness now seems to be emerging. Pleasing case sizes and well-balanced size selections within collections, the return of round dials, the appreciation of mechanical movements and the strong presence of classic three-hand watches all underline one message: "We are here to stay." A touch of freshness is added through colour and tactile highlights. Young rebels and extravagant outliers remain the exception, but they bring vitality to the overall picture. Those who look closely will discover a surprising diversity within modern classics – because the real finesse lies in the details...

1. Pure Classics

Hands-on: Minimalism with Three Hands

Fueled by the trend for retro watches, classic three-hand models are once again moving into the spotlight. They do not appear boring, but rather as long-lasting investments that retain their relevance even after many years. Under the aspect of sustainability, they can be worn for extended periods without fear of losing their modern appeal. In their clear minimalism, they point to a single purpose: telling the time.

Round Shapes in Multiple Sizes

The preference for square cases is declining, while round shapes are regaining dominance. A noticeable trend is the rise of "sibling watches": increasingly, larger models are accompanied by a smaller counterpart, allowing wearers to choose their ideal size. The smaller sibling often features – but does not necessarily emphasise – feminine characteristics, which may be expressed through discreet diamond accents. Compared to previous years, larger models tend to occupy the middle ground, typically around 40 millimetres. Watches exceeding this size often move beyond the realm of three-hand designs, using their dimensions to accommodate functions and complications.

Seen at: Oris (Aquis, Big Crown), Citizen (Tsuyosa), Omega (Seamaster)

Moving Gears for Beginners

Mechanical watches at entry-level price points are in demand. Alongside curiosity about traditional craftsmanship and an appreciation of quality, sustainability also plays a role here. Affordable entry prices make it easier for newcomers to explore and experiment with mechanical timepieces – ideally with room to grow.

Seen at: Citizen, Casio, Sternglas, Seiko, Lilienthal

Black Always Works

With watches, as with clothing, when in doubt: black. Black fits the business environment, adapts effortlessly to fashion and is equally suited for evening wear. Boring? No – a safe choice. Fortunately, a wide range of colours is available to periodically replace the universal black all-rounder.

2. Decorative Affairs

Feminine and Adorned

The trend toward smaller diameters is even more pronounced in women's watches. Delicate models appear distinctly feminine and increasingly resemble jewellery. Other variants present themselves as jewellery pieces from the outset, revealing their dials only upon closer inspection. Fully gold watches emphasise their ornamental character, while lavishly decorated dials featuring miniature paintings, enamelling, engraving and guilloché stylishly testify to both fine art and craftsmanship. Last but not least, gemstone-set watches also rank among the most decorative representatives of the genre. Diamonds are not only welcome in brilliant cuts, but may also shine in baguette cuts.

Seen at:

Women: Frederique Constant (Classics Manchette), Bulova (Rubaiyat, Classic), Glashütte Original (Senator Meissen), Chanel (Première), Patek Philippe, Vacheron Constantin (Grand Lady Calla, Traditionnelle)

Men: Audemars Piguet (Code 11.59), Vacheron Constantin (Métiers d'Art)

Masculine Textures and Matte Dials

In men's watches, textures continue to define the overall look. These now appear even more pronounced and dynamic, interpreted as scratch-like finishes, tie-inspired patterns or

repeating logos used as subtle background motifs. In addition, a second tendency is emerging: matte dials radiate elegance and restraint and are increasingly taking centre stage.

Textured, seen at: Omega (Constellation), Montblanc (Iced Sea), Union Glashütte (Noramis), Tutima (Patria), Tissot (PRC Damascus Steel), Maurice Lacroix (1975 Automatic GMT Legacy), Alpina (Alpiner Extreme), Nivrel (Heritage Automatic), Vacheron Constantin (Traditionnelle, Patrimony)

Matte, seen at: H. Moser & Cie., Citizen (Suratto), Sternglas, Moritz Grossmann, Chronoswiss, Ressence, Parmigiani Fleurier, Panerai (Luminor), Skagen

3. Time You Can Feel

Beyond visual appeal comes tactile experience – and this too plays a role this season, albeit subtly. Reaching for a watch in the dark, one will increasingly recognise it by a fluted bezel. Not all decorations serve the same purpose: while rounded notches on diving watches primarily ensure grip, similar elements elsewhere are used purely for decorative effect. They may appear in coin-edge style, feature Clous de Paris patterns, or be inspired by pufferfish or other motifs. Not new, but worth mentioning in this context, are diamond-set bezels, which naturally offer a distinct tactile sensation due to their gemstone setting.

Seen at: Breitling (Navitimer, Superocean, Classic AVI), Rado (Captain Cook), Tissot (Seastar, Ballade Powermatic), Gucci (Dive), Oris (Aquis), Sinn (U1, U50), Elysee (GMT, Ocean Pro), Hanhart (417 ES), Chanel (J12), Omega (Constellation), Parmigiani Fleurier, Tutima (Grand Flieger, Saxon One)

4. Turquoise, Silver and Powdery Effects

Blue continues to reinvent itself. Following navy and ice blue, turquoise tones are now generating excitement. Green appears either as mint or, in a darker shade, petrol. Matte dial variants create a soft-focus effect and expand the spectrum of colour expression. Other colours confidently take their place alongside, without attracting the same level of attention as the blues. On the opposite end of the colour scale, floral, powdery hues such as lilac, apricot and rose are gaining popularity. Those who prefer a restrained and neutral look should consider watches with silver dials, especially those accented with blue. Here lies great potential for new classics that can effortlessly rival black and white.

Turquoise / mint, seen at: Ressence, Parmigiani Fleurier, Tissot (Seastar), TAG Heuer (Carrera, Aquaracer), Union Glashütte (Belisar), Bruno Söhne (La Traviata, Pesaro I), Timex (Q Timex Continental Day and Date), Glashütte Original (Senator Excellence), Nomos (Club Sport neomatik Weltzeit Trace, Club Campus), Mühle Glashütte (Panova), Junghans (Meister S), Oris (Aquis), Moritz Grossmann, Breitling, Tutima (Lady S), Casio Edifice, Piaget (Sixtie, Polo Date)

Powder tones, seen at: Union Glashütte (1893 Johannes Dürrstein), Junghans (Max Bill), Sinn (556), M&M, Glashütte Original (Senator Excellence, Serenade Luna), Nomos (Tetra, Club Sport neomatik), Bulova (Surveyor), Vacheron Constantin (Patrimony)

Silver / blue, seen at: Montblanc (Star Legacy, 1858), Nomos (Club Sport neomatik Weltzeit), Vacheron Constantin (Traditionnelle, Patrimony), Glashütte Original (Senator, PanoMaticIn-verse), Longines (PrimaLuna)

5. Sustainability Meets Comfort

Mechanical watches, classic designs and pleasing, comfortable sizes all contribute to sustainability. Added to this are recycled materials, including reused stainless steel, straps made from vegan or recycled materials, and environmentally friendly packaging. Beyond environmental considerations, however, convenience also plays a very practical role in the preference for classics and automatic or solar-powered watches. No battery changes or charging, and no need to question whether a watch is still contemporary, make it easier to navigate a complex world while remaining effortlessly stylish.

Solar, seen at: Boccia, Citizen, Tissot, Seiko, Casio, Bering, Skagen, Ruhla, Junghans

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The German Federal Association for Jewellery, Watches, Silverware and Related Industry (BVSU) was founded in Pforzheim in 1947. As a lobby group for over 170 predominantly medium-sized member companies, BVSU represents the interests of its members at a national, European and international level. BVSU is a member of the Federation of German Industries (BDI). It is responsible for coordinating the federal associations of the German jewellery and silverware industry. In this capacity it is also integrated in global efforts of the World Jewellery Confederation, CIBJO. BVSU represents the interests of the German watch and clock industry at a European level as a member of the European watchmaking associations EUROTempus and CPHE. BVSU is a member of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) and the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030.