

**How long have you been collecting watches?**

Since I was 16; it was after my 'O' levels. I was working as a waiter during the holidays so I had some savings.

**What got you into this hobby?**

Mechanical miniatures such as clocks and radios always fascinate me. From young, I learn to take them apart and re-assemble it back. I couldn't afford Star Wars figurines or LEGO then, so making my own toys was a weekend affair using canned food tins, nails, ropes... whatever I could get free. I bought my first \$2 watch from a schoolmate in primary school. It was strapless, digital and had light.

**How addictive is watch collecting?**

It's bad. I used to read up on every single book about watch collecting I could find including Chinese, German and Japanese versions. I would bring them along to the toilet, bus... anywhere. Knowledge is paramount and I often read them over again several times. I was even able to remember what kind of movement is used in a particular model, when they were made and what variety of dials they had!

**Do you break the bank for your watch collection?**

I need to speak to my banker on this.

**How do you go about sourcing for the timepieces?**

I find them in flea markets, old shops tucked away in forgotten estates, Malaysia, Bangkok and beyond. Sometimes, I barter trade them with friends, dealers or collectors. There was no Internet then and the community was small and intimate. Everybody knew each other. Now, I get them from dealers, owners and agents from around the world.

**Any particular type of watches you look out for?**

I like complicated stuffs that tell more than just time alone. These are chronographs, perpetual calendars, tourbillons and repeaters. Then, it'll be the brand, design, construction, finishing and presentation.

**What are some of your favourite pieces?**

I prefer the vintage watches from 1920s-1970s, as they are well designed and relate to the fashion and economic culture of its period. I have a collection of vintage Rolexes (1920s-1970s), Patek Philippe (1910-current) and several pieces from each major manufacturer. Most are limited editions, rare or have ceased production models.

**What does your loved one think of your expensive hobby?**

She's supportive but I try to keep her away from knowing too much.

**Would you sell off your favourite piece if the price is right?**

Yes, watch collecting is just a hobby and it is man-made which can be obtained again. With the right money, you can even commission the factory to reproduce the exact watch for you.

**Any tips for newbies who wish to start collecting watches?**

Budget yourself; don't overspend by paying instalments that you can't keep up. Visit reputable dealers, read books, magazines and Internet forums. But what you see, read and hear may be deceptive or opinionated. Go, explore on your own and use your own judgement.

