



Is the Patek Philippe 'Tiffany' T150 the ultimate retailer-signed watch?

The Patek Philippe T150 was created in 2001 to mark the longstanding relationship between the watchmaker and Tiffany & Co. Values have since shot up...

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The relationship between watch manufacturer and retailer is coming into sharp focus right now, especially as more manufacturers are taking the online route and becoming retailers themselves. Some brands, however, are holding out, putting their faith in retail relationships that have existed for as long as there have been watches.

Back at the beginning it was retailers who held the power. Buyers knew little of watches and expected the shopkeeper to recommend a watch to fit their needs and budget. Often the retailer's name was on the dial, with the maker's name hidden away on the movement. Rolex, ever the marketing pioneer, exhorted customers in its early advertisements to "ask your jeweller for Rolex", a phrase today's brand-savvy consumer would never hear. Eventually the power balance shifted, marketing went global and manufacturer logos and brand names took pride of place above the hands.

In today's collectors market, any detail or nuance that makes a watch rarer can be leveraged to increase perceived value. The presence of a retailer's name on the dial of a prestigious maker can add thousands to the value, especially as the occurrence became increasingly rare. Serpico Y Laino, Freccero, Beyer and Gobbi

evoke a time when powerful retailers helped brands push into new markets. The king of the retailer signatures, however, has to be Tiffany & Co, whose name has doubled and tripled the value of watches at auction compared to those with a plain dial.

Tiffany's relationship with [Patek Philippe](#) is particularly strong, the retailer having championed the brand for well over a century and a half. To celebrate this relationship, in 2001, Patek created the ref 5150 "T150" Annual Calendar dedicated to Tiffany. References to the retailer are found across the dial with the 12 numeral being replaced by a large capital T, the full company name written out below the moonphase window and a picture of the store along with the anniversary years engraved on the officer-style case back. Even the month is displayed as a numeral, in the American style.

To reinforce the Tiffany-ness, the outer carton was made in Tiffany blue. One hundred and fifty watches were created in each of white, yellow and rose gold, making this limited edition not vanishingly rare but, given the popularity of both brands, not easy to come by. Originally the T150 retailed at \$21,000 for yellow gold and \$22,500 for rose or white gold. Unsurprisingly, values have shot up, especially with the current interest in "double-signed" watches, but if retailer connections are your thing, it doesn't come more "double signed" than this.