

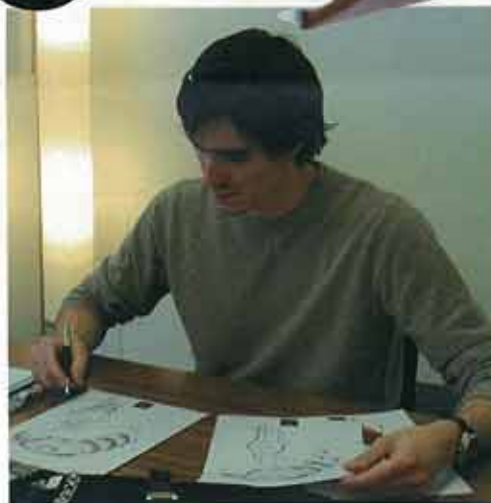


# Making time

ADVERTISING TELLS US THAT IT'S OUR WATCH THAT MAKES THE BIGGEST STATEMENT ABOUT WHO WE ARE, BUT IT ALSO TELLS US MUCH ABOUT THE PERSON WHO CREATED IT. RETAIL JOURNALIST **ANDREW DON** TALKS TO THE PEOPLE WHO DESIGN WATCHES TO UNCOVER THE INSPIRATIONS THAT ARE DEFINING YOUR CUSTOMERS

Falling rain on a window, or a stone on a beach can be sources of inspiration for new watches that take the market by storm or fill a niche. Spring rain on a window was exactly what drove Nina Ricci freelance designer Sebastian Perret to create the drop dials of the N011. The idea for another Nina Ricci watch, the N001, was born of a vase that designer Giampiero Bodino saw in New York.

It's easy for fashion styles to be ephemeral, but designers who want to create brands that have staying power must know how to harness their skills to come up with something timeless.



Sebastian Perret, freelance designer at fashion watch brand Nina Ricci, takes his inspiration for his creations from nature, hence the curves of the models (above)

Ann Kantra, who oversees the design and development of the Tommy Hilfiger watch collection at Movado Group, where she is vice-president, says this is one of the most challenging parts of the design process. Kantra's inspiration comes from cars, sports, art and street fashion.

Thierry De Baschmakoff, who has developed a collection of No 8 watches for Asprey – where he is creative director for leather, watches and accessories – tends to pluck ideas out of his head. He says all kinds of creations can influence him – decoration, fashion, graphic design and new technology but it's important for designers to be strong enough to “control and anticipate” trends.

## Now for something different

Designers, and those that brief them, need to keep a weather eye on the competition. Chatila, a London-based retailer and wholesaler that designs its own Royal Diamond brand, does this to make sure it produces something different.

And listening to what customers want is paramount. Gary Batchelor, who works in one of the company's four shops, in Old Bond Street, London, talks about the feedback he gets from exhibiting in Hong Kong and Las Vegas: “The Japanese market will say: ‘We'd love that, but we'd like it half the size.’ And when we go to Vegas and they say: ‘We love that watch but we want it twice the size’, we go back the following year with the watch tailor-made.”

Maurice Lacroix, like most brands that want to stay relevant to a modern market, examines its range periodically to see if an update is necessary, or if there is a gap in the market that it could fill.

Mark Sutcliffe, managing director of watch brand Maurice Lacroix UK, and the brand's Selena range, which has been designed to meet specific demands

