

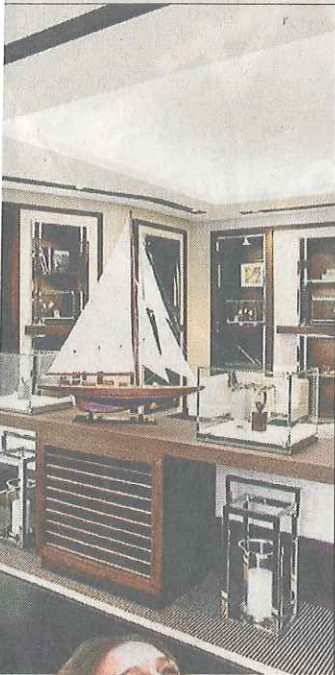
The Daily Telegraph



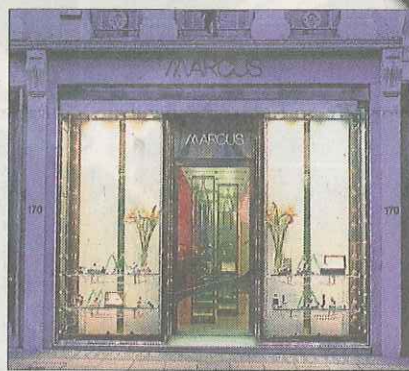
Breitling Navitimer steel on crocodile strap, £4,110, available at Harrods and Selfridges

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buffalo-skin flying jackets. The sporty Ingenieur department offers hi-tech racing bikes and wraparound sunglasses. Fans of the famous Portuguese model, meanwhile, are offered desktop weather stations and nautical instrument sets, while the Ingenieur models are complemented by custom-made watch winding machines and leather goods. Then there's the small IWC Collection of specialised items, which are only available at the flagship boutique. (www.iwc.ch)



Live the life: the IWC concept store in Hong Kong



Specialist boutique

Marcus, on New Bond Street, London, is one of the most prestigious watch boutiques on the planet, and suitably claims to house one of "the most important collection of watches in the world". It is a mecca for horophiles from every continent, especially those looking for expensive, exotic and hard-to-obtain pieces by niche makers such as Greubel Forsey, Urwerk and MB and F. The store belongs to Marcus Margulies whose family company, Time Products, established the Sekonda brand during the Sixties - it is now one of the UK's best-selling watch brands and its success allowed Margulies to found his eponymous store for like-minded watch buffs in 1999. This tranquil, architect-designed shrine to haute horlogerie is laid out over four floors, with stock at prices ranging from £3,000 to what Margulies will only refer to as "seven figures". The service is immaculate and regular customers are often to be found there enjoying a light lunch, a game of backgammon and, of course, an in-depth discussion about the world of high-end watches. (www.marcuswatches.co.uk)

Airport

Airports are popular places from which to buy watches, and inexpensive "holiday" models sell. But many people take advantage of waiting time to peruse the pricier timepieces on offer, on the basis that the airport can be a bargain place to buy. It happens to find yourself in a country where the currency exchange rate is favourable. Watch brands usually try to keep prices in line across the world to prevent people going to countries with weaker currencies in order to make considerable savings. The choice of brands at major airports is as good as on the high street, especially, of course, at Swiss airports such as Geneva - but remember, if you buy a watch from outside the European Union and import it into the UK it will be liable for import duty. Some people attempt to avoid this by disposing of the packaging while strolling through the "nothing to declare" channel while wearing the watch. If caught this can result in confiscation of the watch and a large fine.



“ Specialist high-street retailers

Brand salon

Many high-end brands establish their own boutiques in major

Independent

Despite the power of the major independent, family-owned retailer, a popular destination among the w