

WATCHES



The Marcus boutique on Bond Street turns watch buying into a leisure activity.

It comes as no surprise that Marcus Margulies is a man passionate about watches. Rather refreshingly, though, he admits two things: "Shopping is a leisure activity," he says matter-of-factly, acknowledging that Marcus, his beautiful shrine to some of the most sophisticated watches on the market, competes fiercely with museums, spas, country walks, football and basically any other leisure activity you might care to imagine. Indeed, that's why they call this sort of place destination shopping. It's a destination alright – enter it and you'll feel you've arrived.

"A watch is an impulsive buy," Margulies goes on to explain. "People have been known to come here and spend serious money buying

Sieraforn of Marcus, Bond Street



watches on a whim, and then never wear them." All of which probably explains why he prides himself in having created a store where you can shop for a watch while simultaneously being invited to enjoy a cigar and watch the football.

Margulies wanted the shop to look like an art gallery. He was inspired by, amongst other things, London's John Soane Museum, which has been open to the public since the nineteenth century. While Soane, an architect, designed his house to live in, he also intended it as a setting for his works of art. In a similar vein, the striking and inviting design of Margulies' three-storey emporium, with its artfully constructed cabinets and illumination systems, shows the world's finest watches in their most impressive light.

"Certain ones just jing to you," says Margulies, getting sentimental. "Richard Mille watches, for example. It's like a relationship." Asked to name his favourite timepiece, Margulies effortlessly reels off a whole list. It includes Girard-Perregaux's three-bridge tourbillon, Franck Muller's mirror dial watches (these are limited editions made exclusively for Marcus), anything by Richard Mille, and Audemars Piguet's perpetual Royal Oak, which, says Margulies, "offers the ultimate horological performance and endurance – it's stood the test of time."

Watches are, of course, the ultimate boy's toys, like cars or gadgets. But the perennial difference with a watch is that you are able to bring it

A TEMPLE OF TIME

To step into Marcus, the specialist watch store on London's Bond Street, is to enter a veritable cathedral of luxury watches – a cathedral, fortunately, in which everything is for sale.

One of Harry Winston's latest creations



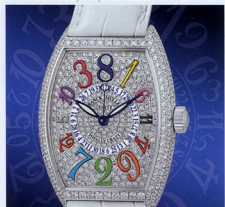
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with you into a room and wear it on your skin. And rest assured that any watch you lay your eyes on at Marcus is perfectly qualified to make a bold style statement, clearly reflect your appreciation of sophisticated engineering and act as the subject of many an animated conversation.

Indeed, telling the time is often the last thing on anyone's mind. Franck Muller's most cheeky watch to date, the brand new Totally Crazy Hours, is an excellent example of this. Jumping hours and jumping date features mean the numbers on the dial are arranged randomly and the hands dance around to reach them each time the hour or date change. Dean Harding, the deputy manager, recently confessed that customers have been

Franck Muller's Totally Crazy Hours



known to return to Marcus several months after buying the Crazy Hours – last year's somewhat less confusing version given it didn't even feature a date indication – simply to find out how the mixed-up dials tell the time.

– Claire Adler

MARCUS MARGULIES TALKS SHOP

Q: What is your definition of a customer with good taste?

At Marcus with good taste are able to carry extravagant and unusual styles comfortably. They typically blend colours together well and always look elegant. A lady once came in and asked for a particular watch to be customised for her in a specific

colour, requesting baguette-shaped diamonds instead of brilliants. The factory was delighted with the result. They should have made it themselves but they didn't have the guts.

Q: What has been your most memorable sale at the boutique?

As a customer pursuing a severe hangover came in and spent an obscene amount on beautiful watches. I was literally begging him, saying he shouldn't buy so many in one go, but the guy insisted and bought the lot. He ended up saying "this will be my last lesson never to get so drunk and behave so irresponsibly ever again."

Q: What was the most unusual request you received?

As I have personalised watches with images of the owners on the dial.

– Claire Adler

Daphlys at Marcus

