

BOND STREET

London's Bond Street is a major centre of horological excellence, attracting buyers from all over the world.

In recognition of this, some of the most prestigious watch companies have opened their own shops here, including Patek Philippe, Rolex, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Chopard, Breguet, de Grisogono and, recently, Omega. They nestle alongside watch and jewellery companies whose names are legendary the world over, such as Cartier, Tiffany, Bulgari and Asprey.

Watches of Switzerland has two shops in Bond Street, one at 1 Old Bond Street, on the corner of Piccadilly, and its flagship store at 16 New Bond Street. It probably stocks the widest range of Swiss watch brands to be found anywhere in the UK. It carries a wider selection of models from many manufacturers than can be found in most other shops.

Wempe, at 135 New Bond Street, is another company that is very serious about watches and has a blue-blooded lineage of brand names. The presence of the Wempe family in the world of luxury for more than 125 years has enabled it to develop a special relationship with the greats. The Hamburg-based company has a strong presence in Germany, as well as stores in New York, Paris, Vienna and Madrid. When the London shop opened eight years ago, it represented the realisation of a dream for Helmut Wempe, grandson of the founder. He had long considered London to be 'The capital of Europe'.

One remarkable man who has spent his life importing and distributing many great watch brands, as well as building his own exceptional private collection, is Marcus Margulies. Evenually he decided to open his own unique shop, providing a luxurious and peaceful environment that is appropriate



MARCUS



GOLDSMITHS GROUP



MARCUS

NON BOND STREET

The United Kingdom has around 7,000 watch and jewellery shops and is unique in Europe in having two major chains of jewellers. **The Goldsmiths Group** has more than 200 shops, including Mappin & Webb and its sister company, Watches of Switzerland, which joined the group last year. Being a national chain enables Goldsmiths to offer a significant benefit: a watch bought in any of its shops can be returned to any other shop in the group if it needs to be serviced or in the unlikely event that it needs attention under guarantee. Goldsmiths was the first company in the UK ever to sell Rolex watches. It still proudly sells them in a number of its shops and each of these branches has a resident watchmaker.

The **Signet Group** is the other major group whose shops can be found in almost every high street, trading mainly under the names of Ernest Jones and H Samuel. It has more than 600 shops in the UK.

The **David Morris International Watch Room**, on the ground floor in Selfridges in Oxford Street, may be the single most important watch outlet in Europe and claims to be the number one outlet for Omega, TAG Heuer, Gucci, Dior and Breitling watches. It offers an extensive choice of watches from around 30 brands.

Harrods, too, has long been an important port of call for watch buyers from all over the world. In October last year a sumptuous refurbishment of the Fine Jewellery and Luxury Watch Room was completed. It now offers a very inviting space in which to choose between fine timepieces from many of the world's best-known watch houses.

There are many excellent independent watch and jewellery shops in the UK that also have much to offer: look out for a sign that says that they are members of the National Association of Goldsmiths.

WHERE TO BUY



MARCUS INTERIOR



WATCHES OF SWITZERLAND



WEMPE

for the extraordinary watches he sells. Known simply as **Marcus**, the shop is at 170 New Bond Street. It occupies four floors of the 19th century building and is a shrine to haute horlogerie. Here, in addition to the classic models it is always possible to find limited editions and exclusive pieces, as well as outstanding vintage timepieces that can make any watch collector drool. Mr Margulies' policy is to buy for his shop only what he likes – and he has exquisite taste. Some of the world's most exclusive watchmakers sell their watches exclusively through Marcus in the UK, which gives this shop a special appeal. The finest examples of new and vintage timepieces are kept in the vault, as well as a dressing case made by Boucheron in the 1850s. This was bought at auction and Mr Margulies smiles when he mentions that the underbidder was the Louvre. It is not surprising that Marcus is considered to be one of the three most important watch shops in the world, given Mr Margulies' unrivalled knowledge of the watch industry. For many devotees of fine watches Marcus is horological heaven. Prices at Marcus here are from less than £3,000 to what Mr Margulies modestly refers to as 'seven figures'.