

Watch Customisation

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A growing trend for personalised timepieces

Customisation on luxury watches is an ever growing market as all types of clientele look to personalise their timepiece and make it unique to them.

The requested changes can range from something very basic, such as engraving, to master engraving, which is hugely popular on Rolex watches. I have also fitted sapphire glass backs on Rolex watches and etched clients initials on Rolex 3135 rotor weights, which I think looks superb and makes each unique.

Personalisation is endless and even the big watch houses are taking note. Tag Heuer is now in partnership with Bamford Watches, an elite Company who, in the past, has customised Rolex watches with amazing dials and pvd/dlc cases. Bamford now customise Tag Heuer watches with amazing results and have become highly successful with a huge client base.



The Cartier before its customisation.

The picture above shows a very standard ladies quartz Cartier which retails new at around £2,700. This model is one of the most popular Cartier watches and has a quartz in-house movement and basic minute and hour hand with white roman dial.

My client initially approached me with a view to selling and upgrading to a more stylish steel and diamond version, retailing at £6,100. I explained that it is possible to achieve exactly the same look, with the same diamond cut, weight and clarity, by using the skills of a highly professional

master diamond setter to micro set the diamonds into the stainless steel case.

The original set Cartier has 24 diamonds, approx. 0.49 carats. We are able to achieve 0.60 total carat weight, also with 24 diamonds at a clarity of VS with a colour of G/H.

I made sure my client was aware that once the case was diamond set, Cartier's in-house service centre would not be willing to service the watch unless the case was changed back to its original condition. She was happy with this and had no issue signing the agreement to say she understood all the terms and conditions.

Once the customer had seen an example of a watch that had been customised in this way, she then booked her watch in for the whole process. This included an entire strip down of the case and ultrasonic clean to a very high temperature to remove the glue from the glass.

Afterwards, the case was sent to a master diamond setter, who put in hours of work to produce a perfectly uniformed row of 12 diamonds on each side. These were all 100% mined cut diamonds (not clarity enhanced or lab grown) and came to a total carat weight of approx. 0.60 carats vs g/h (the naked eye cannot tell the difference from d to f).

Once set, the case was then ultrasonically tested to check that each and every stone was secure in its four claw setting before being given a high-lustre mirror finish and a final quality control check.

The completed case was then sent back to me, the watchmaker, to re-set the



The dull and scratched bracelet.



The completed watch.

sapphire glass and fit new seals. It was also pressure tested at 50 meters. Once the case was tested for water resistancy and passed, the bracelet was then fitted.

As well as the watch, which had a new battery supplied and fitted, the bracelet was also fully valeted, which included a full ultrasonic and steam clean and a satin finish in the centre. When everything was complete the case was given a 12-month warranty.

My client was delighted with the watch and decided to have it valued at her preferred valuer. It was valued at £6,800 due to the diamond content – she is now planning to buy a Cartier handbag to match.

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