



ROLEX RESETS THE DIAL ON LONDON'S LUXURY LANDSCAPE

THE WATCH BRAND'S
NEW BOUTIQUE UPS THE
TEMPO WITH A FOCUS ON
PREMIUM HOSPITALITY,
FINDS AMY WAKEHAM



In London in 1905, Hans Wilsdorf founded the watch company that he would name 'Rolex' just a few years later. Now, 120 years later, Rolex has put a fresh stamp on its city of origin with the opening of a new flagship boutique at 34 Old Bond Street.

The brand, in partnership with retailer Watches of Switzerland, has spent the last year and a half transforming the 7,200sq ft property, which was originally built as a bank in 1886.

Its new address has become the largest Rolex boutique in Europe, featuring four floors, an exhibition space, a selection of certified pre-owned models, and a service centre with five expert watchmakers and two technicians.

The boutique will "redefine the luxury retail experience," says Brian Duffy, CEO of The Watches of Switzerland Group.

The building itself, offering incredible double-aspect views over Old Bond Street and Stafford Street, has been painstakingly renovated and reimagined for the world's leading watch company.

Every inch is imbued with brand signatures, from the marble concierge desk in Rolex green to the walnut-clad pillars that recall its famous bezels. Vitrines hold the latest must-have models, while a portrait of Hans Wilsdorf is a



CHANGING TIMES Left: The new Rolex flagship boutique at 34 Old Bond Street. Above and right: Inside, there are four floors and an exhibition space. Top right: the Land-Dweller 40 in platinum. Right: the GMT-Master II in 18ct white gold; Below: The Oyster Perpetual 28 in lavender

reminder of where the story began.

Once visitors have finished viewing the just-released timepieces on the ground floor, they can make a beeline downstairs for an appointment in the Rolex Certified Pre-Owned space. Here, collectors can get their hands on rare references, with stock replenished frequently and requested models sourced if possible.

On display during my visit was a sought-after Rolex GMT-Master II with a meteorite dial, and an unusual Rolex Datejust 36 “Zebra”, with its distinctive monochrome striped dial and diamond-studded strap.

Alongside the much-coveted vintage watches is an exhibition space, currently dedicated to an in-depth display about the fascinating aviation history of the GMT-Master model.

On the first floor a huge green marble bar, trimmed with gold, sits alongside private appointment rooms. Here will be held intimate receptions for some of the watch brand’s most important customers. Photographs of Rolex ambassadors and sporting greats like Roger Federer, Jackie Stewart and Tiger Woods adorn the walls.

On the top floor, in a light-filled space with sweeping views is the Rolex Authorised Service Centre, where people can bring their timepieces for servicing and repairs. The glass-walled workshop allows visitors a glimpse of the brand’s master watchmakers at work, placing its



commitment to craftsmanship and enduring quality centre stage.

Although each floor is beautifully rendered in luxurious materials and finishes, the centrepiece at the heart of the boutique (aside from the watches on display, of course) has to be the extraordinary art installation that extends from the top floor to the basement, made from green glass and gold bezels that mirror the brand’s timepieces.

But although the interiors are impeccably executed, with the kind of understated confidence that Rolex has made its own, what makes the boutique stand out – even surrounded by leading luxury brands on Bond Street – is its focus on providing an impeccable welcome to everyone who steps through its double doors.

The staff, who together speak 17 languages, have undergone extensive hospitality training, with the mission of giving visitors an experience on a par with a five-star hotel. Whether you’re an old customer, a new one, or a future one, the



reception is warm and genuine, and there’s lots to engage with.

“The new store represents the latest elevation in customer service standards and Rolex representation,” says Richard de Leyser, Managing Director of Rolex UK, who also notes the brand’s “commitment to delivering an unparalleled experience for every client.”

This vision is confirmed by Duffy. “We have invested in this venture because we are committed to delivering a memorable brand experience with exceptional client experience,” he says. “This will be a true destination for Rolex enthusiasts, where they can immerse themselves in the heritage and craftsmanship of the brand.”

And with history, legacy and savoir-faire built into every corner, this is undoubtedly the new must-visit destination for every watch lover taking a stroll down Old Bond Street. **1**
For more information, visit rolex.com