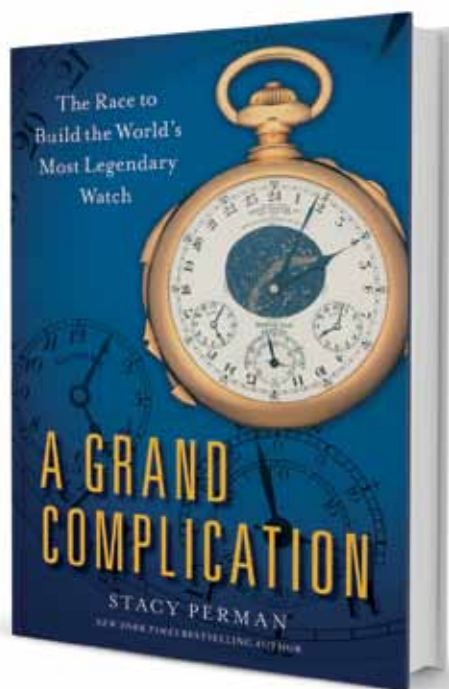




WATCH JOURNAL REVIEW

THE BOOKS OF SUMMER | TWO NEW PERSPECTIVES ON WATCHMAKING AND HISTORY

A fine watch has always been a sought-after sign of wealth, but today's watch-conscious collectors, celebrities and world leaders have nothing on the watchmaking patrons of the early 20th century.



The horological “arms race” was at its height between 1900 and 1928, when born-to-wealth financier Henry Graves, Jr., and self-made millionaire James Ward Packard were locked in a competition to possess the most complicated watch in history. *New York Times* bestselling author Stacy Perman chronicles their rivalry in her new book “A Grand Complication: The Race to Build the World’s Most Legendary Watch” (Atria Books, \$26 in hardcover, \$13 ebook).

The outcome of their battle is already familiar to watch enthusiasts: Patek Philippe’s completion of the Graves Supercomplication pocket

watch after eight years in design and production put Graves on top and in possession of the most complicated timepiece created until that time—with 24 distinct horological complications. But Perman’s telling of the story goes beyond that. It is also a fascinating study of the two men’s divergent and dynamic personalities and careers as well as their single-minded pursuit of the same objective. In addition, it’s a sweeping chronicle of early-20th-century high society and the dawn of the modern automotive era that reads like a social drama.

When Graves died, the storied watch disappeared for decades and then resurfaced

at a Sotheby’s auction in 1999, where it shattered all known records and fetched \$11 million from an anonymous bidder. Perman’s epilogue explores its recent re-emergence at the end of last year, when the anonymous bidder was revealed to be a member of the Qatari royal family, who has pledged the Graves Supercomplication to Sotheby’s to cover debts owed to the auction house.

In this epilogue, as in the rest of the book, Perman brings to life the high-powered and often-secretive world of watch collecting through meticulous research, vivid detail and an abundance of unforgettable personalities.

WATCHMAKING GREAT

Master watchmaker and inventor George Daniels (1926–2011) is widely regarded as the finest watchmaker of the 20th century. Over the course of his career, he constructed just 25 unique mechanical watches, creating almost every component by hand. While admired for their lucidity of appearance and unadorned but supremely elegant dials, Daniels’ watches often incorporate exquisite complications, including chronographs, thermometers, perpetual calendars and minute repeaters as well as displays of mean solar and sidereal time and the age and phases of the moon. The new biography “George Daniels: A Master Watchmaker & His Art” (Thames & Hudson, \$95 in hardcover)

by noted journalist Michael Clerizo is an up-close look at the man and his creations, including his invention of the Daniels co-axial escapement, which ingeniously reduced friction, improved timekeeping and helped the mechanical watch industry survive in the face of an onslaught of mass-produced quartz wristwatches.

Clerizo, who interviewed Daniels many times, including for this magazine, worked closely with the watchmaking great in the preparation of this book, a large-format volume filled with detailed photographs of each of Daniels’ unique watches alongside rare and previously unpublished images from Daniels’ own archive of photographs and working drawings. In addition, Clerizo tells the story of Daniels’ early life, enduring passions and affinity for all things mechanical, reflected in his own collections of watches, clocks and cars. The biography presents a comprehensive and fitting tribute to a great watchmaker, a fascinating personality, a great figure of the modern era and one who won’t be soon forgotten.

