

Play the name game for value

The watch market can be obsessed with brand names – and the best names do come with a price tag to match.

But for those who don't wish to join the pricey hunt for Rolex tool watches or Heuer sports chronometers there are plenty of good timekeepers at auction or from dealers that won't break the bank. Some may even share the same movements and case elements as their more expensive contemporaries. As the advert once said, beware of expensive imitations.

The sale at **Duke's (25% buyer's premium)** in Dorchester on June 16 included a collection of 1970s stainless steel chronographs by low-key makers – many the forgotten Swiss firms that were casualties of what has become known as the 'quartz crisis' when countless makers of good quality mechanical watches (and their suppliers) went to wall as consumers embraced a new and cheaper technology.

Currently, these 'rediscoveries' are providing the market with its best value and its newest narratives.

Among the most popular of all vintage Seikos is the 6105 8110 diving watch in a 'turtle' case. The affordable choice for US soldiers in Vietnam, it set the trend of bold, wide, asymmetrical, cushion cased diving watches. Martin Sheen wears one as

“

These 'rediscoveries' are providing the market with its best value and newest narratives

Captain Benjamin L Willard in *Apocalypse Now* – leading to the nickname Seiko Willard. They are still relatively affordable although prices have risen across the decade: the example here made £700.

Yacht timers – also referred to as regatta timers, yachting chronographs, or sailing watches – are specially designed and made for the countdown to the start of a sailing race. Perhaps the most famous of these regatta timers is the Heuer Skipper Carrera, nicknamed the 'Skipperera', one of which sold for £19,000 at Bonhams on June 15.

It is usually the colour-popping dials that make yachting chronos stand out. The example made by Yema was powered by a Valjoux 7713 movement and has a two-piece case with inner case for protection. Produced in very small numbers, c.1974, and branded as 'yachting chronograph' to the dial, the example here took £760.

The Memosail made by the Swiss 1970s brand Memotime comes in a number of different builds – the Dorchester example with a cushion-shaped case and red, blue and white dial. The countdown function has the letters *S T A R T* and the minutes on rotating rings. The first five minutes appear against a yellow background, with the final countdown minutes 5-4-3-2-1 against fire engine red. The internals were a Valjoux 7737, a modification of the 7733. It sold at £400.

Royce is another of the all-but-forgotten Swiss companies. It was the later brand name for watches manufactured by the Eska Watch Company, founded in 1918. A chunky cushion-form watch with a two-tone blue dial with white subs and red, white and silver hands looked the part on its blue military canvas strap and took £700.

What they lack in brand recognition, these watches gain in rarity value. The collection included two manual wind 70s chronographs by Swiss makers about which little or nothing is recorded.

A watch with a tonneau-form case by Fabrique d'Horlogerie Miramar with a blue and silver dial and orange second hands sold at £500 followed by £700 for a stainless steel bracelet watch with blue dial and bezel branded for Palex of Switzerland.



WATCHES OF LANCASHIRE

the vintage watch specialists

globally trusted for sales and service.
every watch we sell comes with a reassuring 24 month guarantee.

telephone +44 (0)1254 87 33 99
www.watchesoflancashire.com



1. Memosail yachting chronograph – £400 at Duke's.
2. Yema yachting chronograph – £760.
3. Royce chronograph – £700.
4. Miramar chronograph – £500.
5. Palex of Switzerland chronograph – £700.
6. Seiko Willard chronograph – £700.