

Rodeo Drive-The Podcast **Season 2 / Episode 7 Summary**

Time Moves On: The Modern Watch Collector

Technology could have made the wristwatch obsolete, but people are still wearing watches - and collecting them like never before. Highly-crafted timepieces are so desirable that all the top brands have a presence on Rodeo Drive today.

On this episode of Rodeo Drive-The Podcast, host **Bronwyn Cosgrave** meets the watch dealers and aficionados who have made the luxury thoroughfare a destination for haute horology.

Nicola Cagliata is the regional manager for Jaeger LeCoultre and the former president of the Rodeo Drive Committee. “If you were to walk Rodeo Drive up and down 15 years ago, you would have not found the Vacheron Constantin boutique, the Panerai boutique, the IWC boutique, the Rolex boutique, the Jaeger-LeCoultre boutique, the Patek Philippe boutique, all of these did not exist. It's a very, very recent phenomenon in the world of retail.”

Tom Blumenthal is CEO of GEARYS Beverly Hills, which owns boutiques on Rodeo Drive for Rolex and Patek Philippe, and has announced their expansion into a 15,000 square feet, flagship location for the two brands. “There's a difference between a passionate collector and a passionate investor,” he says. “And we're selling to the passionate collector.”

Cosgrave meets a new group of passionate women collectors.

“The days of the man in your life buying the watch for you, those days are over,” says **Ming Liu**, who writes about watches for publications including *British Vogue*, the *Financial Times* and the *New York Times*, adding, “Women want watches that express who they are.”

Cosgrave talks to **Iris Ko**, an anesthesiologist in Los Angeles who first became charmed by watches when she was a child and now owns 57 collectibles, including a rare Vacheron Constantin that she purchased on a speedy time out during an operation.

“It's about artistry, passion, creativity, history, there's just so much to it,” says Ko, explaining her obsession with watches. “I don't think that a lifetime is enough to really delve into the world of horology.”

Highly crafted watches can be as sought after as fine paintings and cost as much as a house or a vintage car, and a competitive resale market also exists to meet the demand.

So one Rodeo Drive dealer is opening a new space devoted to the secondary market. **Greg Simonian**, president of Westtime luxury watch store on Two Rodeo Drive, says that soon customers will be able to purchase fully serviced and certified, pre-owned watches by Richard Mille and other brands such as Omega.

“You can go upstairs, look at some older, maybe vintage Omegas, and understand where the brand came from, and gain a new appreciation,” says Simonian.

Finally, Cosgrave delves into why, in an age of smart watches, traditional timepieces continue to hold such an allure.

“I think it is because watches transcend time, because they just get passed down through generations,” says the journalist Ming Liu, adding, “they’re about time, which is quite poetic.”