

BEST GEAR OF THE YEAR

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Men's Journal

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Watches
LUSTWORTHY TIMEPIECES
UNDER \$1,000

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2009



1. RED8

Red8 is dedicated to producing the anti-luxury timepiece. While watch lovers obsess over Swiss brands, the company's models proudly proclaim their Asian production. A bright-red crown adorns each watch, and the bezel is engraved with four related but seemingly random words. The Red8 is no slouch technologically, either, featuring a quartz movement that gets three months of power from a single wind.

[\$880; red8world.com]

2. JORG GRAY 6500

When a secret service agent assigned to then Illinois senator Barack Obama gave him this timepiece, little did either man know it would spark a national phenomenon. Photographs of President Obama wearing the Jorg have made the pared-down chronograph one of the most sought-after accessories of 2009.

[\$325; jorggray.com]

3. TX 530 AIRPORT LOUNGE

For the jet-setter who's just as liable to wake up in Hong Kong as he is in his own bed, the Airport Lounge's ability to display the time (and season) for every time zone at the press of a button is nearly a necessity. And it's all wrapped up in a vintage-inspired body topped off with a domed case crystal.

[\$495; txwatches.com]

4. ORIENT CFM00004W

A 21-jewel automatic movement, see-through ("exhibition") back, and power indicator are three features that typically translate into an inflated price tag, but the Orient chronograph offers the hat trick for peanuts. It's versatile, too: sporty enough for daily wear yet stylish enough to be paired with a suit.

[\$345; orientwatchusa.com]

5. BREIL MILANO MEDITERRANEO

Deep teak inserts flanking the face and a brushed-chrome casing make this Italian-bred sports watch the perfect choice for a man seeking the European yachtsman flair of an Audemars Piguet Royal Oak — without the yacht-size budget.

[\$650; breilmilano.com]

6. LUM-TEC COMBAT B3

Lum-Tec specializes in making hand-assembled, limited-edition military-inspired timepieces with automatic movements and a proprietary luminescent chemical that makes the faces glow like wrist-mounted flashlights. Only 150 Combat B3s will be manufactured, and each comes with two NATO straps.

[\$695; lum-tec.com]

7. REACTOR TRIDENT

Soldiers serving overseas are clamoring to score a Trident after a story surfaced about a staff sergeant on duty in Iraq who survived two IEDs and a suicide bombing while wearing one. Despite the explosions, the watch was still ticking.

[\$350; reactorwatch.com]

8. STEEL BLAZE

The Steel Blaze is spartan in both looks and complexity, and at 45mm wide, it's not for the dainty-wristed. For any man who lusts after the ever-popular watches from Italian manufacturer U-Boat but doesn't have \$2,000 to spend on wristwear, it's the next best thing.

[\$135; steelblaze.com]

—BENJAMIN CLYMER