The Times of Tiffany: A Watchmaking Tradition Since 1847

Tiffany’s heritage as a premier watchmaker can be traced through a timeline of innovations that extends from its founding in New York City in 1837 to the present Tiffany CT60 collection, named for founder Charles Lewis Tiffany, who invented the “New York Minute.” The now-famous phrase originated with the unveiling of the nine-foot Atlas clock above the Tiffany store located at 550 Broadway in 1853. Generations of New Yorkers embraced it as their personal timekeeper and a symbol of the city’s energy. Today the clock graces the entrance of the company’s Fifth Avenue flagship store.

Artistry and Innovation
Tiffany & Co. began selling watches in 1847. Four years later, Mr. Tiffany and Messrs. Patek and Philippe signed an agreement making Tiffany & Co. the first retailer in America to carry Patek Philippe watches. In 1874, Tiffany built a four-story, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at Geneva’s Place Cornavin. Here, Tiffany met the increasing demand for gold pocket watches with advanced movements that chimed on the hour and quarter-hour; diamond-encrusted lapel watches and timepieces embellished with pastoral scenes in enamel, and mythic figures, floral motifs and fine scrolls engraved in gold.

Tiffany pioneered a number of important watchmaking innovations. The Tiffany Timer, an early stopwatch introduced in 1868 was used for engineering and scientific purposes, as well as sporting events. In addition, the company received patents for advances in watch movements and hand settings. Renowned Tiffany gemologist, George Kunz, patented a luminescent green paint for numerals and hands.

By the 1880s, Mr. Tiffany had become a world-renowned jeweler and watchmaker with a reputation for the finest craftsmanship and commitment to customer service. One aspect of that service was the weekly regulation of over 400 clocks in the homes of Tiffany customers, which began with the adoption of standard time in 1883.

Leading the World
The Tiffany Archives showcases masterpieces from Tiffany’s gold-medal exhibits at World’s Fairs spanning two centuries. At the 1876 Philadelphia World’s Fair, Tiffany was honored for its jeweled watches. A centerpiece of its winning exhibit at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair was the American Wild Rose Lapel watch, a diamond and enamel creation by chief designer Paulding Farnham. Tiffany also received medals for watchcases and astronomical clocks at the 1893 Chicago Fair. Tiffany’s exhibit at the 1939 New York World’s Fair featured an array of elegant diamond and platinum cocktail watches, as well as timepieces in the striking “Cocktail Style” such as the Trapezoid wristwatch with tinted gold, geometric...
Two watch designs introduced in the 20th century were influenced by the country and city where Tiffany was founded. The Streamerica® watch was inspired by the gleaming forms and metallic surfaces of the 1930s American industrial design movement. In 1983, the Atlas® watch was introduced as a tribute to Tiffany’s great public clock above the Fifth Avenue flagship store. The watch’s three-dimensional, diamond-cut Roman numerals generate a sensuous play of light. The iconic Atlas watch collection is re-energized with the Atlas 24mm watch with diamond details—a new interpretation of the classic motif. The sophisticated and refined design symbolizes something more feminine and intimate to suit both everyday and elegant occasions. The Atlas® collection represents a seamless transition from archival to modern Tiffany design.

Inspired by a chatelaine watch made by Henry Blank and Company for Tiffany in the 1920s, today’s Tiffany Cocktail Collection is the epitome of timeless glamour. The collection pays homage to the original watch by echoing its feminine, oval face and is embellished with sparkling round brilliant diamonds on the bezel and crown. A Tiffany travel clock from the 1940s influenced the Tiffany East West® collection, featuring crisp, rectangular lines and a distinctively unique horizontal dial. The latest designs include the smaller Tiffany East West® Mini, a Tiffany East West® Automatic as well as the Tiffany East West® with SuperLuminova numerals that illuminate the night with an iconic Tiffany Blue® afterglow.

Setting the Pace
Inspired by the pace and energy of New York City, the Tiffany Metro collection for women is the perfect synthesis of refined jewelry design and unparalleled craftsmanship. Tiffany’s diamond legacy takes center stage in this design where each timepiece features a round brilliant diamond crown that is assigned a unique serial number to make the watch personal to its wearer. The Tiffany Metro watch redefines the past to reflect a unique design for the contemporary woman, offering a range of stunning dials, cases and straps as well as a the refined curve of the stainless steel bracelet. The array of design details present the wearer with style options to suit any occasion day or night.

Merging extraordinary design with handsomely crafted with Swiss movements, the Tiffany CT60 and Tiffany CT60 Dual Time model are hand-assembled using time-honored techniques to create a refined watch with vintage character. The timepieces’ pure lines and clean aesthetic are based on a gold Tiffany watch given to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, one of many American presidents who purchased or received Tiffany watches. The inscription on the case back read, “Franklin Delano Roosevelt, with loyalty, respect and affection.” Inspired by Roosevelt who wore the watch to the historic Yalta Conference in
1945, the Tiffany CT60 collection represents a seamless transition from historic to modern Tiffany design.

The Tiffany CT60 and the Tiffany Metro watch both symbolize the bold innovations of founder Charles Lewis Tiffany— inventor of the New York Minute—and the city where he first opened his doors to a new world of style. TIFFANY & CO., T&CO., TIFFANY, STREAMERICA and ATLAS and are trademarks of Tiffany and Company and its affiliates.