

# PHILLIPS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

## BACS & RUSSO

PRESS RELEASE

## Phillips to Offer Roger Smith's Career Defining, Handmade Pocket Watch Number Two, A Landmark Achievement in Watchmaking

Smith's Greatest Masterpiece and the Cornerstone of the  
21st-Century English Watchmaking Renaissance

To be Sold in The New York Watch Auction: EIGHT,  
Estimated in Excess of \$1 Million



Roger Smith, Pocket Watch Number Two  
Estimate in Excess of \$ 1 million

NEW YORK – 11 APRIL 2023 – Phillips in Association with Bacs and Russo are honored to announce the first public sale of Roger Smith's Pocket Watch Number Two, an historically important timepiece that represents a landmark achievement in the industry and the cornerstone of the 21st-century English watchmaking renaissance. There has been no other singular watch known to have completely defined the life of a renowned watchmaker.

At the age of just 22, Smith presented the esteemed George Daniels, widely considered the greatest watchmaker of the 20th century, with his first handmade pocket watch in hopes of securing a coveted apprenticeship. Daniels, however, advised the newcomer to go back and start again as it looked “handmade” and not “created”. Undaunted, Smith spent the next five years perfecting his second pocket watch, featuring a perpetual calendar and tourbillon with spring-detent escapement, before presenting it to Daniels. Upon examining the timepiece, Daniels proclaimed, “you are now a watchmaker,” and accepted him as his only apprentice. Without the completion of this watch and its acceptance by Daniels, there would be no Roger Smith brand. Estimated in excess of \$1 million, the watch will be included in The New York Watch Auction: EIGHT on 10-11 June at 432 Park Avenue, following a global tour to London, Singapore, Los Angeles, Geneva, and Hong Kong.



**Paul Boutros, Phillips’ Head of Watches, Americas**, said, “Roger Smith’s Pocket Watch Number Two epitomizes a ‘make or break’ moment for both Smith himself and subsequently for all of contemporary English watchmaking. It was with this watch that he became George Daniels’ only apprentice, anointed to continue Daniels’ legacy beyond his lifetime. The painstaking, years-long creation of Pocket Watch Number Two is a testament to one man’s absolute focus and perseverance in the pursuit of his chosen trade. It is without any doubt, one of the most important and impressive timepieces made by any contemporary independent watchmaker or brand, and consequently one of the most important watches in the world. We look forward to sharing this remarkable and storied timepiece with our community around the globe.”

At 16, Roger W. Smith, OBE, applied to either woodworking or watchmaking school, and was accepted to the latter first, setting his career in motion. A lecture in his final year at the Manchester School of Horology offered an opportunity for him to encounter George Daniels for the first time, after which he wrote to Daniels asking for an apprenticeship. Though denied by the master who worked alone, Daniels invited Smith to come visit him at his workshop.

With the audacity and fearlessness inherent to youth, Smith set up shop in his parents’ garage and set himself on the path to creating, entirely by hand, his first pocket watch, which entailed 18 months of work. It was a tourbillon pocket watch with spring detent escapement and twin barrels. When he finally presented it to Daniels, the reception was not positive. “Not up to scratch” was the verdict, and Smith then received the key piece of advice inherent to the Daniels method: that watches should appear “created” rather than handmade. Further enhancements and refinements were needed. Smith returned home, determined to succeed on the next attempt.



Roger Smith in his Workshop on the Isle of Man, 1990s  
Credit: Roger Smith

From 1992 to 1997, Roger Smith devoted himself to this second pocket watch, which was even more complicated than his first attempt with the addition of a perpetual calendar. Every single component of the watch was hand created from raw materials by Smith himself. The watch would near completion only for Roger to realize that the more recent components were superior to the older components, and he would have to remake them. Five times he remade the entire pocket watch, tempering and refining each individual element up to eleven times. Finally, his efforts culminated to a point where he was happy with the result.

Housed in an impressive, hand-made 18 karat gold case measuring 66.5mm in diameter, it was time to present the watch to Daniels. Daniels carefully inspected the watch that would define the rest of Smith's life. Daniels asked who made each of the components, one-by-one. To each query, Smith answered "I did." At the end, Daniels congratulated him. "You are now a watchmaker."



In his six decades as a watch and clock maker, Daniels only ever had one apprentice: Roger Smith. Shortly after approving of Pocket Watch Number Two, Daniels called Smith and asked for his help in completing a series of watches to celebrate his co-axial escapement recently adopted by Omega. This was to become the Millennium series.

Once the Millennium series was completed, in 2001, Smith decided to set out on his own and create his own wristwatch. After Daniels' death in 2011, Roger Smith inherited his workshop on the Isle of Man, as well as the current production and future service needs of any Daniels wristwatch or pocket watch. More than an heir to this throne, Smith has also advanced the cause of contemporary British watchmaking in the past two decades. In 2013, Roger Smith was invited to be part of the GREAT Britain campaign, showcasing the splendor and innovation of contemporary British watchmaking.

Placed side-by-side with the chapter in Daniels' *Watchmaking* on engine-turned cases and dials, in the execution of this dial, Smith clearly sought to experiment with every possible skill set described in the book. Four different types of engine-turning are present: barleycorn for the outer portion of the main dial, basket weave for the seconds dial displaying the moon phase, clous de Paris within the calendar dials, and a wave and trough pattern delineates the hours and minutes sectors. The hour and second rings are straight-grained, engraved, and filled with ink. A small cartouche below the moon phase displays 'R.W. Smith', discretely at 12 o'clock a "No. 2" is engraved. Rather than drawing inspiration from traditional British watchmaking, the dial is quintessentially Breguet.

Beneath the dial lies the exquisite double barrel spring detent escapement and tourbillon carriage. Unlike Swiss watchmaking, there is no anglage or Côtes de Genève present on the movement. Instead, the movement is created from a single brass plate that is first given a type of distinctly English finish called "frosting" and then immersed in an acid bath and gilded. The finishing of the edges is straight, rather than curved. The winding mechanism is hidden, so that when the watch is opened to view the movement, the viewer only sees the most exceptional components.



Roger Smith pictured with George Daniels, 2000s  
Credit: Roger Smith

In total, Roger Smith has made only three pocket watches. His Pocket Watch Number 1, deemed insufficient by George Daniels, was disassembled and only the movement remains now, still in the workshop on the Isle of Man. Pocket Watch Number 3, made as a private commission, remains in private hands. Pocket Watch Number Two, the present watch, stayed in Smith's possession until 2004, when it was sold to fund the launch of his eponymous brand. Offered by an important collector, it has never surfaced publicly until now. On 13 April, Pocket Watch Number Two will make its public debut during the London Exhibition of The New York Watch Auction: EIGHT's International highlights tour, with a special panel discussion featuring Roger Smith. Phillips is privileged and honored to offer Roger Smith's greatest masterpiece.

## INTERNATIONAL TOUR:

Dates	Location
13-16 April	London - 30 Berkeley Square, London
25-27 April	Los Angeles – Phillips Los Angeles, 9041 Nemo Street, West Hollywood
10-14 May	Geneva - Hôtel La Réserve, 301 Route de Lausanne, Geneva
May, dates forthcoming	Hong Kong- G/F, WKCDA Tower, West Kowloon Cultural District, No. 8 Austin Road West, Kowloon
3-9 June	New York - 432 Park Avenue, New York

**Auction:** 10-11 June 2023

**Click here for more information:** [www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/NY080123](http://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/NY080123)

### **ABOUT PHILLIPS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BACS & RUSSO**

The team of specialists at Phillips Watches is dedicated to an uncompromised approach to quality, transparency, and client service. Phillips in Association with Bacs & Russo holds the world record for the most successful watch auction, with its Geneva Watch Auction: XIV having realized \$74.5 million in 2021. Over the course of 2021 and 2022, the company sold 100% of the watches offered, a first in the industry, resulting in the highest annual total in history across all the auction houses at \$227 million.

Record-breaking prices include:

1. Paul Newman's Rolex "Paul Newman" Daytona reference 6239 (CHF 17,709,894 / US\$17,752,500) – New York Auction: Winning Icons – 26 October 2017 – Highest result ever achieved for any vintage wristwatch at auction.
2. Patek Philippe reference 1518 in stainless steel (CHF 11,020,000 / US\$11,112,020) – Geneva Watch Auction: FOUR – 12 November 2016 – Highest result ever achieved for a vintage Patek Philippe wristwatch at auction.

### **ABOUT PHILLIPS**

Phillips is a leading global platform for buying and selling 20th and 21st century art and design. With dedicated expertise in the areas of 20th Century and Contemporary Art, Design, Photographs, Editions, Watches, and Jewelry, Phillips offers professional services and advice on all aspects of collecting. Auctions and exhibitions are held at salerooms in New York, London, Geneva, and Hong Kong, while clients are further served through representative offices based throughout Europe, the United States and Asia. Phillips also offers an online auction platform accessible anywhere in the world. In addition to providing selling and buying opportunities through auction, Phillips brokers private sales and offers assistance with appraisals, valuations, and other financial services.

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium; prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

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