



# international WATCH

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## A CENTURY OF CITIZEN WATCH TECHNOLOGY

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### BUYING VINTAGE

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The vintage Zenith Heritage is powered by the manual winding movement, Caliber 146HP

LFW

BY LAURENT MARTINEZ

# BUYING *Vintage*

How to approach a potentially collectible watch like a dealer.

**I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU A SNEAK PEEK ON HOW I SELECT AND BUY TIMEPIECES SO YOU CAN APPROACH BUYING VINTAGE WATCHES LIKE A WATCH DEALER. WE'LL USE THE VINTAGE ZENITH HERITAGE 146 HP - A277, AN ICONIC PIECE FROM THE LATE 1960S, AS AN EXAMPLE.**

First off, buying a vintage watch is an emotional experience. Whether it's the brand, the design, the movement, or the story behind the watch, something speaks to you to persuade you to buy it. Never buy a timepiece if something about it bothers you, even if it's a small detail like the style of the hands or the pattern of the dial. What may seem like a minor inconvenience in the beginning will eventually grow into a bigger nuisance in the long run.

The vintage watch market is large and varied so only settle on a timepiece that you're completely satisfied with. Be patient, do your homework, and remember the age-old saying, "If it's too good to be true, it probably is."



This year Zenith revives its 1960s Cairelli model with this Pilot Cronometro Tipo CP-2.

When I first saw the vintage Zenith Heritage, I was immediately attracted to it, which was already a great sign. Then I began my initial inspection to ensure that everything is original on the watch. In today's vintage market, an original dial is critical to its value.

I took the Zenith Heritage watch in my hands to first feel the weight. Then I looked at each component—the dial, the hands, the bezel, the crown, the luminous accents, the case, and the caseback—taking my time and noticing the details. I noted that the watch has signs of wear, but I'm okay with that since it's never been polished. I also noticed that the crown is probably not original as it's missing a logo, which will affect its value, as does the lack of original strap and buckle.

The vintage Zenith Heritage timepiece has a beautiful dial with creamy subdials, a true mark of its age. The uniformity of the main dial color is striking while the patina of the three subdials enhances the vintage quality of the watch. Not only is the tritium luminescence in solid condition but also the "Swiss Made T" designation dates the watch between 1968 and 1998. I've seen other versions of that label that made me question the authenticity of those particular models.

Flipping the watch around, I took the screw-down caseback off to get a closer look at the movement. The vintage Zenith Heritage is powered by the manual winding movement, Caliber 146HP, with 17 jewels. It features a balance wheel oscillating at a rate of 18,000 vibrations/hour, offers a 38-hour power reserve and displays of the hours, minutes, with small seconds at 9 o'clock.

After the acquisition of Martel Watch Company in 1960, Zenith took their movement and adapted it to make the 146 D and H. Everything beneath the watchcase was in working order and to my satisfaction.

Adding to the appeal of the watch is the fact that Zenith just released a new vintage-inspired series. Consequently, this interest in vintage aesthetics will only serve to increase the value of the original vintage model. This particular

Zenith Heritage is quite rare, which of course also increases its value. Generally speaking, a good condition vintage Zenith Heritage with an original crown, band, and buckle would be priced anywhere between \$8,000 and \$10,000.

Overall, this particular example offered a good balance of uniqueness, rarity, and desirability in the market. While the absence of an original crown, band, and buckle decreases its value, those components are easy to source and replace. Furthermore, the fact that it's never been polished makes it all the more attractive. Completing the package is its good looks and functioning movement. But most importantly, I got a good feeling when holding the watch. So after great consideration, I deemed this watch to be suitable enough to add to the website's collection.

There you have it, a little insight on how I decide if a timepiece is worthy of our time. Happy vintage watch hunting! 🍷

*Martinez is the proprietor of Laurent Fine Watches*

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