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VALUATIONS



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Slow and Steady? The Enduring Appeal of Cartier's Tortue Wristwatch

French for 'Turtle,' the Cartier Tortue gets its name from its distinctive tortoise shell shaped case. The Tortue was Cartier's third ever watch case design, predating even the ever-popular Tank. Louis Cartier had just introduced the Santos-Dumont in 1904 and the Tonneau in 1906 when he designed the Tortue in 1912.



Cartier's First Ever Chronograph

The Tortue started out as a time-only watch but in 1928, both a minute repeater and a single-button chronograph were introduced. The Tortue Monopusher was in fact Cartier's first ever chronograph timepiece. These early pieces are incredibly rare, and less than fifteen pieces have ever surfaced on the open market. In 2002, Antiquorum sold a 1929 Cartier Tortue ref. 20797 – a rare example of a minute repeating watch and at the time thought to have been the only minute repeater made by Cartier during the Art Deco period. This piece set auction records, and achieved a hammer of CHF 993,500, or £877,871.50. Two years later in 2004, Antiquorum unearthed and sold a 1928 example of a Tortue Minute Repeater ref. 20797 and this piece achieved \$640,500.



The Earliest Cartier Minute-Repeating Wristwatch Cartier, France, "Bracelet Montre Tortue Or", No. 20797, movement No. 30159. Entered into the Registers on August 2nd, 1928. Exceptionally fine and extremely rare, minute-repeating, tonneau-shaped, 18K yellow gold Art Deco wristwatch. Accompanied by a Cartier certificate. Sold at Antiquorum for CHF 993,500 (£877,871.50).

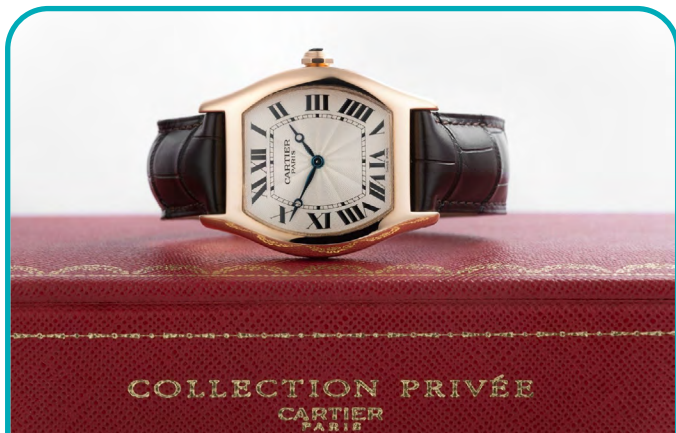
Throughout the 20th century, Cartier have produced many variations of the Tortue, in steel, yellow gold and platinum. Popularised as a ladies watch and gaining celebrity fans such as Cate Blanchett and Patti Smith, these watches have been available to purchase on the secondary market, performing steadily on an upwards trajectory.

For example, the Cartier Tortue reference 2496C which was produced from 1998-2008 is a time-only, 34mm, 18ct yellow gold watch with silvered dial and

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classic Cartier dial with Roman numeral markers, chapter ring and blued steel Breguet style hands. According to Chrono 24, the average value of this watch took a typical post-covid dip from those dizzy heights in watch collecting, however has been steadily increasing over the last 18 months, with the average sale figure on the secondary market now sitting at £12,500 (rising from a modest £5,000 pre-covid).

With production numbers limited and many models already sold out – at the time of writing only the platinum diamond Privé Tortue and the platinum Privé Tortue were still available to purchase new from Cartier – it will be interesting to see the rise in value for these timepieces, particularly the Monopousoir references with their sleek classic design, impressively 'simple' one button chronograph complication and distinctive red ruby cabochon crown.



Above: A Cartier Tortue wristwatch, ref. 2496C. Released between 1998 and 2008 as part of Cartier's Collection Privée. 'With My Car', 1978, £18,000

Re-imagined and launched at this year's Watches & Wonders, the 2024 Privé Tortue is the eighth instalment in Cartier's latest Privé collection. Celebrating 112 years since the inception of the original Cartier Tortue, the maison introduced a collection of time-only and more excitingly chronograph Privé Tortue models, each limited to 200 numbered pieces – except for a diamond and platinum monopusher (or monopousoir in French) watch limited to 50 pieces.



The new 2024 Privé Tortue collection

Model	Production Quantity	Price at Watches & Wonders 2024
Platinum Privé Tortue Monopousoir Watch	200	€53,000
Yellow Gold Privé Tortue Monopousoir Watch	200	€46,000
Platinum Privé Tortue Watch	200	€31,100
Yellow Gold Privé Tortue Watch	200	€27,900
Platinum Diamond Privé Tortue Watch	50	€67,735

(Sources: Cartier & Hodinkee)

In what remains an ever-changing market, current and up-to-date and specialist watch valuations are incredibly important to ensure that your collection is adequately covered. For an insurance valuation of your collection from our specialist, nationwide team, contact our team via enquiries@doerrvaluations.co.uk or visit our website www.doerrvaluations.co.uk.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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With over 12 years in jewellery and watches, Liz holds FGA and DGA qualifications, chaired North West Gem-A, and delivers expert, detail-oriented valuations, continually updating her expertise through courses, conferences, and webinars.

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