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Article: **Time to Choose Luxury or Practicality**

big ticket

Time to choose luxury or practicality

Rory Jones

N High-end luxury watches can be pretty expensive, especially if you are the kind of person who gets bored with the clock face in the time it takes to pay off your credit card.

But how about a luxury watch that can change its appearance – like a good spy in a bad movie.

The HD3 Slyde uses a smart phone technology to give buyers the option of a number of clock faces. Launching globally in the next few weeks, the traditional Swiss watch-makers will release a few new faces each year to give buyers a growing number of options.

The touch-screen face can be flicked upwards, downwards and sideways to reveal a number of other time-related functions and photos can be added to give some faces a personal touch.

One of the faces is a stopwatch and there is another that shows the cycles of the moon.

The watch comes in a number of different colours and styles, including steel, titanium, black and rose gold. Buyers can also add diamonds and some styles have black rubber straps and others have alligator leather.



An HD3 Slyde watch. Courtesy Slyde Watch

Like all Swiss watches, the design of the Slyde is sleek, stylish and looks expensive – because it is expensive.

The HD3 Slyde will retail at Dh25,000 (US\$6,807) in Ahmed Siddiqi and Sons stores across the Emirates. That might not seem too pricey next to a Rolex. But compared to the Apple iPod Nano, it is certainly big-ticket.

The latest Nano has a square face and also boasts touch-screen technology. And there are now a number of wrist straps that can be bought separately for the Nano, which the

music player can slide straight into. You get music, a watch, iTunes and a radio all in one, but for hundreds of dirhams, not thousands.

Admittedly, the Nano is not going to give you the Slyde's technology or the style of a Swiss watch.

But, on the other hand, you will be able to keep the kids in shoes this Christmas, and you can even buy some music from iTunes with the money saved.

You decide, style or savings.

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Top five most expensive watches in 2011

- 1** 201-carat Chopard: US\$25 million (Dh91.8m)
- 2** Patek Philippe Supercomplication: \$11m
- 3** Patek Philippe Platinum World Time: \$4m
- 4** Vacheron Constantin Tour de l'Île: \$1.5m
- 5** Patek Philippe Sky Moon Tourbillon: \$1.3m

Source: Menpulse.com

High cost of high-end design

Jorg Hyssek, the chief executive of HD3, explains how his son injected some life into the company.

How did you come up with the Slyde concept?
My son joined the company about five years ago and we began to think a little bit more for the younger generation and using new technology. He designed the Slyde with the idea to make a very high-end watch.

Is Dh25,000 (US\$6,807) not a bit too high for a watch that uses smart phone technology millions of phones now have?

There are people who see the product and understand the high-end, luxury nature of it. The most important point is the watch is in the higher point of sales.

But the Slyde is not the same product as a normally intricate and delicate Swiss watch. We are the first high-end watch with the new technology and all the experience with the normal watches is the same. The difference is that we use other technology and it is our challenge to prove you can do high-end products with this technology.

Is it not cheaper to buy a smartphone with similar technology?
We do not want gadgets that you can compare with the iPhone. But people can feel comfortable personalising the product. You can download your own photos which gives that personal touch. It is also very instinctive to use. You tap, slide or hold a tap down for three seconds to set the time. It is simple and logical to use.

★ Rory Jones



I'm very proud of my gold pocket watch. My grandfather, on his deathbed, sold me this watch

Woody Allen