



## LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

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# SYMBOLS OF PERMANENCY

## THINGS THAT LAST AND WHY WE MAKE THEM

**Time stands still for no man.** That's nowhere more evident than in Egypt, which I was fortunate enough to visit recently. Standing next to the Great Pyramid of Khufu on the Giza Plateau outside Cairo, Egypt, I was impressed by the scope of the structure, as well as its permanency. Built around 2560 BC, it is still standing, little worse for wear.

By contrast, absolutely everyone involved in its construction, including the pharaoh who commissioned the pyramid, has long ago escaped this mortal coil. But the monument to their lives, their work and their beliefs is still standing. There is speculation that the pyramids were designed not only as the resting places of the pharaohs but also as enduring and monumental reminders to the people of Egypt that the pharaohs may come and go, but what they represent—a link to the gods—is permanent.

Visiting the pyramids was an awesome experience for me, since I have always been fascinated by ancient Egypt. At one point, I read everything I could on the civilization, the culture and the rituals of this region. In fact, when I was young, I wanted to be an Egyptologist. Instead, I became a “watchologist,” a writer specializing in watches.

Like the pyramids, fine watches are symbols of permanency. This is because the best watches are designed to last, theoretically, forever. As Patek Philippe's marketing slogan goes, “You never actually own a Patek Philippe, you merely look after it for the next generation.” The same is true with any fine watch—if you take care of it, you will be able to hand it down to your children, and if they take care of it, they can hand it down to their children, and so on. The idea makes me smile: the thought that, long after I am gone, my grandchildren's children might be wearing my Zenith, my Bovet or my Carl F. Bucherer. It's amazing, really.

They aren't Egyptian pyramids, but fine watches have their own kind of staying power. Plus, they're much easier to wear.



—Keith W. Strandberg

INTERNATIONAL EDITOR