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## Bold move for luxury watch retailer

Tuesday, 6th May 2008 by Rebecca Burn-Callander



When Jura Watches founder Alastair Laidlaw decided to create an online shop for his luxury Swiss watch firm, the whole sector sat up and paid attention.

Luxury brands have traditionally been reluctant to embrace e-commerce. The reasons are manifold. "They feel that true brand values and the whole 'luxury shopping' experience can only be achieved within a retail environment," explains Laidlaw.

There's also the question of competing on price with hundreds of other online stores. Jura Watches is unique in this aspect. The retailer only stocks Swiss-made watches from independent brands. Run a "price comparison" search on a [Corum Classical Billionaire Tourbillon](#) (£589,000 – eek!) and you're unlikely to find many matches.

And if you're forking out upwards of £10,000 on a watch, you want to know you're buying from a credible business, not an internet cowboy.

To ensure these high-end brands would allow Jura to retail their rare watches online, Laidlaw needed a physical retail presence too. Not just any old shop, either. The Jura store is based in the heart of classy Mayfair on Burlington Gardens.

In an unusual twist, Jura also makes good use of its online offering in its real-world shop. The Jura Watches website is buffed to the max. It features articles from luxury watch magazine QP and contains a database of over 3,000 watches. The hi-resolution imagery is so sophisticated that you can zoom in and examine the detailed engraving on a second hand.

The online catalogue can be viewed in-store on a 103" screen - the largest plasma screen in the world, which takes up a wall in the shop. "Our customers can choose to order from the online range, or pick one of the 300-400 watches that we have in-stock," explains Laidlaw.

Sales are split 50/50 between the store and the website and the marriage of online and traditional retail is a big earner. Jura has only been in business for six months, but revenues so far indicate a prospective first year turnover of £2m.

[www.jurawatches.co.uk](http://www.jurawatches.co.uk)

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