



**A RARE MINIATURE FLORAL ENAMEL AND PEARL-SET GILT VERGE WATCH (above 1.5x magnified)  
- Made for the Chinese Market by Dimier et Cie, Geneva, Circa 1825**

This rare miniature Chinese market pocket watch is unusual for its small size, and for having a verge fusee movement, used to appeal to the Chinese taste for ornately engraved complex mechanisms.

This Dimier et Cie miniature watch has a signed gilt full plate movement fully engraved with foliate decoration, fusee and chain, verge escapement, three-arm balance, pierced and engraved balance bridge with coqueret, and is key wound through a hinged glazed cuvette. The white enamel dial is signed, and has roman chapters and outer minute divisions, with blued steel Breguet hands. The four-body, "Empire" case has a spring-loaded back with a finely painted polychrome floral bouquet, and the bezels, pendant and bow are set with seed pearls. The case is numbered 9566 and is 32mm in diameter.

See [www.bonhams.com/usa/auction/19216/lot/35/](http://www.bonhams.com/usa/auction/19216/lot/35/) where a very similar watch was sold by Bonhams USA in Sale 19216 - Fine Watches and Wristwatches, 16 June 2011 for USD\$8,540 (inclusive of buyer's premium).

See also [www.sothebys.com/en/ecat.lot.HK0356.html/3862](http://www.sothebys.com/en/ecat.lot.HK0356.html/3862) where another similar in pink gold with champléve to the band sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong Sale HK0356 October 2011 for HKD\$90,000 inclusive of premiums.

**Provenance / Condition:** The present owner's great grandfather was one of Dunedin's earliest shipping agents, managing vessels from the 1860's between Australia, Dunedin, and the goldfields of Otago and the West Coast. The gold rushes brought significant migrations of Chinese miners and traders and it is believed the watch was traded for passage. The watch is in original unrestored condition. There appears to be no damage or restoration to the enamel, dial, glasses, movement or case. The movement is going strongly and shows no signs of ever being modified or tampered with.

**A brief history of Dimier & Co.**

Dimier et Cie was founded in Geneva in the first quarter of the C19th by Jean Antoine Dimier (1795-1863), and later records show the firm was active in the rue Croix d'Or 27 circa 1835.

Dimier specialised in the manufacture and export to the Chinese market of miniature watches in gilt brass or gold cases, often with floral enamel and pearl-set decorations. (see "Dictionnaire des Horlogers Genevois", by Osvaldo Patrizzi, Antiquorum Editions, 1998). Dimier's miniature watches are a rarity amongst Chinese market watches of the early C19th, when Chinese buyers usually preferred watches of a large and impressive size.

Dimier's sons Charles-Louis (1822-1896) and Auguste-Antoine (1824-1891) graduated from the College of Geneva and were initiated into the art of watchmaking at Chaux-de-Fonds. Circa 1846 they set up in Fleurier, where Auguste manufactured "Chinese" watches with Charles as sales director. Around 1847 Charles moved to Canton and there founded Dimier & Cie. In 1860 this business came to a halt, probably because of the war in China, and Charles returned to Switzerland. In 1862 Charles and Auguste relocated the business from Fleurier to Geneva. Dimier Brothers & Cie continued supplying high-end watches well into the C20th.

The Dimier name was revived in the C21st by Pascal Raffy in conjunction with his firm Bovet Fleurier SA, producing limited edition and unique high-end artistic watches, priced between USD\$18,000 and \$2.5 million.

## Overview of Antique Chinese Market Watches

### **The Chinese Market Watch**

By Vince Ho

<http://www.rawbw.com/~hbv/horology/chinese.html>

### **Fabulous Antique Chinese Market Watches**

<http://www.worthpoint.com/blog-entry/fabulous-antique-chinese-market>

*"The watches need to be big and impressive, so size was very important. Small watches do exist, but are infinitely more scarce."*

## Market Commentary and Auction Reports

### **Buying Back a Forgotten Chinese Heritage**

New York Times - January 21, 2013

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/21/fashion/21iht-acaw-pocket21.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/21/fashion/21iht-acaw-pocket21.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

*"Only the best pieces, however, in original unrestored condition, will continue to be highly sought-after"*

### **Chinese Wealth Shows in Higher Watch Auction Prices**

New York Times - January 16, 2012

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/16/fashion/chinese-wealth-shows-in-higher-watch-auction-prices.html?pagewanted=all>

### **Sotheby's Geneva Sale of Important Watches Brings \$8,753,568**

Art Daily - May 17, 2011

[http://artdaily.org/index.asp?int\\_sec=11&int\\_new=47427&int\\_mod=1](http://artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=47427&int_mod=1)

### **A Time for Pocket Watches**

Wall Street Journal - May 16, 2011, 9:15 AM

<http://blogs.wsj.com/scene/2011/05/16/a-time-for-pocket-watches/>

### **Time is Money In China—Again**

Auction News Network - April 22, 2011

<http://www.auctionnewsnetwork.com/uncategorized/big-time-sales-in-china-200-years-later/3569/>

### **Perfectly Timed? Pocket Watches Score with Chinese Collectors**

Red Luxury - 15 April 2011

<http://red-luxury.com/2011/04/15/perfectly-timed-pocket-watches-score-with-chinese-collectors/>

### **Auction Houses Benefit From Renewed Chinese Passion for Pocket Watches**

New York Times - March 24, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/fashion/25iht-acaw-pocket-25.html>

### **Antique Pocket Watches Back in Vogue**

New York Times - 17 January 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/17/fashion/17iht-acawpocket17.html?pagewanted=all>

### **Seems Like Old Times for Chinese Watch Collectors**

Wall Street Journal - November 9, 2010

<http://blogs.wsj.com/scene/2010/11/09/seems-like-old-times-for-chinese-watch-collectors/>