

# Little Shop of Altered Time

*by* Gary Hardaway

“Such an interesting shop name. I see clocks and watches—antiques by the look of them— but do you really offer altered time?”

“Time is inalterable. We can only offer an altered perception of time. And what better way to do that than by offering altered timepieces? We only work with geared clockwork. We can't provide altered time through digital pieces. Changing their codes is outside our expertise. Given present trends, we may be forced to find a code wizard one of these days.”

“I see, or think I see. Do you have a bestselling altered time timepiece? Or is each one altered to order?”

“Actually, we offer four lines as ready-mades because of demand. The most popular are the nostalgia models, which suspend time to a given period of US history. Republicans are very fond of them. The older ones prefer the pieces that never register time outside of 1953--1960. They like Ikes. The younger prefer the altered Rolex models that keep time between 1981 and 1988. We call them the Reaganomics. They used to come with a very light dusting of cocaine but we had to back off that feature when Nancy heard about it and just said No. Among apostate hippie baby-boomers, the Timex-based Flower Child is a strong seller. It limits the wearer to 1968 Pacific Standard Time or 1969 Eastern Standard time, depending on the geographic bias and the Haight-Ashbury vs. Woodstock sensibility. They are so similar, we don't differentiate them as separate lines. Among despondent literati — demand from them is thin but consistent-- the Parabola is the favorite. With it, Delta-Time is always zero, and we add a tiny V-2 rocket in stainless steel to original

versions, or replicas, of German military-issue watches from the early forties. You can wind and wind them and they never break. The hands never move though you can hear the clockwork turning if you become very quiet and listen carefully. Do any of these appeal to you? Perhaps we can we offer a custom piece of altered time instead?"

"I do like the Parabola model you describe, but I'd have to have an original, not a replica. I presume they are rare and expensive and I don't think my budget could stand that. Do you have anything, anything at all, in what I'd call a Carpe Diem where time is made to run rather than walk? You know, something that somehow says "Seize the Day" whenever you glance its way?"

"Funny you should ask! As we speak, the studio is working on a speculative piece that matches your description. We call it the Coy Mistress."

