

Short answer: partly. Rolex secondary-market prices have shown signs of recovery since mid-2025, but “recovering” does not mean every model is climbing, prices are back to their pandemic-era highs, or a watch will sell quickly for the number you see online. The clearest way to assess the trend is to separate broad market indicators from individual watch prices—and to treat a Rolex as a valuable asset, not a substitute for cash flow.



For Los Angeles creatives, that distinction matters. A production payment might arrive weeks late, while rent, payroll, insurance, and studio costs are due on schedule. A Rolex may help bridge a temporary cash gap through an asset-backed loan, but borrowing against a watch has costs and timing risks of its own. Here’s a practical playbook for reading the market and deciding what to do next.

What does “recovering since mid-2025” actually mean?

After a sharp run-up during the pandemic-era buying boom, secondary-market prices for many luxury watches cooled. A recovery means prices or market indexes have started moving upward again from a lower point. It does not necessarily mean prices have returned to their previous peak, nor that every Rolex model has followed the same path.

WatchCharts data is useful for tracking broad trends and estimated market prices. One reported example is **Rolex secondary-market prices rising 1.7% in Q1 2026**. That figure suggests positive movement over the quarter. It should not be read as a guaranteed gain for every watch—or as an offer to buy a particular watch for 1.7% more than it was worth at the start of the year.

Indexes summarize a market; individual transactions happen one watch at a time. The price a seller actually receives can depend on the reference number, condition, age, box and papers, service history, and the buyer’s appetite for that specific configuration. A widely traded sports model and a less sought-after dress watch can behave very differently even when both carry the Rolex name.

How to read the trend without overreading it

- **Check the time window.** A quarterly gain can coexist with a longer period of flat or declining prices.
- **Look at the exact reference.** Brand-wide averages can hide large differences between models and variants.

- **Separate asking prices from completed sales.** A listing price is what a seller hopes to receive, not proof that a buyer paid it.
- **Allow for selling costs.** Dealer margins, platform fees, shipping, insurance, and possible servicing can reduce what lands in your account.

So, is the headline true? A careful version would be: **some market indicators point to a Rolex secondary-market recovery since mid-2025, with WatchCharts data showing a 1.7% rise in Q1 2026, but the rebound is uneven and does not promise a profit on any individual watch.**

Why a Rolex can be liquid—and why that doesn't mean instant cash

In finance, a liquid asset is one that can be converted into cash without excessive delay or a steep discount. Rolex watches can be relatively liquid compared with many other luxury goods because the brand has broad recognition and an active resale market. A buyer is more likely to understand the value of a familiar Rolex reference than a niche item with a tiny pool of collectors.

But “liquid” is comparative. A watch is not cash in a checking account. You may need time to find a buyer, verify the watch, negotiate a price, and complete payment. If you need money by Friday to cover a crew invoice, a strong resale market does not guarantee a Friday payout. Urgency can also weaken your negotiating position.

Consider a creative professional in Los Angeles who has a client payment due but not yet received. Selling a watch might solve the immediate problem, but it also gives up the asset and any future use or potential value. Borrowing against it may preserve ownership, but creates repayment obligations. The right choice depends on the size and timing of the shortfall—not on a headline about rising prices.

Why banks like predictable income (and why freelancers can struggle)

Traditional lenders often assess whether a borrower can make regular payments over time. A W-2 employee may be able to show consistent pay stubs and a clear salary. A freelancer, actor, designer, photographer, musician, or producer may have strong annual earnings but uneven deposits: a large project check one month, a quiet stretch the next, and a client payment that arrives late.

That irregularity can make underwriting harder. It does not automatically mean a freelancer is financially risky. It means the lender may have a tougher time fitting income that rises and falls into a standard monthly-payment model. Banks may request tax returns, bank statements, contracts, or other records, and may focus on income history rather than one promising invoice.

This is why someone with a valuable watch can still find ordinary borrowing difficult. The watch represents collateral—something with resale value—but a bank's standard loan process may be built around predictable [thelosangelestribune](#) income and credit history. Asset-backed lending is a different approach: the lender considers the asset as security for the loan. The borrower still has to understand the terms, fees, and consequences of failing to repay.

Asset-backed lending: the basic playbook

With an asset-backed loan, you pledge an asset—in this case, a watch—as collateral. The lender assesses the watch and offers a loan based on its estimated value, usually lending less than the full resale value to account for price changes and resale costs. The loan agreement sets the repayment terms, interest or fees, and what happens if you do not repay.

That can be useful when the cash need is temporary and the borrower has a credible plan to repay. It is not free money, and the watch's market value does not erase the debt. Ask for the complete cost in dollars, not just a rate or a vague promise of quick funding.



Before pledging a watch, check these points

1. **Get the full written terms.** Confirm the amount advanced, interest, fees, payment dates, loan term, and any extension or late-payment charges.
2. **Ask how the watch is valued.** Find out whether the offer reflects estimated resale value, a dealer purchase price, or another benchmark.
3. **Understand custody and insurance.** Confirm where the watch will be held, how it is insured, and who is responsible if it is lost or damaged.
4. **Know the default outcome.** Ask exactly when the lender can sell or take ownership of the collateral if you miss repayment.
5. **Match the loan to a real repayment source.** A signed contract or an expected client payment may support a plan; hoping that the market rises is not a repayment plan.

For example, borrowing against a Rolex to cover a short gap before a contracted payment arrives is different from borrowing to fund ongoing expenses without a clear way to pay the loan back. If the client's check is delayed again, the loan clock does not necessarily pause with it.

How to compare a sale with a loan

Question Selling the watch Borrowing against the watch Do you keep ownership? No. You transfer the watch to the buyer. Usually, but the watch is pledged as collateral under the loan terms. What is the main cost? The difference between your net sale price and what you might otherwise receive or value the watch at. Interest and fees, plus the risk of losing the watch if you do not meet the agreement. When might it fit? When you want to convert the asset to cash and do not need or want to keep it. When the need is temporary and you have a credible repayment source.

Neither option is automatically better. Compare the net sale amount with the total repayment cost of a loan. Also consider what the watch means to you personally. An asset can be financially useful and still have sentimental

value that makes a sale the wrong choice.

Getting a realistic valuation

A good valuation starts with identification, not a brand-wide average. Gather the reference and serial details, service records, purchase documentation, and information about condition. Note whether the watch has its original box and papers, but do not assume those items alone guarantee a higher offer. The model, condition, authenticity, and current demand all matter.

Tools such as **global secondary market pricing visibility** can help show how similar watches are being priced across markets. An **authentication and valuation process** can then assess the specific watch and identify factors that a broad index cannot capture. These tools are useful for getting oriented; they do not replace a written offer or a careful review of loan terms.

Diamond Banc, for example, operates in the luxury-asset lending and buying space. If you are comparing a loan with a sale, ask what service is being offered, how the watch is evaluated, and what your net proceeds would be after all charges. Morgan Stanley is a useful contrast: a traditional wealth-management and financial-services firm is not the same thing as a watch buyer or collateral lender. A luxury watch may be part of your personal balance sheet, but it does not automatically fit neatly into a conventional bank's lending process.

A Los Angeles creative's practical checklist

Before making a decision, take these steps:

1. **Write down the exact cash deadline.** A bill due next week is a different problem from a general desire for more working capital.
2. **Confirm the incoming money.** Separate signed contracts and approved invoices from work that is still only expected. Build in room for late checks.
3. **Identify the exact watch.** Use the reference, condition, and documentation—not the word "Rolex" alone—to seek estimates.
4. **Get more than one comparison.** Compare a potential sale price with a loan offer and its full repayment cost.
5. **Choose based on the repayment or sale plan.** If you borrow, know where repayment will come from. If you sell, know whether you are comfortable giving up the watch.

That process is more useful than trying to time the market from a single quarterly figure. Someone near Beverly Hills or along N. Camden Drive may encounter luxury-watch businesses and buyers, but proximity to a high-end retail district does not guarantee the best price. Treat each offer as a transaction to evaluate, not a verdict on your watch's permanent worth.

The bottom line

"Rolex prices recovering since mid-2025" is a reasonable description of a positive direction in parts of the secondary market, not a blanket promise. The reported example of Rolex secondary-market prices rising 1.7% in Q1 2026 is encouraging for sellers, but the gain is modest and does not tell you what a specific watch will fetch after costs.

For creatives with irregular income, a Rolex can be a comparatively marketable asset and may offer another financing route when traditional lenders want more predictable pay. But liquidity is not the same as immediate

cash, and collateral does not make a loan risk-free. Check the exact watch, compare a realistic sale with the full cost of borrowing, and plan around the payment dates you actually have—not the ones a client promised.

This article is general information, not personal financial, tax, or investment advice. Loan terms and watch values vary; review the written agreement and consult a qualified professional when appropriate.