

WINDOWS ON THE WORLD

For watchmakers, minimal production numbers can mean maximum creative freedom. These two timepiece creators turn out a small number of watches each year that break known design standards, this time with an emphasis on apertures.

BY ELIZABETH DOERR

MB&F

You might think that **Maximilian Büsser and Friends (MB&F)** sounds more like a hip advertising agency than a serious watch firm, but don't be fooled. Max Büsser's strengths lie in entrepreneurship. He ushered in Harry Winston's Opus watch in 2001, a line that saw the manufacturer working together with one well-known and creative independent watchmaker per year to produce an extremely limited product.

These kinds of projects gave Büsser the most energy and pleasure, so he created a company dedicated to designing and crafting small series of radical concept watches. Thus, thanks to the help of all the "friends" he has made in watchmaking over the years, Büsser is able to identify trends in *haute horlogerie* and bring together teams of talented independents to produce unique timepieces. "We are creating what has never been done," Büsser explains, "...amazing products that embody the shared values of exceptional mechanical horology with innovative thinking."

Horological Machine No. 2 is the second such product to emerge from the firm, a limited edition of 125 in red gold/titanium and 125 pieces in white gold/titanium, scheduled to be delivered over three years. The movement was designed by Jean-Marc Wiederrecht, a talented behind-the-scenes Swiss specialist. Wiederrecht's unique movement uses 349 components, including a double "Battle-Ax" rotor for the automatic winding that powers the twin windows of displays. The window on the left shows a retrograde date and the moon phase as seen from both hemispheres, while the right side provides information on the current time using a jump-hour display and concentric retrograde minutes. Extremely complex to fabricate, the case's engineering allows maximum flexibility in design and utilizes a rich variety of materials and finishes. This watch retails for \$62,000.

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HOROLOGICAL MACHINE NO. 2 / MB&F

VIANNEY HALTER

Vianney Halter has long been known as one of watchmakers—*an individual watchmaker with a curiously unique craft*. His is a world inspired by the novels of Jules Verne instruments, vintage automobiles and all things innate. This view is mirrored in each of the timepieces he crafts. At home within his emblematic **Futur Antérieur** collection, the rectangular **Trio** model, featuring separate windows for large aperture for the main display of the time and small subsidiary seconds at left and double-digit large date at right.

As unconventional as it looks, the Trio is an example of horology in its highest form. The brushed 18K rose gold case is embellished with decorative rivets located on the crown, bezels of the ports and the buckle. Each one is individually machined, polished and created with meticulous hand-crafted care. All of the blued-steel hands found on the Trio are also hand-crafted, an unusual element in this technical watch.

Halter created the **Caliber VH205** movement to precisely follow the parabolic curve of this unique timepiece. The movement's design includes 50 for the large date function alone—rest upon a curved angular base plate. This movement is outfitted with Halter's mysterious automatic-winding rotor, featuring a moving ring with no apparent link to the system.

The independent setting of the date and the time are controlled from the crown, which may not sound spectacular, but this see-through function represents a technical breakthrough as most large date functions are corrected by a separate button or pusher. Thanks to this system, passing midnight while setting the time will not damage the display or damage the movement. Halter's workshop in Switzerland, produces no more than 70 timepieces per year. The Trio range in price from \$65,000 to \$200,000.

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TRIO / VIANNEY HALTER

