



Workshops

As a little aside, one of our clients in Singapore, which had the Number One model, did not want to part with it, even with its defect, so he ordered a new one.'

The two men then go on to add, 'To speak quite honestly, however, we often ask ourselves this question: Why should we insist on making absolutely everything in Switzerland when so many others are quietly producing many parts in China? Are we stupid or are we masochistic? Frankly, no, we are neither. Why? Because our watches are made to last. Our timekeepers are not comparable to the concept watches being made by some of the grand brands, which are nothing more than marketing gimmicks. We are taking advantage of our originality. We are working for the long-term.'

It is true that the most advanced research into displays is at the avant-garde of timekeeping and thus only concerns a very small and exclusive clientele. Yet, the close, privileged, and personal relationship—which has been patiently built up with those rare individuals who appreciate exceptional pieces and incredible mechanisms—is what drives the actions and success of the young brands that are changing the 'face' of watchmaking.

Nomad rock band

A good example of this type of young brand is Max Büsser & Friends or MB&F as it is also called. This nomad manufacturer with a rock band-sounding name bases its activities on cooptation. Max Büsser has been able to profit greatly from the current trend of networking because of his very intimate understanding and knowledge of the terrain. Clearly, it is a terrain occupied by a rare and exclusive clientele who often see the watch market as a cousin to the art market.

Creator of Harry Winston's Swiss watch branch and initiator of the Opus family of timepieces (a pioneering collection in terms of display, see chapter on Baumgartner and Urwerk), Max Büsser launched MB&F in

2005 with his own Horological Machine No 1. In the vein of total transparency, we find the names of Laurent Besse and Peter Speake-Marin engraved on the movement of the HM1.

This unidentified watch object features an elevated central tourbillon that dominates a double ellipse in the form of an elongated figure eight, which displays, in a sort of disjointed manner, the hours, minutes, and seven-day power reserve. From a visual standpoint, this veritable three-dimensional watch aesthetically incorporates the operation of its four barrels mounted in parallel and in series, which drive the regulating organs from two simultaneous sources.

Maximilian Busser



Splitting the display

With its HM2, MB&F takes the double display a step further and explores retrograde indications, this time in collaboration with Jean-Marc Widerrecht, a talented specialist in this domain who was awarded the title of best constructor of the year at the *Grand Prix de l'Horlogerie* in Geneva in 2007.

On the left dial are a retrograde date and a bi-hemispheric lunar phase indicator. On the right dial are the instantaneous jumping hour and concentric retrograde minutes. All are displayed in two windows placed side by side on a rectangular plate. This split display is taken to a new dimension with the end user in mind: with half the watch under a shirt's cuff, only the half with the hour and minutes are seen, leaving no one to guess that the Horological Machine indicates much more than that.

The third machine is the HM3, which was recently unveiled, much like we would say for the unveiling of a sculpture. And, while the three-dimensionality is quite obvious in the first two machines, the HM3 takes this notion to even greater heights. Again, it is Jean-Marc Widerrecht who is at the helm of the little Girard-Perregaux motorized device. In this

HM3 Movement Double



HM3 Starcruiser

case, it features two cones in the shape of a volcano. One indicates the day or night on its summit while the hour is shown on its transparent sides. The other cone displays the minutes.

The two cones are placed in an opening shaped like a large half-moon that provides an in-depth view of the movement and its mysterious rotor placed on the face of the watch, while all around it can be seen the date engraved on a circle that moves. The wearer has not been forgotten, quite the opposite, since he can easily read the time by glancing at the sides of his watch. This truly three dimensions timepiece is available in two versions. The original horizontal model is named Starcruiser, while the Sidewinder is a vertical version suggested by a client.

Measuring the markets

A diligent assessor of the marketplace, Max Büsser was successful in pre-selling nearly all the first round of production of the HM1 thanks to his personal network of clients. But the first steps towards independence have not always been easy especially since the suppliers have not always kept their promises. As a result, delivery of the first 35 HM1 timekeepers was unable to be carried out until May 2007, nearly two years after the announce-

ment of their upcoming launch.

Since then, however, MB&F has consolidated its own network. The HM2 was first delivered in January 2008 and will be continued regularly at the pace of 100 pieces per year until 2010. The HM3 will be publicly presented in March 2009. The MB&F adventure is thus growing, both literally and figuratively.

Free electron

Another 'maverick' watchmaker, Jean-François Ruchonnet, who is very interested in the potential of mechanical displays and, from what he says, has always been so. A very talented individual who likes to dabble in nearly everything, Ruchonnet started in the technical division and R & D at Chopard until he left in 1999. He then pioneered a number of the most beautiful 3D animations in timekeeping, then went on to invent, among others, the V4 for TAG Heuer, a watch driven by belts that the firm's engineers have not yet been able to fully master (dare we ask if this watch is truly feasible?), as well as the Double Tourbillon Tournant for Breguet.

Now, Ruchonnet is launching his own timekeeper through his mini-manufacture called CréaLuxe, which he founded with Andréas Stricker. The first model to finally come out of this recent collaboration is the Cabestan. We