



Revisiting the sci-fi vibe of MB&F’s earlier Horological Machines, HM12 The Guardian is a mechanical duo combining the highly complex HM12 wristwatch – featuring a novel “face shield” complication, a flying tourbillon, a double-sided micro-rotor, jumping hours and traditional fine finishing – with ‘The Guardian’, a towering 38cm-tall robot equipped with a mechanical thermometer and integrated tools. Each combined unit comprises nearly 1,500 components. Only three limited editions of 12 pieces will ever be crafted.

THE MIND WITHIN THE MACHINE

The robots of founder Maximilian Büsser’s childhood have influenced MB&F’s creations from the beginning. One of the most striking examples came in 2015, when MB&F partnered with L’Epée 1839 to create Melchior, a robot-clock shaped by Büsser’s memories of toys, science fiction and machines imagined as personalities rather than objects. In 2026, MB&F introduces something new: a wristwatch conceived as the brain of a robot; and a robot that gives the wristwatch a presence far beyond the wrist.

A TOTAL HOROLOGICAL CONCEPT TO OPEN THE THIRD DECADE

Originally imagined to celebrate MB&F’s 20th anniversary, the development of HM12 The Guardian took far longer than expected. The project expanded and became more complex. What first seemed like a delay gradually revealed itself as an opportunity: it became the perfect object to launch the brand’s third decade. HM12 The Guardian is not a watch; it is a complete horological concept – and a deliberate return to MB&F’s roots, at a time when much of the brand’s audience has discovered it only recently. HM12 arrives as a recalibration. A way « to put the church back at the centre of the village » as we say in French.

BACK TO THE IDEA

At MB&F, going back to the roots does not mean revisiting the past. It means returning to the ideas and principles that have shaped the brand from the beginning, and testing whether they still hold when pushed forward. One of those principles has always been: a creative adult is a child who survived. HM12 The Guardian revisits key elements developed over the past twenty years and recombines them into a single object. Part Horological Machine, part Legacy Machine, part Co-Creation, it brings together narrative design, high-end watchmaking, mechanical experimentation and a playful relationship with the object.

A NEW CREATIVE DUO

HM12 also marks a pivotal moment in MB&F’s creative structure. For the first time, after 20 years of collaboration with renowned designer Eric Giroud – who remains a key partner on other projects – an Horological Machine is conceived and developed entirely by the tandem formed by Maximilian Büsser and Maximilian Maertens. Max and Max have been collaborating for several years, but until now Maertens’ work had been mainly visible in the clocks and music boxes co-created by MB&F with L’Epée and Reuge. Büsser provided the initial impulse for HM12 The Guardian, framing the concept: What if a robot’s head were a watch? He then stepped back and Maertens became the architect and guardian of the project. Over four years, Maertens iterated relentlessly: drawing, modelling in 3D, printing prototypes, testing stability and adjusting proportions.

A FACE, BEFORE A WATCH

Visually, HM12 is frontal. It reads immediately as a face, the head of the robot it sits on. Two eyes. A presence. The references are layered. For Max Büsser, they stem from early memories of robots and toys, from the science fiction imagery of the 1970s and 1980s, when machines were imagined as characters, explorers, or guardians. For Max Maertens, they come from a later generation, shaped by Transformers, animated series, and films like I, Robot, where robots evolve, adapt, and take on more complex roles. HM12 sits at the intersection of these imaginations across different eras.

A MECHANICAL FACE

Developed entirely in house, HM12 is the result of a movement and case architecture that took more than four years to complete. Every element was designed internally, with narrative intent and mechanical constraints addressed simultaneously. HM12 is conceived as a face, the entire watch forming the robot’s head. The time display occupies the position of the eyes. Instantaneous jumping hours on the left and trailing minutes on the right are read at a fixed point, while the information moves on rotating discs. Below, one side of the micro-rotor – shaped like the MB&F battle-axe – sits where the mouth would be. Above, the flying tourbillon functions as the brain, deliberately exposed, with a classical aesthetic grounded in high-end watchmaking rather than futuristic design. The skull of HM12 is largely made of sapphire, allowing light to enter from multiple angles and strike the tourbillon directly, visible from the front and laterally through the side of the case.



THE FACE SHIELD, A MECHANISM WITHIN THE MECHANISM

One of HM12’s defining features is its face shield system, treated as both a complication and a functional element tied to the object’s narrative. Within the logic of the watch, the shields exist to protect the robot’s face. They also radically transform and bring colour to the face of the watch.

Actuated via the left crown, the shields move in a continuous, linear way. The wearer controls how exposed the face remains and can stop at any point, from fully visible to concealed. The crown is declutching once the shields reach their stop, it disengages.

The system is entirely mechanical and fully independent from the movement. More than 200 components are dedicated to this function alone, a level of complexity that exceeds that of many complete mechanical watches. Chatons, polished wheels and inward angles demonstrate a level of finishing usually reserved for traditional horology.

Development was handled in parallel, one engineer focusing on the timekeeping movement and the other on the shield system, while maintaining constant alignment to prevent conflicts in space, kinematics, and function. The result is a single machine in which mechanics and narrative are developed together.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HEAD

Developed entirely in house, the HM12 calibre has a power reserve of 84 hours and comprises 646 components – most of which are hand-finished – including 86 jewels. From the back, HM12 reveals a different register

this side follows a more classical, traditionally horological language. Where the front leans toward a futuristic expression, the back is restrained. The calibre was shaped to follow the case, not the other way around. Echoing the proportions of a human face, the movement is open, balanced and symmetrical.

The finishing reinforces this contrast. Bridges are softly curved and hand finished, with a grained surface on the mainplate. The rear rotor features a guilloché dome executed with the involvement of renowned independent watchmaker Kari Voutilainen and his team, a demanding exercise given that the guillochage is applied to a curved, spherical surface rather than a flat plane. HM12 sits deliberately between two worlds, combining the expressive futuristic language of the Horological Machines with the classical refinement of the Legacy Machines.

THE GUARDIAN, A COMPANION, NOT A STAND

HM12 is delivered with The Guardian, the rest of the robot’s body – the two are one. The watch detaches from its strap via a quick-release system and mounts directly onto the head via a clipping system designed to secure it firmly while allowing repeated handling. The strap is stored in a hidden drawer integrated into the robot’s base. This is not a base or a stand. It is a body built around the watch.

The development of The Guardian was entrusted to L’Epée, a long-standing partner of MB&F. The robot is conceived as a mechanical extension of the watch and includes 755 components. At the centre of its chest sits a mechanical thermometer,

acting as the heart of the robot. Each arm carries a tool. On one side, a shield that contains a loupe, calibrated to inspect the movement and reveal its finer details. On the other, a detachable torch with UV capability, designed to activate the Super LumiNova on both the watch and the robot itself.

A ONE-TIME OBJECT OPENING TO THE FUTURE

HM12 The Guardian is produced in three limited editions blue, purple, or green. Only twelve pieces per colour, for a total of thirty-six. No more.

HM12 The Guardian brings together many of the elements that have shaped MB&F over the past twenty years a sci-fi inspired Horological Machine, an entirely in-house calibre, traditional high-end finishing, an unconventional display, and a mechanical companion designed to be handled and explored. What first appears as a playful sculpture is in fact the result of years of development and nearly 1,500 components working as one.

HM12 The Guardian revisits MB&F’s roots – creating mechanical objects with strong personalities, real technical substance and a sense of wonder. It reaffirms those foundations and carries them into the brand’s third decade.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

HM12 is crafted in three editions of 12 pieces each
Green, Blue and Purple

MOVEMENT

In house automatic movement, double winding rotor
Flying tourbillon
Instantaneous jumping hours
Trailing minutes
Shield function
Power reserve
84 hours
646 components
86 jewels

CASE

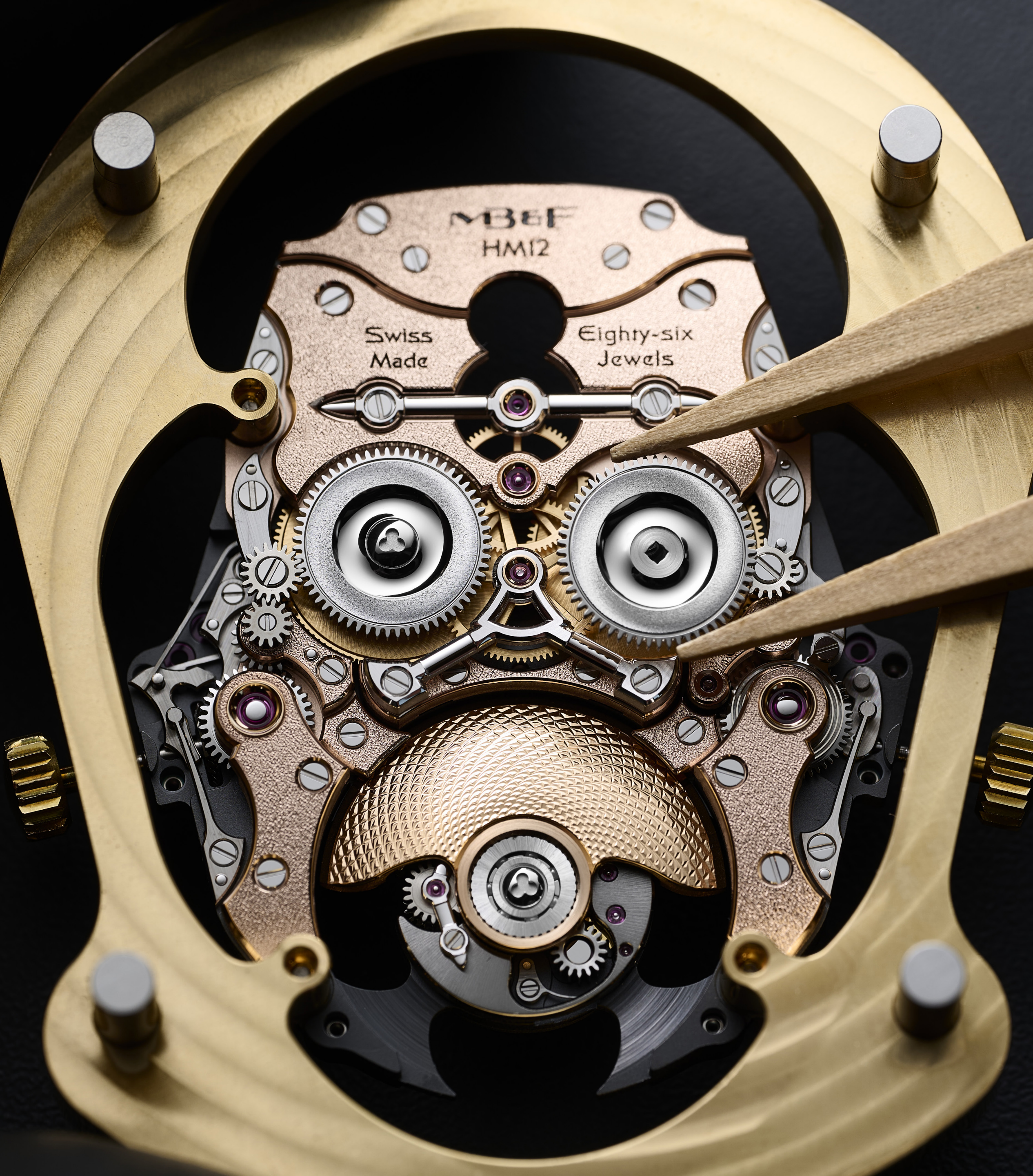
Grade 5 titanium
84 components
Super-LumiNova highlights
Mobile lugs at 12 o'clock
Fixed lugs at 6 o'clock
Three sapphire crystals, top, bottom, and at 12 o'clock with view
on the tourbillon
Dimensions
Length 49,3 mm, Width 43,6 mm, Height 13,8 mm

STRAP

Quick release system to detach the watch and mount it on the
Guardian
20 mm lug width
20 mm buckle
Velcro fastening

GUARDIAN ROBOT

Development by L'Epée 1839
Mechanical thermometer
755 components
Integrated magnifying glass on right arm (shield)
Integrated UV torch on left arm
Strap stored in drawer within the robot base
Dimensions including base
diameter 22 cm x height 38,2 cm
Weight including base
approx. 15 kg



CONCEPT

Maximilian Büsser / MB&F

PRODUCT DESIGN

Max Maertens / MB&F

TECHNICAL AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Serge Kriknoff / MB&F

MOVEMENT DESIGN AND FINISH SPECIFICATIONS

Max Maertens and MB&F R&D Team

MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Thomas Lorenzato and Pierre-Alexandre Gamet / MB&F

R&D

Thomas Lorenzato, Pierre-Alexandre Gamet and Robin Cotel / MB&F

METHODS AND LABORATORY

Anthony Mugnier, Georges Veisy, Nicolas Herail and Yannick Journoud / MB&F

WHEELS, BRIDGES, PINIONS AND AXIS

Bandi, HorloFab, AMECAP, 2B8, D-Cojoux, Mimotec, NTE, Quickparts, Le Temps Retrouvé, Rouages Sa, Studi'Ho, Viquodeco

BALANCE WHEEL

Precision Engineering AG

SPRINGS AND JUMPERS

Elefil Swiss, Horlofab

BARREL

Générale Ressort

RUBIES

Pierhor / Crelier

ENGRAVING OF MOVEMENT

DM Surface

HAND-FINISHING OF MOVEMENT COMPONENTS

C-L Rochat, DSMI Electronics SA, MBG Watch Décor, Rhodior SA, Transcendance, SVMA, Brodbeck Guillochage, STS

PVD/CVD-TREATMENT

Positive Coating

MOVEMENT ASSEMBLY

Didier Dumas, Emmanuel Maitre, Amandine Bascoul, Michelly Sales, Michel Pappalardi, Clément Erard and Oliver Maric / MB&F

MOVEMENTS COMPONENTS

Jean-Baptiste Prétot, Yoann Joyard, Stéphanie Carvalho-Correia, Arsène Phouthone and Kubilay Korkut / MB&F

AFTER-SALES SERVICE

Antony Moreno, Mathieu Lecoultre, Loïc Robert-Nicoud / MB&F

QUALITY CONTROL

Cyril Fallet, Jennifer Longuepez and Simon Douère / MB&F

CASE

AB Product

DIAL AND SUPER-LUMINOVA ON THE DIALS

La Montre Hermes

BUCKLE

AB Product

CROWN AND CORRECTORS

Cheval Frères

HANDS

Elefil Swiss

SAPPHIRE CRYSTALS

Novocristal

ANTI-REFECTION TREATMENT FOR SAPPHIRE CRYSTALS

Anthony Schwab / Econorm

STRAP

Manufacture Jean Rousseau

PRESENTATION BOX

Olivier Berthon / Soixante et Onze

PRODUCTION LOGISTICS

Ashley Moussier, Thibaut Joannard, David Gavotte, Jean-Luc Ruel, Caroline Ouvrard, Etienne Marcadet, Maryline Leveque and Emilie Burnier / MB&F

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Charris Yadigaroglou, Arnaud Légeret, Vanessa André, Talya Lakin and Eléonore Marcadet / MB&F

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Benoît Rochat / MB&F

M.A.D.GALLERY

Hervé Estienne and Louan de Peretti / MB&F

SALES

Thibault Verdonckt, Cédric Roussel, Baptiste Uhl, Augustin Chivot, Richard Réocreux, Jean-Marc Bories, Virginie Marchon and Claire Jammet / MB&F

TEXTS

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PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY

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FILM

Le Truc

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Rossier / MB&F

WEBSITE

Talya Lakin / MB&F, Julien Henchoz / Idéative



Founded in 2005, MB&F is the world’s first-ever horological concept laboratory. With over 20 remarkable calibres forming the base of the critically acclaimed Horological and Legacy Machines, MB&F is continuing to follow Founder and Creative Director Maximilian Büsser’s vision of creating 3-D kinetic art by deconstructing traditional watchmaking.

After 15 years managing prestigious watch brands, Maximilian Büsser resigned from his Managing Director position at Harry Winston in 2005 to create MB&F – Maximilian Büsser & Friends. MB&F is an artistic and micro-engineering laboratory dedicated to designing and crafting small series of radical concept watches by bringing together talented horological professionals that Büsser both respects and enjoys working with.

In 2007, MB&F unveiled its first Horological Machine, HM1. HM1’s sculptured, three-dimensional case and beautifully finished engine (movement) set the standard for the idiosyncratic Horological Machines that have followed – all Machines that tell the time, rather than Machines to tell the time. The fiercely unconventional Horological Machines have explored themes as diverse as space and science fiction, aviation, supercars, the animal kingdom and architecture.

In 2011, MB&F launched its round-cased Legacy Machine collection. These more classical pieces – classical for MB&F, that is – pay tribute to nineteenth-century watchmaking excellence by reinterpreting complications from the great horological innovators of yesteryear to create contemporary objets d’art. Certain Legacy Machines have also given birth to EVO editions, featuring increased water and shock resistance compatible with collectors’ active lifestyles. MB&F generally alternates between launching contemporary, resolutely unconventional Horological Machines and historically inspired Legacy Machines. In 2025, for its 20th Anniversary, MB&F also released SP One, the first of a ‘Special Projects’ collection that falls between categories.

As the F stands for Friends, it was only natural for MB&F to develop collaborations with artists, watchmakers, designers and manufacturers they admire.

This brought about two new categories: Performance Art and Co-creations. While Performance Art pieces are MB&F machines revisited by external creative talent, Co-creations are not wristwatches but other types of machines, engineered and crafted by unique Swiss Manufactures from MB&F ideas and designs. Many of these Co-creations, such as the clocks created with L’Epée 1839, tell the time while collaborations with Reuge and Caran d’Ache generated other forms of mechanical art.

To give all these machines an appropriate platform, Büsser had the idea of placing them in an art gallery alongside various forms of mechanical art created by other artists, rather than in a traditional storefront. This brought about the creation of the first MB&F

M.A.D.Gallery (M.A.D. stands for Mechanical Art Devices) in Geneva, which would later be joined by the M.A.D.Gallery in Dubai – along with MB&F Labs, which showcase a more compact selection of artists in locations like Singapore, Taipei, Paris, Beverly Hills and Silicon Valley.

There have been distinguished accolades reminding us of the innovative nature of MB&F’s journey so far. To name a few, there have been no less than 10 awards from the famous Grand Prix d’Horlogerie de Genève, including the ultimate prize the “Aiguille d’Or”, which rewards the best watch of the year. In 2025, MB&F’s second brand – the more affordable M.A.D.Editions – won the “Petite Aiguille” category with the M.A.D.2. In 2022, the LM Sequential EVO was awarded the Aiguille d’Or, while the M.A.D.1 RED won the ‘Challenge’ category. In 2021, LMX won the Best Men’s Complication and the LM SE Eddy Jaquet ‘Around The World in Eighty Days’ was awarded in the ‘Artistic Crafts’ category. In 2019, the prize for Best Ladies Complication went to the LM FlyingT; in 2016, LM Perpetual won the Best Calendar Watch award; in 2012, Legacy Machine No.1 was awarded both the Public Prize (voted for by horology fans) and the Best Men’s Watch Prize (voted for by the professional jury). In 2010, MB&F won Best Concept and Design Watch for the HM4 Thunderbolt. In 2015 MB&F received a Red Dot Best of the Best award – the top prize at the international Red Dot Awards – for the HM6 Space Pirate.



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