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FILENIOS WATCHES

OVER THE TOP



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The Best Independent Watchmakers

The mainstream market in the luxury and hyper luxury range offers top quality watches. Brands like ALS, AP, GS, JLC, PP, ROLEX, among several others, provide for the best quality available. What comes next is the feeling of perfection and devotion in the world of independent watchmakers, like the ones appearing in the **photo of NY Times**. It is the countless hours devoted to each and every one of the few thousands of handmade timepieces produced every year by a group, or rather a club of master watchmakers addressing their creations to the very few who know and could afford to buy the most exquisite and expensive timepieces available in the global watchmaking industry. Historically, their representative association (AHCI) was established in 1985 by Svend Andersen and Vincent Calabrese.

Probably unknown, not only to the occasional buyer, but also to the majority of the watch enthusiasts and professionals, these watchmakers deserve a broader recognition, and this is why I present herein 26+ selected ones, regarded as the best of our times. This group includes small boutique brands delivering up to 1000 watches annually (150 on average) differentiating from border line companies operating in between the independent segment and the mainstream market due to their size, affiliations, historical roots. Moreover, this group is representative not inclusive since there are several other significant and worth mentioning independent watchmakers, with some of them listed in AHCI association, but also included in my complementary e-books like "THE MARKET GUIDE" and "SIXTY OUTSIDERS PLUS". Being a very personal selection, the TOP 5 along with Philippe Dufour make up the "Dream Team".

High-End horology has two sides. First, it deals with the most demanding complications like the minute repeater, tourbillon, perpetual calendar, split & flyback chronographs. Second, it deals with the meticulous finishing and the best possible applications and materials in the simple function watches. This second dimension is eventually the one that counts, the one that distinguishes the best artisans in the industry, and the one of major interest for connoisseurs who focus not only on the design and the typical specifications, but on the inner quality of any watch, primarily on the hand crafting work of the watchmaker reflected on the superb quality of his creation. Needless to say, the quality/price ratio is never neglected, no matter how rare and exclusive a timepiece could be. In other words, the connoisseur looks for the proper balance between the value of the watchmaker and the value of his watches.

Mechanical horology today does not provide for any new technology, not any more, even considering the introduction of new materials like the silicon used for the construction of the balance and the escapement stuff, for instance. In my humble opinion, SEIKO Spring Drive represents the pinnacle of watchmaking regarding the current advanced technology. Complications and functions like repetition, tourbillon, resonance, remontoire, coming from the distant past are not even necessary today. What matters though is the preservation of the ancestral techniques and the application of new patents on all this hereditary technology, and this is a very demanding task accomplished by very few talented and devoted watchmakers. Most of us might not afford to buy their watches, but nobody prohibits us from admiring and respecting the "crème de la crème of haute horlogerie".



The Best Independent Watchmakers

Akrivia - Switzerland	P. 5
Andreas Strehler - Switzerland	9
Antoine Prezioso - Switzerland	13
Armin Strom - Switzerland	17
Beat Haldimann - Switzerland	21
Christophe Claret - Switzerland	23
De Bethune - Switzerland	27
Ferdinand Berthoud - Switzerland	31
Francois-Paul Journe - Switzerland	33
Greubel Forsey - Switzerland	37
Greib & Benzinger - Germany	43
Gronefeld - Netherlands	47
Habring ² - Austria	51
Hajime Asaoka - Japan	55
Kari Voutilainen - Switzerland	57
Keaton Myrick - Unites States of America	61
Laurent Ferrier - Switzerland	63
Louis Moinet - Switzerland	67
Marco Lang - Germany	71
Moritz Grossmann - Germany	73
Phenomen - France	77
Philippe Dufour - Switzerland	79
Roger W. Smith - Great Britain	83
Romain Gauthier - Switzerland	87
Urwerk - Switzerland	91
Vianney Halter - Switzerland	95
Epilogue & Apotheosis	99

The “Dream Team” Collection



ANDREAS STREHLER PAPILLON D'OR



CHRISTOPHE CLARET ALLEGRO



FP JOURNE CHRONOMETRE SOUVERAIN



GREUBEL FORSEY TOURBILLON 24 SEC



KARI VOUTILAINEN V-8R



PHILIPPE DUFOUR SIMPLICITY

The Best Independent Watchmakers

AKRIVIA



Photo credit www.akrivia.com

Rexhep Rexhepi was born in Kosovo in 1987, and started his apprenticeship in Patek Philippe at the age of 15, where he evolved to a very talented full-time technician remaining to this manufacture for five years in total. After another five-year work for BNB Concept and FP Journe, he set up his own brand Akrivia in Geneva in 2012. Soon he started presenting his first tourbillon models, and in 2016 introduced the model AK-06 (based on the name of his in-house hand wound mechanism) his first openwork non tourbillon watch with a very characteristic design. In 2018, he presented the 3-hand limited edition (50 pcs) model Rexhep Rexhepi Chronometre Contemporain, equipped with the same excellent caliber and enamel dial. He delivers around 35 watches per year requiring a minimum indicative budget of 55.000 euro.

AKRIVIA



REXHEP REXHEPI CHRONOMETRE CONTEMPORAIN

Photo credit www.watchprozine.com

AKRIVIA



AK-06 3-HAND MANUAL 100 HOURS POWER RESERVE

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

AKRIVIA



AK-03 TOURBILLON CHIMING JUMP HOUR

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

ANDREAS STREHLER



Photo credit www.astrehler.ch

He is a Swiss watchmaker that has fulfilled a 30+ year career in highly complicated watches starting from the renowned house of Renaud & Papi, and working for many brands like Audemars Piguet, Chronoswiss, Garrick, Gronefeld, Harry Winston, Maurice Lacroix, Sarpaneva as well as H.Moser & Cie, for whom he has developed their awarded perpetual calendar mechanism, perhaps the best of its kind ever presented in the industry. Holding his own in-house collection since 2007 with the characteristic cushion case and papillon mechanisms including the entry level model Cocon (2012) and the “Sauterelle” models with remontoir d’egalite, for constant and linear energy supply to the balance, he produces upon order and delivers very few watches per year belonging to the TOP 5 of the group. Minimum indicative budget 80,000 euro.

ANDREAS STREHLER



TRANS-AXIAL REMONTOIR TOURBILLON

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

ANDREAS STREHLER



PAPILLON D'OR POWER RESERVE 78H

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

ANDREAS STREHLER



SAUTERELLE A HEURE MONDIALE

Photo credit www.timeandwatches.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

ANTOINE PREZIUSO



Photo credit www.antoine-preziuso.com

He is a Swiss watchmaker, with a solid background in restoration before presenting his own watches in the 1990s, and gradually developing his family business on an annual output of circa 500 timepieces. He likes working on bespoke projects, but also on accessible models of impressive design, equipped with mass production top quality mechanisms, like the tonneau Hours of Love, Fire Fly, Oltre Tempo, Chrono Grand Robusto, plus the round ones Power Energy and Siena. Thanks to the contribution of his son Florian since 2006, the brand has developed a specialty in the use of meteorite cases and tourbillons, with the ultimate achievement being the awarded (2015) “Tourbillon des Tourbillons”, with 3 cages functioning at resonance, mounted on a rotating carriage. Indicative budget for pre-owned watches less than 10,000 euro.

ANTOINE PREZIUSO



HAND WOUND TRIPLE TOURBILLON AT RESONANCE

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

ANTOINE PREZIUSO



HAND WOUND TOURBILLON IN METEORITE CASE

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

ANTOINE PREZIUSO



SIENNA SINGLE HAND AUTOMATIC ISO 14th CENTURY TOWER CLOCK

Photo credit www.antoine-prezioso.com & www.timetunnel-jp.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

ARMIN STROM



Photo credit www.arminstrom.com

Armin Strom is a retired Swiss watchmaker specialized in skeletonizing wristwatches who established his workshop in 1967 in his native city of Burgdorf. In 2006, he handed over to Serge Michel and Claude Greisler (master watchmaker), two childhood friends and co-founders of this new era Armin Strom brand, inaugurated in 2009. Being a manufacture with full in-house capacity, it keeps the tradition of “openwork” timepieces developing at the same time a specialty in resonance watches with double regulator applications. In 2020, It presented the “System 78” Gravity Equal Force collection with constant power supply to the balance of an automatic mechanism. It produces around 400 watches per year, and it is considered one of the most accessible independent manufacture brands. Minimum indicative budget less than 15,000 euro.

ARMIN STROM



GRAVITY EQUAL FORCE AUTOMATIC

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

ARMIN STROM



PURE RESONANCE

ARMIN STROM



SKELETON PURE POWER RESERVE 8 DAYS

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

BEAT HALDIMANN



Photo credit www.haldimann.swiss

He is a Swiss watchmaker with a centuries long family tradition in horology. After establishing his own company in 1991, he was among the pioneers experimenting in the resonance (double regulator) application on a wristwatch, and presented his first such model in 2000. Two years after, he introduced H1 model with flying central tourbillon floating above the dial being one of the most beautiful wristwatches ever appeared in the market. The same design was used later on for H2 flying resonance and the sophisticated H3 minute repeater. In 2013, he introduced H11 Pure - Central Balance 2-Hand model (followed by 3-Hand H12) in par with his firm philosophy for understated and essential watches, in limited production of approximately 30 pcs per year. Minimum Indicative budget 30,000 euro.

BEAT HALDIMANN



H1 CENTRAL TOURBILLON & H12 PURE CENTRAL BALANCE

Photo credit www.acollectedman.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

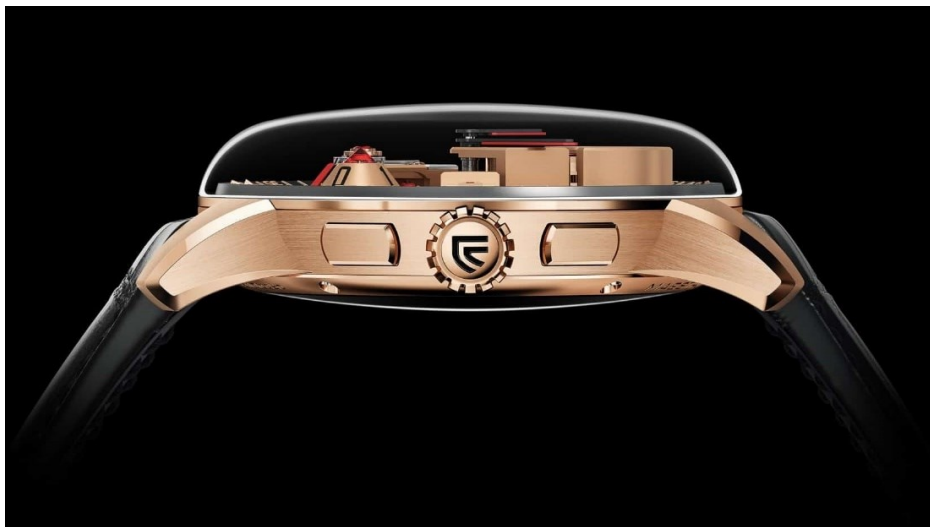
CHRISTOPHE CLARET



Photo credit www.christopheclaret.com

He is a French watchmaker who established his manufacture in Switzerland in 1989 supplying his highly complicated mechanisms to many luxury brands. Regarded as the “Breguet” of our times due to his ingenuity and expertise, in particular for repeater watches, started presenting his own avant-garde timepieces in 2009. Among his best creations presented so far are the 4 repeater models Adagio in 2011, Soprano in 2013, Allegro in 2015, Napoleon in 2021 (136 pcs in total), the trilogy of gaming watches 21-Blackjack, Baccara, Poker since 2011, the supreme X-Trem-1 in 2012, the anniversary Angelico tourbillon in 2019 (40 pcs), plus his more affordable models Kantharos in 2013 (Constant force chronograph), Maestoso in 2014 (60 pcs) and Maestro in 2017. Definitely he belongs to the TOP 5. Minimum indicative budget 70,000 euro.

CHRISTOPHE CLARET



MAESTRO 3-DIMENSION SCULPTURAL

CHRISTOPHE CLARET



**KANTHAROS MONOPUSHER GONG CHRONOGRAPH
MAESTOSO WITH CONSTANT FORCE DETENT ESCAPEMENT**

Photo credit www.hodinkee.com & www.ablogtowatch.com

CHRISTOPHE CLARET



ALLEGRO GMT BIG DATE MINUTE REPEATER

ADAGIO GMT BIG DATE MINUTE REPEATER

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com & www.watchprosite.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

DE BETHUNE



Photo credit www.lacotedesmontres.com

Founded by Denis Flageollet (master watchmaker) and David Zanetta in 2002 in Switzerland, its administration passed to Pierre Jacques in 2011. Investing from the very beginning in the quality of their mechanisms, and in particular in several patented applications on the balance-wheel, along with their iconic case design, they have established a firm reputation as an innovative manufacture. Among all the watches presented over the last 20 years, their preferable models are the entry level DB27 Titan Hawk since 2012 (174 pcs so far), Maxichrono DB28/21 operating in 5Hz with 24h central axis counter since 2014/2019 (20 pcs so far), DB28 Digitale since 2014 (32 pcs so far) and the most recent DB28XP with 2-hand and 5Hz-tourbillon versions since 2020, with more than 50 pcs produced so far. Minimum indicative budget 35,000 euro.

DE BETHUNE



DB27 TITAN HAWK V2

$\Phi\Sigma$

DE BETHUNE



DB28 MAXICHRONO 24H CENTRAL AXIS 5Hz CHRONOGRAPH

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

DE BETHUNE



DB28 DIGITALE JUMPING HOUR

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

FERDINAND BERTHOUD



Photo credit www.telegraph.co.uk

He was a legendary Swiss watchmaker (1727-1807) renowned primarily for his excellent marine chronometers. In 2015, the co-presidents of Chopard Caroline and Karl-Friedrich Scheufele revived his legacy, and established the homonymous brand in Fleurier. The watches presented so far (around 300 pcs) have been created in the spirit of F.Berthoud 18th century marine chronometers, with two very characteristic primary features, among other innovative applications. They are chronometer (COSC) certified and they are equipped with fusee (steel chain transmission) constant force mechanism. The best preferable models are the awarded (2016) octagonal tourbillon FB1 and the austere FB2RE (2020) equipped with one-second remontoire in addition to the fusee device. Minimum indicative budget 200,000 euro.

FERDINAND BERTHOUD



CHRONOMETRE FB1 TOURBILLON WITH GOLD DIAL

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

FRANCOIS-PAUL JOURNE



Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

He is a true blue French watchmaker who established his brand in Geneva in the late 1990s. Considering his overall status and awards, he is the most successful independent watchmaker, and profoundly belongs to the TOP 5. His watches are very characteristic with “neo-classic” designs and solid gold in-house mechanisms, in most cases. His top ten creations include Tourbillon Souverain (1999), Chronometre A Resonance (2000), Octa FB Chronographe (2004-2008), the trilogy Vagabondage (2004-2019), the entry level Chronometre Souverain (2005), Sonnerie Souverain (2006-2019), Repetition Souverain (2008), Centigraphe 1/100th second chronograph models (2008), Chronometre Optimum with remontoire and direct impulse escapement (2012), An.Tourbillon (2013). Min.indicative budget 35,000 euro, sales around 800pcs/py.

FP JOURNE



CHRONOMETRE SOUVERAIN HAVANA

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

FP JOURNE



CHRONOMETRE OPTIMUM

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

FP JOURNE



CHRONOMETRE A RESONANCE

The Best Independent Watchmakers

GREUBEL FORSEY

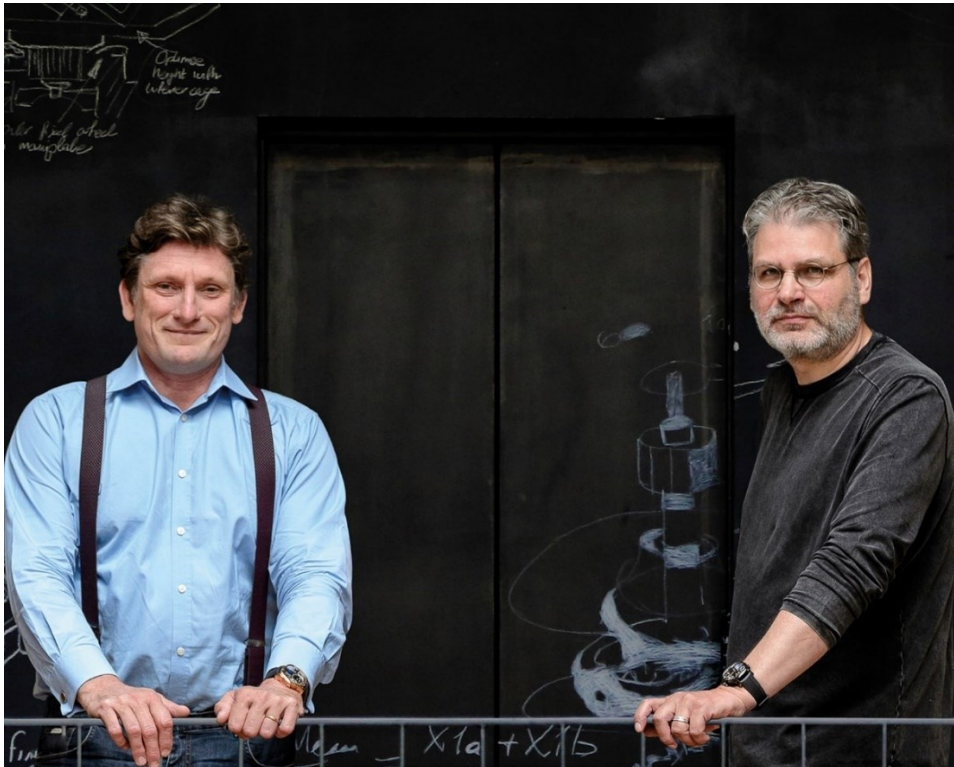


Photo credit www.swisswatches-magazine.com

English watchmaker Stephen Forsey and French watchmaker Robert Greubel met in 1992 in the house of Renaud & Papi. In 2004, they founded their own Swiss brand presenting their first watch, Double Tourbillon 30 Vision. It was followed by the limited editions DT30 Secret, Historique, Technique (winner of the 2011 international chronometry competition in Le Locle) and Asymetrique. In 2007, they presented the sibling Tourbillon 24 Seconds Asymetrique, with limited editions Contemporain, Vision, Historique following till 2017. These two model lines, with an approximate and rounded volume of 500 pcs, are perhaps the best tourbillon watches ever presented in the industry. Since 2016, they have introduced Double Balancier (51 pcs), plus the limited edition entry level models Signature-1 (66 pcs), Balancier (33 pcs), Balancier Contemporain (69 pcs), in addition to respective sport models. They belong to the TOP 5 being a primary investment brand. Minimum indicative budget 200,000 euro.

GREUBEL FORSEY



SIGNATURE 1 & BALANCIER CONTEMPORAIN

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

GREUBEL FORSEY



DOUBLE TOURBILLON 30 DEGREES INCLINED - VISION

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

GREUBEL FORSEY



DOUBLE TOURBILLON 30 DEGREES INCLINED - ASYMETRIQUE

Photo credit www.watchprosite.com

GREUBEL FORSEY



Z

- INVENTION PIECE 1 DOUBLE TOURBILLON**
- INVENTION PIECE 2 QUADRUPLE TOURBILLON**
- HAND MADE 1 – HANDMADE TOURBILLON WITHOUT CNC**
- AEON NAISSANCE D'UNE MONTRE - HANDMADE TOURBILLON**

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com & www.eclecticum.com

GREUBEL FORSEY



Z

**DOUBLE TOURBILLON 24 SECONDS CONTEMPORAIN
DOUBLE BALANCIER - CONSTANT FORCE
ART PIECE HISTORIQUE DOUBLE TOURBILLON
GRANDE SONNERIE DOUBLE TOURBILLON**

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com, www.watchesbysjx.com
www.loupiosity.com, fratellowatches.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

GRIEB & BENZINGER



Photo credit www.grieb-benzinger.com

Hermann Grieb (master watchmaker) and Jochen Benzinger (master engraver) joined forces with the help of brand developer Georg Bartkowiak, and set up their artisanal workshop in Germany in 2009. Engaged primarily in “restomod” one off projects of bespoke artistic work on vintage timepieces, they have recently presented their first in-house model, Vanquish Tourbillon Remontoire. Among their best watches presented with contemporary mechanisms, the masterpiece Blue Merit with ALS 1990s tourbillon mechanism, housed in platinum case after one year work, in addition to the special edition St.George equipped with hand engraved ETA/UNITAS-6498, perhaps the most expensive watch ever presented with this workhorse caliber. They deliver very few watches per year, with minimum indicative budget 40,000 euro.

GRIEB & BENZINGER



ST.GEORGE SPECIAL EDITION

Photo credit www.grieb-benzinger.com

GRIEB & BENZINGER



BLUE MERIT - CUSTOMIZED A.LANGE & SOHNE FUSEE-TOURBILLON

GRIEB & BENZINGER



VANQUISH TOURBILLON REMONTOIRE

Photo credit www.grieb-benzinger.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

GRONEFELD



Photo credit www.gronefeld.com

The “horological brothers” Tim and Bart Gronefeld are third generation Dutch watchmakers. After working in highly complicated watches in Switzerland (Renaud & Papi), they set up their own workshop in their home city in the Netherlands, and presented their first Tourbillon Minute Repeater watch in 2008 (LE 20 pcs). Two years later, supported by R&P, they introduced the innovative model One Hertz with dead-beat second counter powered by secondary gear train, in eight LE series of 194 pcs. In 2014/2016, they introduced Parallax Tourbillon (46 pcs) and Remontoire (188 pcs), and in 2018 the entry level Principia. Considering their overall quality, they belong among the best independent watchmakers outside Switzerland delivering around 100 watches annually (on a waiting list). Minimum indicative budget 35,000 euro.

GRONEFELD



ONE HERTZ DEAD-BEAT SECONDS

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

GRONEFELD



1941 REMONTOIRE GUILLOCHE & ENAMEL

Photo credit www.hodinkee.com

GRONEFELD



1941 PRINCIPIA AUTOMATIC

Photo credit www.fratellowatches.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

HABRING²

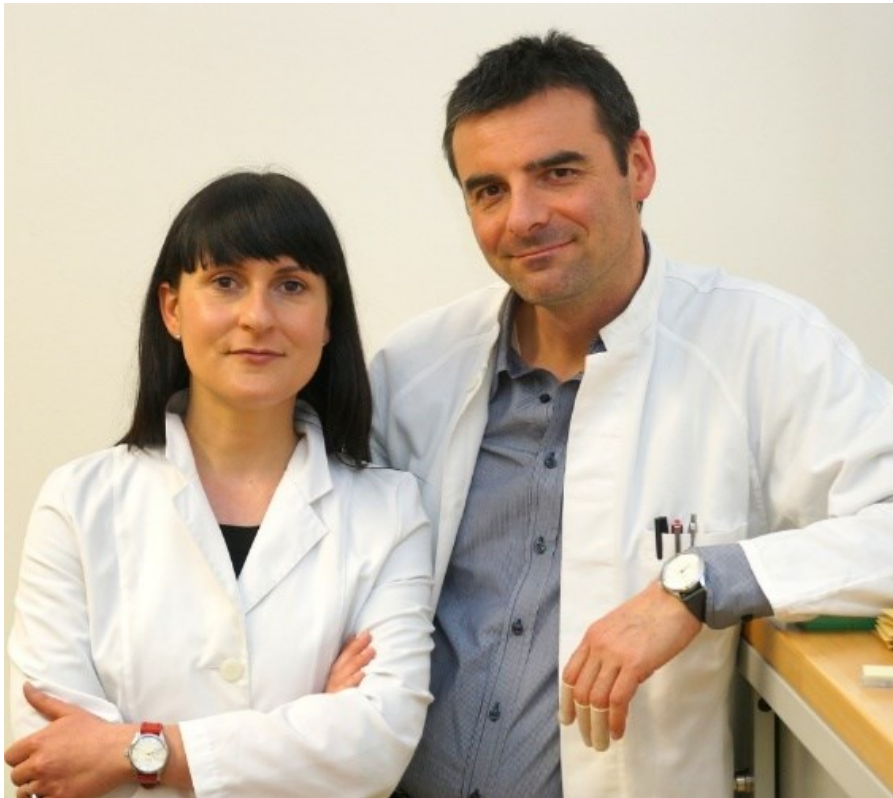


Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

Austrian manager Maria Kristina and watchmaker Richard Habring (former technical executive in IWC & ALS) are together in life and in their workshop since 2004. Smartly working on the “bulletproof” caliber ETA-7750, they have developed since 2011 their in-house base mechanism A11B, upon which they build all the necessary functions for their collection line that preferably includes the entry level 3-hand Felix (2014), Erwin model with dead-beat second central hand, monopusher chronographs with central 60-minutes counter, the Perpetual-Doppel split chronograph with 10 functions, the 5-Minute Repeater with Dubois Depraz D90 module. They deliver the “best value for money” watches in the independent watchmaking segment, in a limited volume of around 200 timepieces annually. Minimum indicative budget 5,000 euro.

HABRING²



FELIX with small seconds hand & ERWIN with dead-beat seconds

HABRING²



DOPPEL 3.1 SPLIT CHRONOGRAPH - CENTRAL 60MIN COUNTER

Photo credit www.acollectedman.com

ΦΣ

HABRING²



5-MINUTE REPEATER

Photo credit www.watchprosite.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

HAJIME ASAOKA

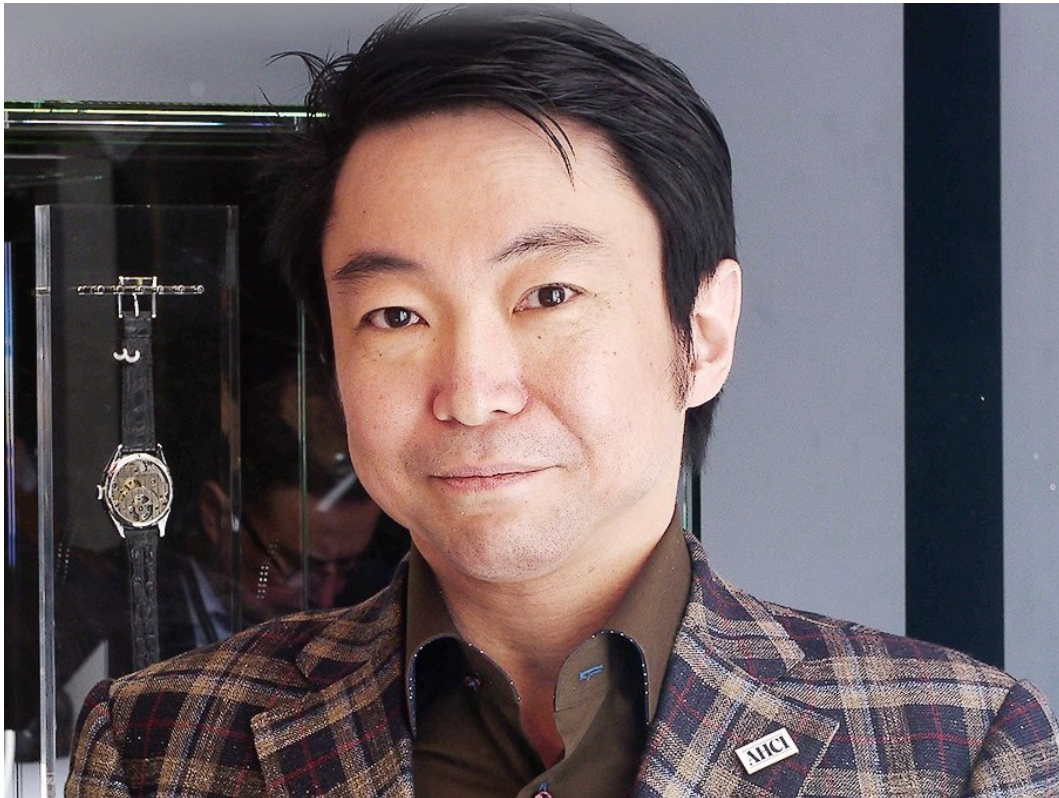


Photo credit www.deployant.com

He is a Japanese designer and self-taught watchmaker opening his studio in the middle 2000s in Tokyo and presenting his first tourbillon watch in 2009. His very short list of hand crafted models reflects his ingenuity, and includes three primary timepieces. In 2012, he presented the entry level 3-hand Tsunami, equipped with his proprietary hand hound caliber, with a characteristic very large balance. Around 10 such watches have been delivered so far, housed in a stainless steel case of 37mm, for a minimum budget of 30,000 euro. In 2014, he presented Tourbillon Project-T with some unique features, and finally in 2017, he introduced his impressive chronograph project, with an open work column wheel caliber, housed in a 38mm stainless steel case. Working alone, he delivers very few watches per year upon order.

HAJIME ASAOKA



TSOUNAMI STAINLESS STEEL

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

KARI VOUTILAINEN

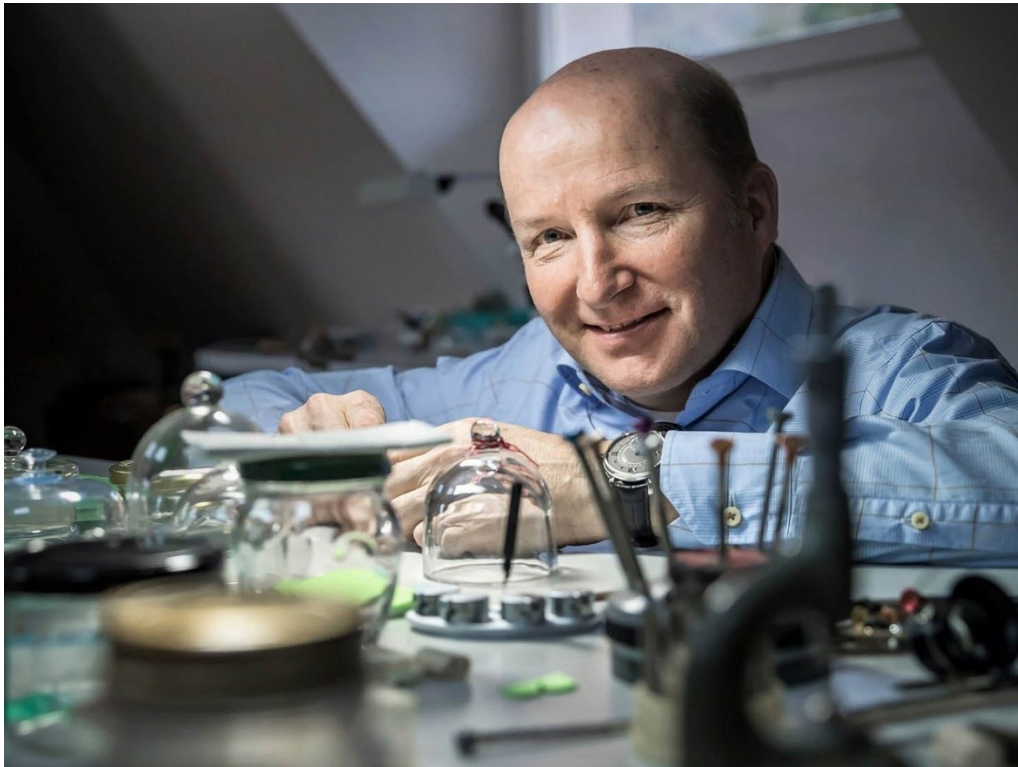


Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

He is a Finn watchmaker, graduate of Tapiola and Wostep watchmaking schools. After working in Parmigiani restoration and “one-off” project departments for 10 years, he returned back and left his mark as a teacher in Wostep, before setting up his own workshop in the village of Motiers in 2002. One of the most talented watchmakers of our times, he has crafted watches with all kinds of complications, and has received 8 GPHG awards so far. Since 2011, his extensive 3-hand collection is equipped with the proprietary direct impulse dual-wheel escapement Cal.28 requesting a minimum indicative budget of 70,000 euro. He delivers around 60 customized timepieces per year to some very patient watch investors. Not only he belongs to the TOP 5, but has already secured his place among the legendary watchmakers of the 21st century.

KARI VOUTILAINEN



GMT-6 GOLD

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

KARI VOUTILAINEN



28SPORT TITANIUM

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

KARI VOUTILAINEN



DECIMAL REPEATER

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

KEATON MYRICK



Photo credit www.keatonmyrick.com

He is an American watchmaker, graduate of the Lititz Watch Technicum school in Pennsylvania, who spent 6 years in restoration projects before establishing his own workshop in Sisters - Oregon and creating his first wristwatch in 2013. Smartly working on the time tested Unitas Cal.6497/98, he has re-designed and crafts himself almost all the critical components like the free sprung balance with solid gold regulating masses and bridge (even the hairspring is formed manually with Nivarox-1 wire), the blue heated steel winding click, the 3-quarter plate from German silver. Even more, the steel hands and the frosted German silver dial are also hand crafted including the seconds sub-dial with guilloche engraving. This indicative design is customized for each one of the 10-12 watches delivered per year, for a min. budget of 30,000 euro.

KEATON MYRICK



CUSTOM 1 OF 30 WITH CALIBER 29.30

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

LAURENT FERRIER



Photo credit www.laurentferrier.ch

He is a Swiss watchmaker with a long family tradition in horology. After graduating from Geneva watchmaking school, he worked for more than 30 years in Patek Philippe, before establishing his own brand in 2009, with the support of his friend Francois Servanin and his son Christian Ferrier, with background in micro-mechanics. In 2010, they presented their first awarded tourbillon model with double balance spring, and since 2011 they have developed their proprietary micro-rotor caliber with direct impulse natural escapement (1789 invention of A.L.Breguet). In 2018, they introduced Ecole An.Calendar, and 2 years later the entry level Classic Origin. One of the most favorable independent brands among collectors due to their ergonomic and understated watches, delivers around 150pcs/py. Min.indicative budget 30,000 euro.

LAURENT FERRIER



TRAVELLER AUTOMATIC

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

LAURENT FERRIER



ECOLE ANNUAL CALENDAR

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

LAURENT FERRIER



CLASSIC ORIGIN TITANIUM

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

LOUIS MOINET



Photo credit www.louismoinet.com

He was a legendary French watchmaker (1768-1853) credited with the construction of the first pocket chronograph in 1816. Jean-Marie Schaller revived his legacy by establishing the homonymous brand in 2004, in St.Blaise - Neuchatel. After a series of models equipped with vintage calibers, the brand started collaborating with Concepto and Tec Ebauches for the development of exclusive calibers used in the current lines. In 2016, celebrating the 200th anniversary of Louis Moinet chronograph, the brand introduced Memoris produced in gold (288 pcs so far) and titanium (300 pcs so far) versions. Other preferable contemporary models include the Metropolis & Cosmic Art 3-hand lines (870+ pcs) and the tourbillon models Space Mystery (32 pcs), Skywalker (60 pcs), Ad Astra (8 pcs). Minimum indicative budget less than 10,000 euro.

LOUIS MOINET



MEMORIS MONOPUSHER CHRONOGRAPH

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

LOUIS MOINET



SPECEWALKER TOURBILLON

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

LOUIS MOINET



MOON COSMIC ART LINE

Photo credit www.watchilove.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

MARCO LANG



Photo credit www.marcolangwatches.com

He is a 5th generation German watchmaker located in Dresden. After completing his studies and apprenticeship in the 1990s, he dedicated himself on the construction and repair of pendulum clocks and antique watches, before founding his own brand in 2001, along with Mirko Heyne (Nomos head watchmaker since 2003). Under his administration, Lang & Heyne had developed significantly for 18 years as perhaps the most underrated manufacture in the market, and in 2019 he decided to return “back to the work bench” crafting his own watches. His first solo creation Zweigesicht can be worn on both sides featuring among others, free four-leg balance with gold14k masses, gold14k gear-train wheels, steel bridges, plus an optional shock indicator. He delivers 4-5 watches per year, for a minimum budget of less than 60,000 euro.

MARCO LANG



ZWEIFESICHT (DOUBLE FACE) | STAINLESS STEEL

Photo credit www.marcolangwatches.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

MORITZ GROSSMANN



Photo credit www.manager-magazin.de

He was (1826-1885) one of the “four fathers” of Glashutte watch industry, credited with the establishment of the local watchmaking school in 1878. German watchmaker Christine Hutter revived his legacy by founding the homonymous brand in 2008 focusing on handcrafting manufacture watches of perceived quality. The first model Benu was released in 2010, followed by the power reserve edition three years later. Other significant preferable models are the stainless steel Atum line since 2016, the Backpage with inverted caliber since 2018, and the Hamatic since 2019, inspired by A.L.Breguet automatic watches. The brand is distinguished for its superb in-house mechanisms featuring a unique pusher time setting system. The annual output is around 300 watches. Minimum indicative budget less than 30,000 euro.

MORITZ GROSSMANN



BENU POWER RESERVE & BRAND SIGNATURE MECHANISM

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

MORITZ GROSSMANN



TREBLAGE & BACKPAGE

Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com

MORITZ GROSSMANN



HAMATIC

The Best Independent Watchmakers

PHENOMEN



Photo credit www.phenomen.fr/www.watchesbysjx.com

It is a new French manufacture brand established in Besancon by two co-founders, the master watchmaker Sylvain Nourisson and the car designer (PSA) Alexandre Meyer. Their first extravagant model Axiom was released in 2018, equipped with Cal.PH-010, a three-dimensional hand wound mechanism developed in-house from scratch. It features two mainspring barrels providing power reserve of 100 hours, inverted regulator (Atokalpa) that is visible at the highest plate level, plus two independent retrograde hands for hours (jumping) and minutes, with each one being set from a different crown. Theoretically, it is one of the most qualitative and balanced extravagant timepieces ever presented in the market, with current annual delivery of around 20 pcs requiring a minimum budget of 30,000 euro.

PHENOMEN



AXIOM SPECTRUM

Photo credit www.phenomen.fr

The Best Independent Watchmakers

PHILIPPE DUFOUR



Photo credit www.acollectedman.com

He is a living legend in the watchmaking industry working essentially alone, devoted to the meticulous hand crafting and finishing of his timepieces since the late 1970s. In 1992, he presented the first ever wristwatch Grande & Petite Sonnerie Minute Repeater, after a rigorous work of more than two years. This historic achievement was followed by the presentation of the Duality model in 1996 being the first ever dual balance wristwatch, based on the application of a differential that averages errors between the balance wheels. Finally, in 2000 he introduced the 3-hand Simplicity model. According to his 2018 interview in www.monochrome-watches.com, he has delivered 7 Sonnerie, 9 Duality and more than 210 Simplicity models, available only through auctions, for expecting prices above one million euro!

PHILIPPE DUFOUR



GRANDE & PETITE SONNERIE MINUTE REPEATER

Photo credit www.acollectedman.com

PHILIPPE DUFOUR



DUALITY

Photo credit www.thehourglass.com

PHILIPPE DUFOUR



SIMPLICITY

Photo credit www.thehourglass.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

ROGER W SMITH



Photo credit www.danielslondon.com

He is a British honored watchmaker located in the Isle of Man since 1998 setting his own brand in 2001. He perpetuates the mastery of his mentor Dr. George Daniels (1926-2011) who is regarded as the best watchmaker of the 20th century and the founder of modern independent watchmaking. After committing to the completion of Daniels Millennium series of 47 automatic Co-Axial wristwatches (Daniels primary invention), he presented Series-1 (2001-2004) of 9 rectangular timepieces, followed by Series-2 in 2006, for around 20 watches (including very few with open work dials), equipped with his own in-house crafted power reserve Co-Axial caliber. In 2009, he started working on Daniels Anniversary Series (35 gold 18k pcs), equipped per case with his own single-piece upgraded version of Co-Axial escapement, also used in his contemporary Series of timepieces since 2015. Today, his workshop delivers 12 handmade wristwatches annually, on perhaps the longest waiting list in the market (three years at least), for a minimum budget above 100,000 euro, fully justified by the fact that his 100+ watches (built so far) are auctioned for much higher prices!

ΦΣ

GEORGE DANIELS

&

ROGER W SMITH

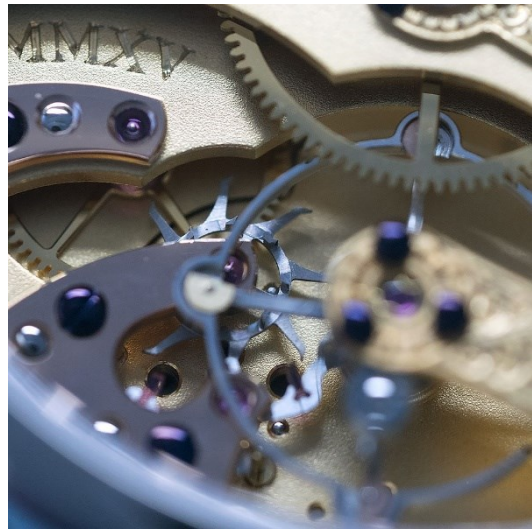


DANIELS MILLENIUM SERIES

DANIELS ANNIVERSARY SERIES

Photo credit www.acollectedman.com

ROGER W SMITH



**SERIES 2 - FIRST EDITION
CO-AXIAL ESCAPEMENT EVOLUTION**

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

ROGER W SMITH



**SERIES 4 - FULL CALENDAR
GREAT BRITAIN - PIECE UNIQUE**

Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

ROMAIN GAUTHIER



Photo credit www.thenakedwatchmaker.com

He is a Swiss micro-mechanics engineer who founded his own brand in 2005, with the scope of creating his own watches, but also supplying components to third parties, after working for several years for Francois Golay. In 2007, he presented the understated model Prestige HM featuring a gold 18k dial and a special crown on the back, equipped with the in-house hand wound Cal.HM2206 and produced in limited editions of 160 pcs in total. After the launch of the sibling model HMS three years later, in 2013 he introduced the awarded model Logical One featuring an innovative fusee application, and four years after the automatic Insight Micro-Rotor, one of the most beautiful timepieces in the market. Distinguished for his original designs, he delivers around 60 watches per year requiring a minimum indicative budget of 70,000 euro.

ROMAIN GAUTHIER



PRESTIGE HM

Photo credit www.europeanwatch.com

ROMAIN GAUTHIER



LOGICAL ONE BYZANTINE PIECE UNIQUE

Photo credit www.watchesbysjx.com

ROMAIN GAUTHIER



INSIGHT MICRO-ROTOR

Photo credit www.deployant.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

URWERK



Photo credit www.watchmanias.com

It is an avant-garde Swiss brand founded in Geneva, in 1997, by the graphic designer Martin Frei and the master watchmaker Felix Baumgartner who have established themselves as the creators of the most representative extravagant watches in the market. After their first modestly accepted models (UR-101/102), they introduced the radical UR-103 in 2003, equipped with the characteristic satellite hour hand module (based on Cal.ETA7001), and two years later, they developed HW Opus 5 featuring three-dimensional telescopic hour hands. These two iconic watches not only have defined the brand two basic lines 1xx and 2xx ever since, but have also affected the course of watchmaking. The annual output is around 150 pcs, with models UR-103/100/202-220 being the preferable ones. Minimum budget less than 50,000 euro.

URWERK



UR-103 & HW OPUS 5

Photo credit www.watchprosite.com

URWERK



UR-203 & UR-220

Photo credit www.watchprosite.com

URWERK



UR-100 SPACETIME

Photo credit www.revolutionwatch.com

The Best Independent Watchmakers

VIANNEY HALTER



Photo credit www.vianney-halter.com

Last but certainly not least, he is perhaps the most creative of all thanks to his avant-garde spirit. Born in France, he graduated from the *Ecole Horlogere de Paris* in 1980 being only 17, and after working for more than ten years in antique restoration projects, he established his own workshop in 1994 committing his work to hyper luxury brands. In 1998, he presented the characteristic multi-dial perpetual calendar model Antiqua, produced till 2016 in less than 100 pcs, and in 2000 he introduced his signature Classic model, based on a reworked Lemania Cal.8810 (250pcs). Leaving aside his subsequent anniversary and extravagant tourbillon projects, in March 2022 he presented the innovative La Resonance, with a scheduled output of 7 pcs per year demanding an indicative price of 225,000 euro. All reserved within a month!

VIANNEY HALTER



ANTIQUA AUTOMATIC PERPETUAL CALENDAR

Photo credit www.quillandpad.com

VIANNEY HALTER



CLASSIC AUTOMATIC

Photo credit www.ninanet.net

VIANNEY HALTER



LA RESONANCE DUAL BALANCE

Photo credit www.revolutionwatch.com

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



GERD-RUDIGER LANG is a retired German master watchmaker who was trained in Germany and worked for 18 years in Heuer developing an expertise in chronographs. He was among the first independent watchmakers founding his own German-Swiss brand **CHRONOSWISS** in 1983 utilizing assembling facilities in both countries. His creativity and smart approach (open back cases) resulted in the development of perhaps the most accessible independent brand in the market. His most preferable timepieces include: The early moonphase chronographs and the KELEK collaborative projects in the 1980s. The Regulateur line since 1987 including Tora(1994), Delphis(1995), Chronoscope(2001) and Tourbillon models, equipped with HW calibers, but primarily with the automatic Cal.12x line based on Enicar 165 movement. The entry level models Kairos & Orea. The amazing 1990s chronograph collection with off center hour sub-dial. The Timemaster sport line introduced in the 2000s. Special models like the Digiteur and the Quarter Repeater.

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



DANIEL ROTH is a 3rd generation master watchmaker qualified in France before moving to Switzerland and working for brands like JLC and AP, and later on in 1973 for Breguet undertaking the position of technical director and setting the foundations for its revival. In 1988, he founded his own brand being among the senior independent watchmakers in recent history, even though he handed over the ownership early, with his brand ending up to Bulgari in 2000. The next year, he set up once again his own workshop under the brand name JEAN DANIEL NICOLAS for hand crafting his own tourbillon watches, despite that his name remained active till the late 2010s on Bulgari dials. Especially during his first productive period (1990-1994) he delivered around 400 top quality watches, among the best and most collectible modern Swiss timepieces. The best preferable models include the entry level C107/207 & 208-Datomax, C127 Retrograde, C147 Lemania chronographs, C317 Papillon jumping hour and the tourbillon models C187/197.

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



ROGER DUBUIS (1938-2017) was a Swiss master watchmaker who worked 20+ years for Longines and Patek Philippe, before getting independent in the 1980s and founding his own brand in 1995 (with C.Dias). During the next 8 years, his brand produced top quality watches, under the lines Hommage, Sympathie, Much-More, Golden-Square, before shifting to a completely new course in the mid 2000s (Photo credit www.watchprosite.com)



foversta @ PuristSPro



foversta @ PuristSPro

HARRY WINSTON OPUS line was introduced in 2001 in collaboration with selected independent watchmakers, thanks to the initiative of CEO Max Busser. The preferable “magnificent seven” are: Opus 1 assigned to FP.Journe (18p), Opus 2 A.Preziuso (24pcs), Opus 4 C.Claret (20pcs), Opus 5 F.Baumgartner (100pcs), Opus 6 Greubel Forsey (6pcs), Opus 7 A.Strehler (50pcs), Opus 10 JF.Mojon (100pcs) (Photo credit www.watchprosite.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



FRANCK MULLER is a Swiss master watchmaker, graduate of Geneva watchmaking school, with experience in restoration, before starting to present his own customized complicated watches in the 1980s. Along with Vartan Sirmakes, he founded FM brand in 1992 introducing the “neo-classic” Cintree Curvex models, with the preferable ones being 5850,6850,7851,7880MRT/TCH/THS (Photo credit www.catalog.antiquorum.swiss)



RICHARD MILLE along with Dominique Guenat established RM brand in 2001 producing modern watches, with top quality mechanisms, supplied by VMF & RP(AP). The most preferable model is the Extra Flat RM-67 since 2016, equipped with automatic Cal.CRMA6 featuring titanium plate and bridges, free sprung balance, platinum rotor, housed in a titanium case of 48x38x8 mm (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



BOVET is a Swiss brand established 200 years ago and remaining active till the 1950s. Watch collector Pascal Raffy acquired the brand in 2001, and gradually developed three major collections, the Pininfarina line (2007), the Amadeo characteristic convertible case line (2010), and the Dimier line with in-house highly complicated calibers. Recital 29 is the preferable entry level model introduced in 2020 (Photo credit www.deployant.com)



H.MOSER & CIE is a Swiss brand with roots from the late 1820s and on-going operation till the late 1980s. In 2002, it was revived thanks to the contribution of R.N.Balsinger, Dr.J.Lange, T.Straumann and Andreas Strehler who developed its innovative exclusive mechanisms. Since 2012, it belongs to MELB group being one of the best manufacturers, with Pioneer being the entry level model (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



SCHWARZ ETIENNE is a Swiss brand with a long history since 1902 when founded in La Chaux de Fonds - Neuchatel. In 2007, it got affiliated with the small group Radicchi Horlogerie providing the capacity for in-house manufacture calibers and parts. Roma Synergy model has been developed since 2020, in collaboration with K.Voutilainen, for the dial and caliber decoration (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)



MICHEL PARMIGIANI is a Swiss master watchmaker with a 20-year background in restoration before establishing the homonymous brand in Fleurier - Neuchatel, in 1996, evolved in one of the biggest independent manufactures since the early 2000s, especially after the creation of VMF caliber producer (2003). Tonda PF automatic is one of the best and most understated luxury sport watches (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



URBAN JURGENSEN is a Danish - Swiss brand with an almost 250-year history. Since the early 1980s has entered in its new era that has peaked in 2011 with the introduction of the proprietary caliber P8 being the first ever with pivoted detent escapement (fit in a wristwatch), followed later on by caliber P4 (lever escapement). All its contemporary models are considered collectible items (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)



CHARLES FRODSHAM (1810-1871) had been a legendary English watchmaker whose brand has stood the test of time since 1834. After an effort of 16 years, from the current owner P.Whyte and the watchmaker R.Stenning, the brand introduced its first ever wristwatch in 2018, equipped with in-house developed caliber featuring a direct impulse dual wheel escapement, designed by George Daniels (Photo credit www.deployant.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



DEREK PRATT (1938-2009) was a significant British master watchmaker, renowned for his contribution to the development of UJS and Frodsham (previous page), among others. T.Bales and R.Decorte (located in Florida), in collaboration with prominent market professionals, have materialized a 10+ years wristwatch project, based on his notable Reuleaux triangle remontoire application (Photo credit www.derekprattwatches.com)



BERNHARD LEDERER is a German master watchmaker, one of the first members of AHCI (1985), located in Switzerland since 2000 when he founded his own BLU brand. In 2015, he established M.H.M. studio with the scope of developing his expertise on escapement applications, and in 2020 he presented the innovative Central Impulse Chronometer, with dual remontoire escapement wheel (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



SPEAKE MARIN is a Swiss brand founded by the British master watchmaker Peter Speake Marin in 2002 introducing the original marine style collection with the characteristic “Piccadilly” case. Since 2017, the brand continues without its founder, located in Geneva and using in-house mechanisms, under the ownership of Christelle Rosnoblet. Academic is the entry level model since 2018 (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)



CYRUS is a Swiss brand established in Geneva in 2010, administrated by 3 key people, Dr. Pablo Richard, Walter Ribaga and the master watchmaker Jean-Francois Mojon who has developed in-house its highly complicated mechanisms. The entire collection is housed in very large 46mm cases, with the most preferable model being the Klepcys Alarm, among the best of its kind in the market (Photo credit www.ablogtwatch.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



MAURON MUSY is a Swiss brand founded by Eric Mauron and Christophe Musy introducing their first watch in 2015. Their major differentiation is the development of sport watches with an innovative case construction without o-ring gaskets, water-resistant to 300m. The first titanium models have been equipped with exclusive mechanisms supplied by La Joux-Perret (Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com)



SINGER REIMAGINED is a Swiss brand established in Genève in 2017, associated with the Californian notable Porsche 911 restorer, founded by Rob Dickinson. Singer Flytrack is the first brand model, designed by Marco Borraccino and developed by Agenhor studio featuring a system converting (via a pusher) the central sweeping second hand in a 60-second flyback chronograph (Photo credit www.fratellowatches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



NORD-ZEITMACHINE was a Swiss brand founded in 1998 by the genius mechanic and self-taught watchmaker Daniel Nebel (1971-2020) introducing three sibling models, Variocurve (2011-V1/2/3/4), Quickindicator (2013-V1/2/3), Freesdial (2016-V1/2) featuring an hour disc and a non-circular central minute axis, based on Cal.ETA2824. Each edition is limited to less than 100 numbered timepieces (Photo credit www.keepthetime.com)



RESENCE is a Belgian-Swiss brand founded by the industrial designer Benoit Mintiens in 2010 introducing its first series of watches in collaboration with L.Ballouard, equipped with an in-house designed module that supports a revolving convex dial, based on Cal.ETA2824. Successive (crown-less) preferable models include Type 1 (2014), the sport Type 5 (2015) and the entry level Type 8 since 2022 (Photo credit www.fratellowatches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS



HAUTLENCE is a Swiss brand founded in 2004 by Renaud de Retz and Guillaume Tetu. Today, it keeps going without its founders getting under MELB group since 2012. All preferable models feature jumping - rotating - retrograde indications, based on 3 in-house caliber lines, the hand wound HL since 2005, the automatic HL2.0/Moebius (2011), the innovative HTL501(Sphere) since 2019 (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)



MCT is a Swiss brand founded by Denis Giguet in 2007, supported by Cage Holding since 2012. The first model square Sequential One was launched in 2009 featuring 4 pivoted prism hour display modules, combined with a C-shaped jump disc and a central minute hand. The sibling round model Sequential Two followed in 2014, along with Frequential in 2015 and the digital Dodekal in 2017 (Photo credit www.monochrome-watches.com)

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS

BRAINSTORMING ON CREATIVE & INGENUOUS WATCHMAKING



JACOB & CO EPIC X & DAVID RUTTEN STREAMLINE JUMP JOUR METEORITE
Photo credit www.ablogtowatch.com & www.davidrutten.com

DEWITT ACADEMIA MATHEMATICAL & KRAYON ANYWHERE SUNRISE/SUNSET
Photo credit www.dewitt.ch & www.monochrome-watches.com

EPILOGUE & APOTHEOSIS

SCIENCE FICTION & MECHANICAL HOROLOGY



MAX BUSSER & FRIENDS STUDIO FOR COLLABORATIVE TIMEPIECE PROJECTS

Z

LM101 ON THREE DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT

LM THUNDERDOME BY ERIC COUDRAY & KARI VOUTILAINEN

HM3 FROG HOROLOGICAL MACHINE BY JEAN-MARC WIEDERRECHT (AGENHOR)

Photo credit www.thehourglass.com & www.mbandf.com

George Serafimides