

Monsters, machines, mechanical marvels and masterpieces

Reminiscences of a BaselWorld that left me somewhat bemused, a little frustrated and, for some inexplicable reason, dissatisfied. Naturally, there were many highly notable exceptions!

›D. Malcolm Lakin

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Before I'm defrocked, declared a heretic and drummed out of the 'BaselWorld Fan Club' for including seemingly critical terminology in my sub-heading to this article, let me avow to being an unequivocal aficionado of this incomparable watch-fest.

From the editorial point of view, some vignettes are better than others, but as many a BaselWorld devotee claims, there's no such thing as a bad show, it's just that some are better than others. So it is with a slightly heavy heart that I say, for me 2012 was one of those others.

Let me explain why. Many years ago, a very good friend of mine who also happened to be a world-renowned jewellery designer said to me that however clever, innovative, daring and unconventional a piece of jewellery is, if it's unwearable it's a failure because the objective of jewellery is that it is made to be worn and to enhance the wearer's appearance. Today, I am applying that concept to wristwatches.

Monsters

As I wandered around the halls searching for my utopian timekeeper, it was impossible to ignore the preponderance of massive monsters and machines that purported to be the ideal, if not perfect watch that, in addition to surviving the rigorous corrosive tests of 'The Big Blue' or the pressure of a James Cameron

35,576 feet dive, could also be worn at a black tie event.

I suddenly realised that some of today's most brilliant watchmakers, along with many who don't fit into that category, seem to have lost sight of a watch's function: to show the time at a glance. When I want to know the time, I do not want to have to put my wrist into various contortions to be able to decipher it from a multitude of dials, perpetually rotating mechanisms, oscillating wheels and a multitude of hands. I want to be able to simply look at my wrist and confirm at a glance that the rumbling in my stomach is because it is twelve-thirty and it's lunchtime.

I fully accept that I may never again be allowed to stroll amongst the heady creations in the Palace, but answer me this: who do you know, other than the designers and watchmakers of these monstrous machines, that actually wears one on a daily basis?

Let's take an example, the HM4 Thunderbolt RT by **MB&F**. It looks as though once it's strapped onto your wrist you could zoom off to Krypton faster than Superman himself, pick up a few pieces of kryptonite to be used as dials in more mundane timepieces, rid the world of all its evil dictators and lunatics and be back home for tea before anyone notices you've even left the office. The Thunderbolt may well be a mechanical marvel and maintain the MB&F brand name at the forefront of horological modernism, but to put it another way, how many pieces will be purchased versus, let's say, the new Omega Speedmaster? Another case in point is **Harry Winston's** Histoire de Tourbillon 3 (which was featured in our previous issue). A feat of technical prowess that combines a bi-axial double tourbillon with an outer cage that has a two-minute rotation and an inner cage that rotates in 40 seconds; a second single axis tourbillon that rotates in 36 seconds with the time being displayed on rotating discs. Avant-garde design yes, but take a careful look at the watch and consider whether or not you would actually wear this 65 x 45.9 mm machine as a time-



HM4 THUNDERBOLT RT by MB&F

CHRONOMAT 44 GMT by Breitling

keeper. Given that this monster is in 18-carat white gold it will probably take someone of Schwarzenegger's proportions to even lift it. Additionally, I can't help but ask myself what do these 120-second and 40-second tourbillons accomplish? If you are going to wear a watch on your wrist on a regular basis, there's no need for a tourbillon since the effect of gravity is no longer a consideration. And as much as I love to see a tourbillon in full flow, a watch with two tourbillons is not only doubly redundant, but also a perfect example of overkill. One thing is for sure, by the time you've let your eyes meander over the entirety of its surface, checked whether or not the 50-hour power reserve indicator needs a boost and admired the complexities of the rotating tourbillons, not only will your retinas have a problem decrypting the time on the rotating discs, but also you'll more than likely have a parking ticket stuck under your Ferrari's windscreen wipers because the parking meter will have long ago clicked on to the red 'Penalty' indicator! But then if you can afford the Histoire de Tourbillon 3 and the Ferrari, I suppose the fine would be insignificant.

Since time immemorial monsters roam the earth in groups of three, so to complete my triumvirate let's look at the **H1** by **HYT**. But before I do, I want to state loud and clear that I have a lot of time for Vincent Perriard, the brand's CEO and Partner, and I really appreciated him taking time out to explain to me the H1's intricacies and functions.

Now to business. The H1 is what I would call a 'fun' monster, a timepiece that seems to operate a little like a pacemaker, with a pair of pumps resembling bellows at 6 o'clock that pump a yellow luminescent liquid through a tube that encircles the watch to indicate the hour. The small seconds counter is situated between 9 and 10 o'clock and is reminiscent of a miniaturised waterwheel you might find



at an ancient flour mill or on the sides of one of the paddle steamers that chug up and down the Mississippi river.

If you turn the watch over, the transparent case-back reveals an insight into the working heart of the H1. The timepiece is supremely innovative and it is a brilliant example of how visual creativity is as much a part of modern watchmaking as the mechanical prowess required to construct it. However, for me it is a mechanical monster. I love it, but I wouldn't wear one in a month of Sundays. (See Pierre Maillard's article in this issue for more technical details on the H1 and HYT's plans for the future).

These timepieces are but three examples of many of what I mean by watchmakers going off on a tangent: they display in an extraordinary manner the time but forget about the basic concept of a wristwatch. A watch by definition is a small portable timepiece usually worn on the wrist. Okay, how small is small? Don't get me wrong, all three of these timepieces are exceptional creations that demonstrate inspired mechanical expertise and workmanship, but for me their complexity detracts from what I believe are the two fundamental aims of a wristwatch: an instant visual reading of the time and, given that the male of the species often considers his wristwatch as his only adornment, the enhancement of his appearance. I'm fully aware that by saying that I won't win many friends, but for me a

mechanical or quartz wristwatch is an intricate mechanism worn on the wrist whose *raison d'être* is primordially to give the time and not look like a machine from a Nobel prize winner's laboratory.

Mechanical marvels

Having moaned and groaned about the monsters, I'm now going to take a look at some of the mechanical marvels that I would be happy to put on my wrist. Some of them are large, but their size slots comfortably into my "Big is Beautiful" category, which is, give or take a millimetre or two, the size of the new Transocean Chronograph Unitime by **Breitling**.

In stainless steel or 18 carat red gold the 44 mm Transocean is equipped with a Breitling Calibre 05 manufacture self-winding movement with a 70-hour power reserve. There is a central quarter-second chronograph hand with 30-minute and 12-hour counters, a date aperture between 4 and 5 o'clock and a world time feature that features two mobile discs – a 24-hour disc and one bearing the names of cities representing 24 time zones. The time shown by the hour and minute hands is the local time—or that of the city/zone at 12 o'clock. To change the time zone, you pull out the crown and turn it forwards or backwards in one-hour increments to change the city disc and the 24-hour disc, and the date is simply adjusted in both directions to that of the corresponding local

BR 01 ALTIMETER



BR 01 TURN COORDINATOR



BR 01 HORIZON



time. During these adjustments, the minute and seconds hands continue normally without any loss of precision and without affecting any chronograph timing operation in use. The dials are available in black or polar white and the watch is water resistant to 100 metres.

The Transocean Chronograph Unitime is easy to use, easy to read, offers the time at a glance and it looks great on the wrist anywhere in the world.

Breitling's other gem this year is the Chronomat 44 GMT. Using the manufacture Breitling self-winding Calibre 04 movement, this "traveller's chronograph" offers three time zones: home time, a 24-hour second zone indicated by the red-tipped hand and a rotating ratcheted bezel providing the 24-hour third zone. Turning the crown forwards or backwards to change the time zones doesn't interfere with the minutes function. The watch is in stainless steel with a quarter-second chronograph and 30-minute and 12-hour counters with a date aperture between 4 and 5 o'clock. The dial comes in various colours and the strap is available in leather, rubber or as the iconic Pilot bracelet. Water resistant to 200 metres, this watch combines all the features I would want in a timepiece and looks remarkably elegant if you're wearing denim or dinner jacket.

You don't have to be an aviation aficionado to enjoy the timepieces by **Bell & Ross** that

are inspired by cockpit instrumentation, but if you are, then the new Aviation Collection is a must. At 46mm they are more or less the standard for the brand's BR collections, but although they are big they are supremely comfortable on the wrist and they certainly don't fall into my monster category since readability of the time remains a priority—as it is indeed for those wonderful men in their flying machines. The three limited-edition "from cockpit to the wrist" models—the BR 01 Horizon, BR 01 Altimeter and BR 01 Turn Coordinator—have been recreated in the style of the actual navigational instruments they are named after, with the added impetus of an appealing graphic styling. The BR Horizon's styling is based upon an attitude indicator (or artificial horizon) with the lower part of the watch in black representing the earth and the grey representing the sky. A white horizon line on the 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock axis separates the two sections. The hour indices are on a raised dial to ensure clear legibility and the bridge at 12 o'clock, which is evocative of the attitude indicator, conceals the attachment of the hands. The watch is equipped with an ETA 2892 automatic movement and the case has a black PVD steel finish. Water resistant to 100 metres the BR Horizon comes with a black rubber strap and one in a heavy-duty canvas. The BR Altimeter bears a very strong resemblance to an altimeter. The window at 3 o'clock displaying the date is where normally the

atmospheric pressure would be indicated and the typeface used is reminiscent of that on the genuine altimeter. The watch is equipped with an ETA 2896 automatic movement showing hours, minutes, seconds and big date. The size and case details are the same as on the Horizon. Lastly we have the BR Turn Coordinator, an innovative timepiece that uses ultra-light concentric discs to display the hours and minutes. Each disc weighs thirty times more than a conventional watch hand, thus requiring special materials and techniques to ensure that not only are they not deformed by friction, but also can maintain the power reserve and, therefore, the accuracy of the wristwatch.

It is fitted with an ETA 2892 automatic movement and three black concentric discs to indicate the hours, minutes and seconds. I'm not a pilot, in fact I have problems navigating between the drinks cabinet and the chaise longue on the terrace, but I have to admit that when I tried on the BR Turn Coordinator I had the impression that I would be more than capable of navigating through the hordes of families with their dogs and prams along the Champs Elysées in Hall 1 on a Sunday afternoon.

Choosing a watch to illustrate a brand's participation at BaselWorld is usually easy but sometimes it is problematic. This is one of those difficult times because **Maurice Lacroix** launched a dozen timepieces each as worthy



MASTERPIECE LUNE RÉTROGRADE

Stainless-steel 43mm watch equipped with an automatic manufacture movement ML 192. Hours and minute hands, date by retrograde hand at 10 o'clock, day by hand at 6 o'clock, moon phase on disc at 6 o'clock, power reserve hand (52 hours) at 2 o'clock. Adjustments made by 5 crown positions, navy blue dial on a solid silver plate, sapphire crystal caseback, water resistant to 50 metres.



MASTERPIECE ROUE CARRÉE SECONDE

Rose-gold 43mm watch equipped with a mechanical ML 156 movement. Dial created on the movement main plate, trailing square wheel for the seconds display driven by a clover-shaped wheel, seconds pointer with luminescent coating, stick hand for the power reserve indication engraved on dial, stamped hours and minutes hands with diamond-cut head, sapphire caseback, water resistant to 50 metres.



PONTOS DÉCENTRIQUE GMT

Stainless-steel 43mm watch equipped with a self-winding ML 121 automatic movement. Off-centre display of hours, minutes and seconds with diamond-cut faceted hands with luminescent coating, date at 6 o'clock, GMT display at 4 o'clock with an opening for day/night disc indicator. 38-hour power reserve, sapphire crystal caseback, water resistant to 50 metres.

as the next of inclusion. Consequently, I'm going to dispense with a long eulogistic text and let the illustrations do my job for me. The choice of watches is subjective, but they more than adequately cover the spectrum of watches that Maurice Lacroix now offer. They are: the Masterpiece Lune Rétrograde, the Masterpiece Roue Carrée Seconde and the Pontos Décentrique GMT.

I really don't recall the first time that I met Fredi Brodmann at Basel, but he's always around in some capacity or other because Fredi is, amongst his many talents, a watch designer. I say many talents because the designer tag is very appropriate in his case since in addition to having designed watches for many leading watch companies internationally, he has also designed chairs, cuff-links, written books and created the Brodmann Blades – a remarkable ping pong bat without a handle. Check it out when you have a moment.

Born in Vienna, Fredi Brodmann attended the Academy for Applied Arts, then moved to New York where he founded Visual Visions Inc.,

where he developed his style and styling, which he terms as "When Bauhaus meets Dali." But back to the watch business. Teaming up with **Modex Time & Jewelry, Ltd.** Fredi Brodmann has created and developed a new timepiece called Angolo Suisse that he de-



ANGOLO SUISSE by Modex Time & Jewelry, Ltd.

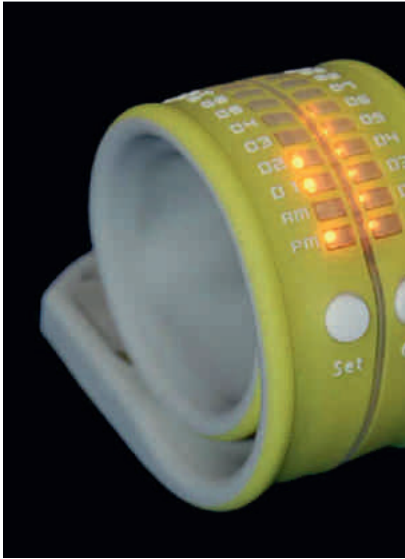
scribes as his "first high-end jewellery object that also tells time". In fact it is a bangle watch available in 18 carat white, yellow or rose gold that "parallels modern high-tech and architecture with surrealism". It comes with a variety of surface treatments from leather inlays, to wood veneer and guilloché to a variety of diamond settings, all of which are made to order for a client.

However, the Angolo features an exclusive, first time patented bent sapphire crystal. Milled out of a solid block of sapphire to create a 90° angle—"twenty break before one comes out perfect"—the watch is equipped with an ETA quartz movement or, if requested, a mechanical movement.

By definition, each watch is unique and as Fredi explains, "The Angolo Bangle watches are Swiss Made and individually numbered. They are served in an egg shell piano lacquered luxury gift box and range from US\$ 50,000 to 150,000, depending on the model and the finishing."

As Fredi says, "Give me luxury, the rest I can live without."

REFLEX by Ritmo Mundo



IZOD Collection by Ritmo Mundo



I usually pop into **Ritmo Mundo** to see Ari Soltani and his latest collections because he always has something a little different. Last year it was the Puzzle watch, this year it's the Reflex, a "fun" watch made up from a colourful silicon strip that is slapped on so that it wraps itself around the wrist. Although the concept is not new, the Reflex is new because it has an ultra bright colour LED digital display that shows the time and the date.

There are two buttons on the strip marked Set and On. By pressing the On button the LED numbers light up for five seconds with the hour display in the left column and the minute display on the right. By pressing the On button a second time, the LED numbers light up to display the month on the left and the day on the right. After five seconds, the watch returns back to the a.m/p.m display mode.

The Reflex comes in seven colours: white, red, black, green, blue, yellow and pink, is washable with a mild soap and water and a clean cloth and is water resistant to 10 metres, making it ideal for land sports and an eye-catching adornment if you're feeling in a disco mood. The wearer gets around 3000 readings before a change of battery is required – which is easily done via a small screw-down back plate.

Ritmo Mundo also produce watches in partnership with the Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation to license men's and women's watches under

the **IZOD** brand. The 2012 Collection offers inexpensive (US\$75 to 300) and colourful timepieces in a spectrum of ten bright colours featuring simple three-hand models and chronographs with sporty rubber, canvas and leather strap options.

Sizes range from 41.1 mm to 55 mm depending on the model and are in stainless steel and aluminium and stainless steel and polycarbonate. Water resistant to 30 metres the watches are fitted with Miyota quartz movements.

And as an added bonus, Arnold Schwarzenegger visited his pal Ari Soltani on the stand at Basel-World and he wears Ritmo Mundo watches – when he's not visiting Audemars Piguet that is.

deLaCour was tucked away in Hall 2 amidst the glittering jewellery exhibitors with a booth entrance almost hidden from view to passers-by. Hopefully the brand will be more visible next year because they have some eye-catching models just waiting to be discovered.

The first of the deLaCour creations was the Bichrono. Designed by Pierre Koukjian the timepiece had a dual time zone powered by two independent chronograph movements and won several prizes around the world. From there the brand went on to produce a Bitourbillon and by 2007 there was the Birepetition followed later by other innovative watches such as the Bichrono Hommage using wood as the dial, the Bichrono Fidelidad using tobacco leaf and the Bichrono Asphalt using pulverised asphalt. All powerful pieces designed to enhance the male of the species.

The ladies haven't been forgotten though and this year deLaCour offered an abundance of colourful timepieces that underline the creativity of the brand's designer, Pierre Koukjian. The first collection to catch my eye was the City Leap Garden, watches inspired by the beauty of field flowers: hand-painted mother-



CITY LEAP GARDEN by deLaCour



CITY LEAP PASSION by deLaCour



CLASS LADY 15TH ANNIVERSARY by Gc



MEN'S GC-4 15TH ANNIVERSARY by Gc



SPORT CLASS XL-GLAM MATTE by Gc

of-pearl dials adorned with diamonds, rubies, tsavorites and yellow sapphires. The cases are in either 18-carat rose gold or steel PVD equipped with DC 225 quartz movements.

Another collection, the City Leap Passion, plays with the emotions by contrasting black mother-of-pearl dials with diamonds, pear-shaped peridots, citrines, amethysts and pear-shaped diamonds. The watch cases are in 18-carat rose gold or titanium PVD and they feature a quartz movement. The City Leap Web recreates that enigmatic asymmetrical creation of the spider, the web. Lattice lines forming intertwined rows of diamonds (2.25 carats) adorn

a black or white mother-of-pearl dial. The watch is equipped again with the quartz DC 225 movement and like all the ladies' watches it is water resistant to 50 metres.

For something completely different there was the Promess Glamour. The brand's first round watch was launched a couple of years ago, but the new model offers an almost three dimensional appearance as the silky lines of the case contrast dramatically with the dials made up from baguette diamonds and rubies enhanced by peridots, iolites, citrines, pink tourmalines and amethysts. The watches are in stainless steel equipped with a DC 221

quartz movement and are water resistant to 30 metres.

If you are looking for a stunning kaleidoscope of precious colour, deLaCour is the answer. The only problem was finding them—a must-look-at problem that the BaselWorld organisers will hopefully rectify with the new halls in 2013.

Once again, the combined **Gc** and **Guess** booth was teeming with buyers, would-be buyers, journalists and Basel's younger generation. Fortunately, the indefatigable CEO of Gc, Cindy Livingston, cleared a space for me in her busy schedule to explain that Gc enjoyed a bigger increase than Guess in 2011, partially due to the brand's marketing and packaging being just right and partially because Gc now has 5,000 retail outlets around the world including thirty-five Gc boutiques—increasing to fifty by year-end.

Continuing with its Smart Luxury concept of a commitment to providing quality Swiss watches at a genuinely accessible price level, this year sees the creation of the Gc Class Lady 15th Anniversary Limited Edition (115 pieces): a stainless-steel version with rose gold accents on the transparent dial; one in rose gold PVD; and one with 46 finely-cut diamonds set in two crescent shaped curves on the stainless-steel case. The watches are equipped with an



CITY LEAP WEB by deLaCour



PROMESS GLAMOUR by deLaCour

DARING by Guess



ETA 2801 mechanical movement with either a translucent mother-of-pearl dial or transparent dial and sapphire crystals front and back. The watch is water resistant to 50 metres and comes with either a polished steel bracelet or a black croco-embossed leather strap.

Men also have an anniversary model: the Gc-4 15th Anniversary Limited Edition (115 pieces). This 44 mm mechanical watch with a skeleton movement combines what Gc explain as “traditional *savoir-faire* meets bold and expressive design”. Equipped with an ETA 2801 manual wound movement with a 42-hour power reserve, the watch comes in two versions, either brushed and polished stainless steel or black matte PVD. With a scratch-resistant sapphire crystal and a screw-down caseback, water-resistance to 50 metres, this powerfully built timepiece is a typical example of Gc keeping its finger—make that wrist—on the pulse of the sporty, elegant market.

For the ladies who want to join in the “black is beautiful” trend in timepieces, Gc offer the 36 mm Sport Class XL-Glam Matte in high-tech black ceramic. The watch is equipped with a Swiss quartz movement with two counters indicating the date at 3 o’clock and the day at 9 o’clock. The bezel design has metallised matte black crystal inserts between the ten-minute markers to give a tone on tone contrast. There is a matte black dial with hand-applied Roman numerals and indices, a screw-down case and

FIERCE by Guess



crown, a scratch-resistant sapphire crystal and the watch is water resistant to 100 metres.

Guess watches are all about trend, design, eye-catching marketing and prices that belie belief. Take for example the 45 mm Daring with its mixture of textures, treatments and finishes. Rose gold combined with a bronze top ring enhanced by a rich brown croco-embossed leather strap. Hours, minutes and central seconds hands, a 30-minute counter at 3 o’clock and a day counter at 9 o’clock, the watch is water resistant to 100 metres.

Now for something ferociously à la mode: Fierce; a gold-toned leopard print watch that is outrageously bold in concept and appearance. Not for the faint-hearted, this timepiece

combines a reflective bronze and gold-toned leopard print on a stainless-steel case and bracelet, with a dial made up of animal glitz and gold-toned markers. Other versions are the snow leopard with crystal-set bezels.

And if you’re having doubts as a buyer, eat your words, for they are going like the proverbial hot cakes.

Not to be forgotten ...

There are a few brands and watches that I would have liked to include, but my colleagues at *Europa Star* insisted that they got there before me. So, in no special order here are some of the memorable pieces that nevertheless I have to mention ...

Blacksand and the deliciously elegant Continuity Koala Collection. My preference was for the model in white gold with the diamond-set bezel and the painted and cloisonné enamelled koalas.

Boucheron for its Hibiscus Tourbillon in white gold with a hummingbird and a flower with pavé diamonds, blue and pink sapphires, white mother-of-pearl dial and hand-wound mechanical movement with a flying tourbillon.



CONTINUITY KOALA COLLECTION by Blacksand



HIBISCUS TOURBILLON by Boucheron

RAKETA

Last year I stopped very briefly to browse in the showcases of the Russian brand Raketa in Hall 4, promising myself to return when I had more time. A year later I found the time and was greeted with a "Welcome to Russia" from Count Jacques von Polier, Raketa's Managing Director, who is also the Head of Design and Propaganda.

Count von Polier explained that although the Raketa (Russian for rocket) brand name was only created in 1962 in honour of Yuri Gagarin, the Russian cosmonaut, the Petrodvorets Watch Factory where the watches are manufactured is Russia's oldest factory, having been founded by Peter the Great in 1721. The Petrodvorets factory is still located in its original building in St Petersburg and is one of the relatively rare watch factories manufacturing its own movements. It is also now the only Russian watch manufacturing company.

"In the 1970s and 80s the factory was huge," Count von Polier told me. "It produced about five million mechanical watches a year. Before the Second World War the factory had about 600 employees and during the war a third of the employees were killed. In 1945, the remaining 400 workers started to rebuild the factory that had been heavily damaged in the siege of Leningrad as it was then called.

"From 1945 onwards, the factory continued to grow, reaching almost 8,000 employees by the end of the 70s with a production of five million watches a year. The city and the Raketa Factory were almost like a single unit: the factory had its own symphonic orchestra with 150 professional musicians and an Olympic-size football stadium and was heralded as the epitome of communism with its happy, smiling workers.

"After the fall of Soviet Union, Russia entered a chaotic era—the Yeltsin epoch. This period of the 90s under the Yeltsin regime saw literally hundreds of factories close one after the other, because not only were they incapable of adapting to the new economic environment, but also because the economy was governed by what became known as the Russian mafia.

"During this period our factory also suffered badly. Watch production fell drastically, sales collapsed and qualified workers became taxi drivers and grew potatoes in their garden to feed their families. But despite all this, thanks to a few state orders essentially for the Russian army, the factory survived. Its size was seriously reduced with time and when I arrived at the factory for the first time in 2009, I found 100 watchmakers, 300 machines, but a rare know-how.

"Based on this and with the help of Swiss engineers, the Petrodvorets Watch Factory was reorganised and last year modern watchmaking equipment was purchased from the Swatch Group resulting in an immediate improvement of the quality of Raketa watches. I think it's fair to say that we arrived just in time to save the last Russian watch manufacturer - one of the very rare watch factories in the world that produces entirely its own movement from A to Z including the hairspring, balance wheel and escapement. Currently we have a production capacity of 2,000 watches a month and by next year we should double that figure.

"Today, our priority is to initially develop the Russian market and then continue with the rest of Europe."

At BaselWorld, Raketa presented a prototype of its new automatic movement the Automat Raketa. Designed and produced in-house, the new Automat is thinner and of a smaller diameter than the automatic movement the factory manufactured back in 1975. The new movement will come in two versions: the Automat 2615 with three hands and the Automat 2627 with a double date feature. As Count Jacques von Polier explained, "By the end of this year we hope that some of our models from the collection will be available with the new automatic movement. The first model will most probably be our actual 'best seller', the Petrodvorets Classic. Then eventually we will adapt other models to our automatic movement including the Vodianova, which at present is equipped with a Raketa 2609 engraved and gold-plated movement."

The Vodianova to which Count von Polier refers is the new Raketa watch presented this year that was designed by Nathalia Vodianova, the Russian supermodel. Having delved into the Raketa archives, she decided to use as the basis for her design a popular Raketa model from 1974. The new watch has a mother-of-pearl dial decorated with red crystals in the form of the famous red star that adorns the four corners of Moscow's Kremlin, and in Cyrillic on the rotating bezel are the city names representing the various time zones.

As they say over there, Хорошее здоровье и Успех!



Ressence and the highly original timepiece with its revolving dial plate that points out the minutes with a central hand and orbiting sub-dials inside the main dial plate indicating the hours, seconds and a.m./p.m. indication.

Frédérique Constant for two watches: the Black Beauty Double Heart Beat. A beautiful rendition highlighting a mechanical movement through heart-shaped apertures and enhanced by a diamond-set bezel for the utmost sophistication; the Index Moon Timer with its FC-330 mechanical movement and moon phases at 6 o'clock and circular date indicator using a white hand with a red-tipped arrowhead pointer.



INDEX MOON TIMER by Frédérique Constant

CARROUSEL RED PASSION by Peter Tanisman



Peter Tanisman and two elegant timepieces each with a spinning cylinder containing synthetic red rubies for the Red Passion model and a sunburst guilloché cylinder with two diamonds for the Black Attitude.

Franc Vila watches have a very bold and distinctive look. This year Franc Vila introduced a melodic blackened titanium 5 Minute Repeater in his Superligero Concept series and a Cobra Automatic Chronograph with Big Date in blackened steel and titanium that outweighed the Repeater but is very comfortable on the



COBRA by Franc Vila

wrist. The dial is carbon fibre with a distinctive guilloché pattern and the three counters, hours at 9 o'clock, minutes at 6 o'clock and seconds at 3 o'clock, along with the date aperture at 12 o'clock are very legible.

To meet the ever-increasing demand by the ladies for mechanical timepieces, Franc Vila has launched the No 1 Tourbillon Planétaire in DLC DieHard Extreme steel. It has two rubies on the lower part of the combined elliptic and circular bezel and sapphire crystals front and back. The dial is in black mother-of-pearl embellished with *Clous de Paris* and red numerals. There is a 120-hour power reserve indicator and the suspended tourbillon is colourfully prominent at 6 o'clock in red, gold and steel. As Franc Vila states, "This is an ultra-limited edition of 8 pieces."

Luminox had a miniature submarine on their stand so I met up with Andreas Lehmann, the Marketing and Sales Director, to find out why. Renowned for its ultra-rugged watches, the Luminox brand has teamed up with the intrepid underwater explorer and extreme diver



SCOTT CASSELL DEEP DIVE AUTOMATIC SPECIAL EDITION by Luminox

CAPONE by Pilo & Co.



Scott Cassell and, working together, they have created special edition watches that will function and not fail during his deep-sea dives and his world record long-distance attempt. Scott Cassell gave a talk on his underwater expeditions and his continuing battle to preserve the deteriorating condition of the oceans, closing with "The oceans need warriors. Not more words!"

Checking out the ambience inside the miniature submarine with Scott Cassell in attendance, I can only admire his fortitude and dedication to rest entombed in this metal shell for hours on end hundreds of feet below the surface of the sea. He deserves all the Luminox watches they give him!

Pilo & Co Genève presented its new Capone Collection, an imposing 44 mm x 52 mm tonneau-shaped day/date timepiece. In stainless steel or black PVD it has a domed sapphire crystal with an internal loupe over a very distinctive red dial and a transparent caseback. The watch is equipped with an ETA 2834 day/date movement with a screw-down crown.

David Van Heim, Pilo's sister brand offered two new timepieces. The Omina unisex double time zone watch with day/date and 24-hour indication and two crowns, one of which has a protective guard. Water resistant to 30

metres, the watch is available in either rose gold or black PVD with a silicon bracelet. The other new model is in the Irea Collection, a Limited Edition (500) diver's watch equipped with a mechanical movement, a ceramic dial with legible numerals and indices, a seconds counter at 9 o'clock and luminous hands. The watch is water resistant to 50 metres and comes with a silicon bracelet.

For those readers new to the Pilo and David Van Heim collections, the prices are highly competitive, a factor worth remembering in today's difficult economic climate.

Marvin, having been shuffled around various BaselWorld locations through no fault of its own, could be found this year in Hall 4. As if to underline the fact that everything is not as it should be even if it is in black and white, the brand launched a black and white version of its Melton 160 Cushion Collection that contrasted dramatically with the new vibrant multi-coloured models. Reminiscent of something from the *Commedia dell'Arte* of the Renaissance period, this half white and black watch with a dividing line running vertically

through the watch and strap, is Marvin's interpretation of "Boy meets Girl".

The watches are available with either a Sellita SW200 automatic movement or a Ronda 715 quartz movement, both with 3 hands and date. In stainless steel (42 x 42 mm) this cushioned-shaped collection has a guilloché dial, bold numerals and indices, an ultra-resistant sapphire crystal and is water resistant to 50 metres. The collection was designed by Sébastien Perret and Jean-François Ruchonnet and the colourful options make the watches perfect for those who enjoy coordinating their summer and autumnal outfits.

Conclusion

When I began writing this article I have to admit as to feeling a little disappointed and negative about this year's BaselWorld. Having now completed it, I can see from the illustrations that it really wasn't as lacklustre as I first thought.

My comments about the monsters still stands, but as I toiled through the numerous press releases and then plugged in and unplugged all the USB keys, company by company, it



dawned on me that I was less dissatisfied with those hectic few days in springtime than I had anticipated.

To those watch companies that supplied a press kit that included a USB key, thank you. To those that made me go to their website to download illustrations, please think again because in some cases it took hours rather than minutes and as you're in the business, time is of the essence.

To my cigar-smoking friend Guillaume Tetu, I'm delighted both for you and the company that a group of shareholders represented by Georges-Henri Meylan had the good sense to ensure the future of Hautlence and I look forward to following the evolution of your timepieces.

To the organisers of BaselWorld, I look forward to the "new" show in 2013. However, I am a little worried about its conception since, if I understand correctly, there will be 20,000 square metres less than this year, watch brands will have larger stands and exhibiting costs will be between twenty and thirty per cent higher.

I know BaselWorld is supposed to be the Greatest Show on Earth as circus people emphasise, but in addition to acrobats and performing seals there are always the little people. But will they still be participating next year? If not, send in the clowns! <



OMINA DOUBLE TIME ZONE by David Van Heim



IREA DIVER by David Van Heim