

REBELLION TIME

In the world of horology, Maximilian Büsler is a true outlaw in his trade. His creations are adored passionately by an elite few, while at the same time shocking the most conservative of watch connoisseurs with their radical features. By Karla Cripps



Maximilian Büsler was recently in Bangkok to launch his latest timepiece, part of his horological concept brand MB&F (Maximilian Büsler & Friends). He explained that MB&F is an artistic and micro-engineering concept laboratory in which independent professionals – the ‘friends’ – are assembled each year to craft radical timekeeping machines.

Büsler, born in Milan but raised in Lausanne, says that he embarked on his MB&F journey when he was managing director of Harry Winston Rare

Timepieces, a position he took at the ripe age of 31. He led the company to major success from virtually nothing, sparking a 900% increase in turnover to position Harry Winston as an industry leader. Yet something wasn’t sitting right.

“Seven years down the road, I’ve got major recognition, power and money, and the bigger the company is becoming the less I’m enjoying myself,” he remembers. “I started thinking, if I got hit by a bus tomorrow, I really haven’t got that much to be proud of. So what do I really want?”

He says a dream company started to come together in his mind over the next couple of years and eventually, when at the top of his game, he left Harry Winston and created MB&F.

“My mother thought I needed my head examined.” But his gamble clearly paid off. MB&F presented its first timepiece, Horological Machine No. 1 (HM1), in 2006 and followed up with HM2 in 2007. The latest one, HM3, will be available at Bangkok’s PMT The Hourglass in March/April of this year.

At a cost of 2.7 million baht, HM3 features twin cones rising majestically from the sculptured three-dimensional case, representative of childhood dreams with its spaceship-themed design. Büsler says he was inspired by his youth, when he would sit in front of the TV watching shows like Star Trek, Dr Who and Dream On.

But Büsler admits his watches aren’t for everyone, and says those who seek out the prestige of a Rolex or a Patek Philippe probably won’t appreciate his concepts.

“They need to be serious rebels to buy into what we’ve done. They rage against the machine, refuse to follow the lines of establishment. Our clients are extremely diverse and passionate people who don’t fit the usual mould of what the wealthy establishment is. Of course there are a lot of people who hate it and say, ‘I’m never going to wear something like that.’ Love it or hate it, at the end of the day it’s an incredible machine.” ■