

MB&F'S HM2 is easily the most emotive piece on the block. A blue-gold butterfly trapped by black barbed wire inside the case illustrates the plight of a DMD sufferer: young and fragile, caught in the unrelenting grip of the disease. It is a touching contradiction: while the plight of the butterfly is bleak, there is no denying that the butterfly itself is beautiful. The blue-gold butterfly shimmers and looks hopeful in spite of its surroundings. One reason the piece is able to speak volumes may be because of one of the designers, Sage Vaughn. A former heroine addict who just barely escaped from his vice with his life in tatters, Vaughn is perfectly placed to understand the pain of being bodily trapped by something out of his control. The watch is also beautiful from a purely technical point of view: based around the HM2 engine, the piece features instantaneous jumping hour; retrograde minutes and date; as well as northern and southern hemisphere moon phases. There are 349 parts in the Jean-Marc Wiederrecht-designed movement and 102 in the case alone.

We often hear about titanium this and titanium that, but for the **VACHERON CONSTANTIN QUAI DE L'ILE SELF-WINDING WATCH**, the company is using tantalum. Tantalum may be a beautiful metal that possesses a natural blue-grey tone, but it is also one that is so hard that it routinely destroys the cutting tools that are used to cut it. It is clearly worth it, however, as the metal gives the watch a sheen that allows the watch to stand out from the crowd. Of course, that's not the only reason this is a unique watch. The watch is imbued with the characteristic playfulness of the Quai de l'Île collection, which uses secret writing, 3-D engraving and invisible ink to constantly surprise and delight their wearers. This model, for example, has a little sun metalized into the dial which only visibly glows bright yellow when under UV rays. And the other surprises we'll just let the lucky owner find out for himself.

