



## EMOTIONAL RESCUE

*“WATCHES,” AS I HAVE* been told on more than one occasion, “are 90 percent emotion.” At first this idea raises an almost desperate yelp of protest. Parts of us—probably the part that likes mechanics—fondly hopes that each of the innovations we see is some kind of practical improvement in timekeeping which therefore requires ownership. But deep down we know the truth. There is no way

to justify an expenditure on fine watches by logic alone, leaving emotion as probably the most important currency in the craft. And there is no little irony that in our scrupulous and slightly pedantic pastime, such a quality is very difficult to define or measure.

So what exactly fires our imaginations—and emotions? While affinities for brands and mechanisms vary widely, one commonality that seems to pervade our community is an appreciation for those pieces that are genuinely original and bear the true creative stamps of their makers. Those watchmakers who can conceive substantively different timepieces and then execute them wholly or largely themselves seem to dwell on a slightly higher plane in our estimation, and it is to these individuals and companies that we dedicate the major part of this issue.

The quality of being original in watchmaking is not exactly synonymous with being independent. While many of the companies and individuals herein have managed to stay free of the industry’s major holding companies, ownership is just one issue that we cover. Rather, the appeal of these entities centers on their freedom to create the unique and individual, rather than what appears to be safe or commercially expedient. This has not been lost on larger companies, many of which are making more of an effort than ever

to create their own movements. But one advantage the smaller companies retain is the ability to put a human face on their work. This, as we hope you will agree, makes watchmaking a far more interesting and, yes, emotionally satisfying place. It is, after all, a question of our feelings. And, as we have all discovered at one time or another, there is no refuting that. ●

JAMES D. MALCOLMSON  
*Contributing Editor-in-Chief*



The movement of MB&F's HM3 is unlike anything made in Swiss watches today.

“Turning the movement *upside-down* so you see the rotor, and putting the indications *on the side* were nice *new developments*.”

—JEAN-MARC WIEDERRECHT

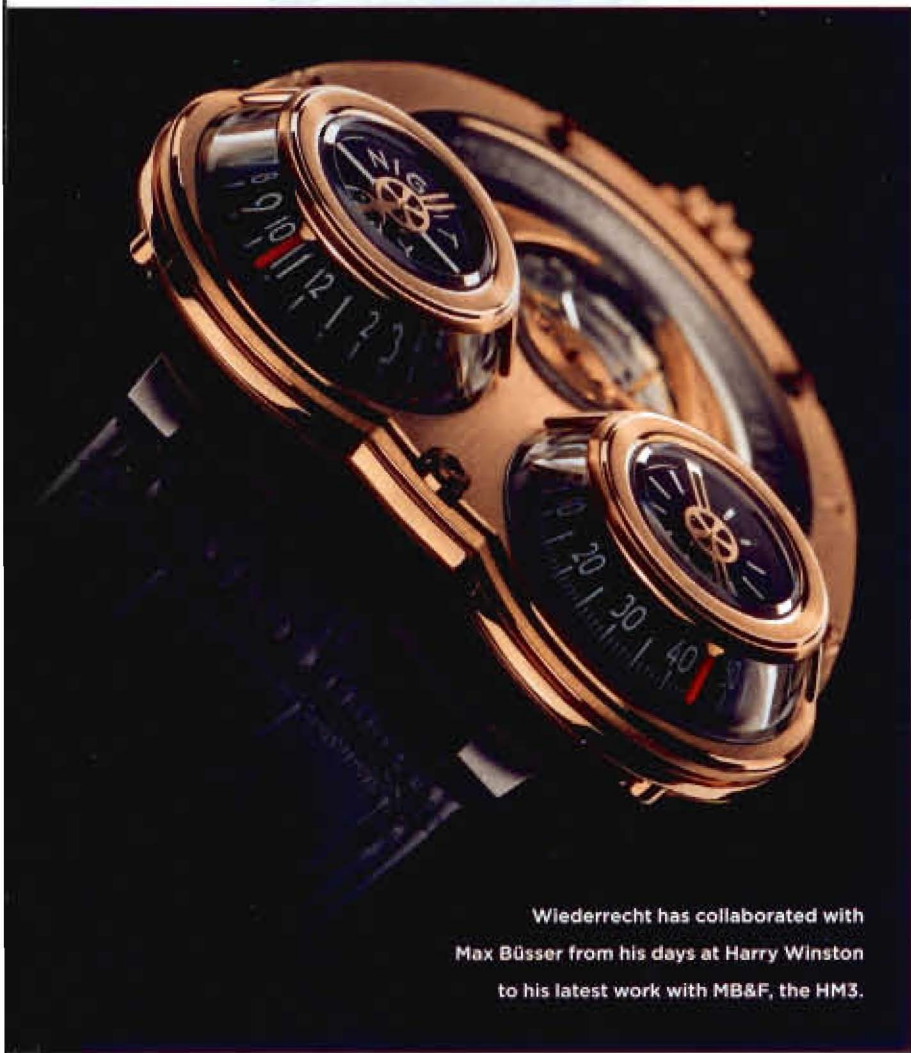
achievements in watchmaking.” For this particular timepiece, he integrated a perpetual calendar with the equation of time so that the watch could determine true north with less than one degree of error, based on the sun’s position and real solar time. The accuracy required to make this delicate calculation was made possible by asymmetrical gear teeth, one of Wiederrecht’s many patented inventions.

But Wiederrecht is not only interested in technical advances—he’s also drawn to visual extravagance. He loves the Opus 9, on which he worked with Eric Giroud. (“The design is so pure,” he enthuses. “It’s fantastic to read the time linearly with diamonds.”) And he considers the HM3, which he developed with Maximilian Büsser for MB&F, “a spectacular watch. Turning the movement upside-down so you see the rotor, and putting the indications on the side were nice new developments.”

Wiederrecht considers Büsser the model client—the two men began their relationship when Büsser was director of Harry Winston Timepieces. “Max Büsser knows exactly what he wants, and when I work with him, we make the movement starting from the design,” he explains. “Normally people start with the movement and make their design based on it. When you start with the design, you’re free to make new watches, better watches.”

And taking such strides is Wiederrecht’s *raison d’être*, the underlying reason why he hasn’t created his own retail watch brand. “At Agenhor, it’s possible for me to make five or six, maybe 10 new watches a year, and I wouldn’t be able to sell so many watches under my own name,” he says. “Making new things is the part of horology that interests me.”

As he and his 27 employees moved into a large new workshop last summer, he even reconsidered his reservations about designing a base movement of his own. “I think it’s possible to increase the accuracy of a watch by making improvements to the *force constant* mechanism,” he says. “Probably it will come in a few years. We are working on it.” And when it arrives, the few brands lucky enough to use one are likely to keep it a secret. —JONATHAN KEATS



Wiederrecht has collaborated with Max Büsser from his days at Harry Winston to his latest work with MB&F, the HM3.

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