

# A Starship's Enterprise

*MB&F launches HM N°3 to well-deserved plaudits.*



Like countless other boys, a young Max Büsser wanted to be in command of a spaceship in which he would explore galaxies and make acquaintance with planets and stars. Today, he is doing exactly what he had dreamed of, albeit in a parallel universe. The big young guy who brought the Opus series and, in effect, Harry Winston Rare Timepieces to life, has founded MB&F – Maximilian Büsser and Friends – a collective brought together to create a singular horological

machine every year. On its third year, the collective has launched Horological Machine Number 3 or simply, HM N°3.

If the Opus series launches a spectacular timepiece by an independent, but no less star, watchmaker, MB&F does the same but with more invisible hands. For every project that the company undertakes, a group of technicians and designers is gathered to contribute their unique knowledge and skills. Every project sees the assembly of a new collective to en-



sure that creativity and output remain optimal. The star of the collective effort, Büsser likes to emphasize, is the outcome – the horological machine – not the individual stars that make up the group. (In the Opus series, the watch and its creator implicitly share equal billing.)

The idea is vintage Büsser and may be traced to his days as managing director of Harry Winston Rare Timepieces. Working with top independent watchmakers, he launched the Opus series of highly innovative timepieces that broke barriers. Instead of developing watches that merely extended brand patrimony and fattened up existing ranges, the series introduced mainstream consumers to the artisanal wonders previously

known only to a handful of collectors and watch aficionados. It was an unusual – some say revolutionary – method of building brand cachet.

After a highly successful seven-year run, Büsser resigned from Harry Winston in 2005 in a dust of speculations. Did the bright, glamorous young star of horology burn out finally?

Well, Büsser has since resurfaced and this year traveled across Asia to introduce HM No3 to collectors and the media.

Büsser warned that HM N°3 is so unlike any watch ever created that it “may cause sensory overload”. At first glance, he was correct. There are half-circles and raised parts, markers and numbers and, to the delight of everyone, rapid movement of parts. However,



elegant symmetry and well defined functions settle in quite easily so that the Stark Trek-worthy gizmo reveals itself as a multifunction timepiece, a bit outré in construction but all the better for it. The movement is turned upside down so that the wearer can observe at will what goes on inside the case. It is akin to driving a car with its hood raised so that at every turn the driver can enjoy looking at the engine at work. Büsser points out that the cones and windows were there to show off the finely crafted parts of the movement in action.

Jean-Marc Wiederrecht, head of Atelier Genevois d’Horlogerie or Agenhor, designed the elegant yet robust three-dimensional movement. It has 304 finished, high precision components that point to an artisanal approach to watchmaking. The underside of the unit, protected with sapphire crystal, reveals the technical secret behind its inverted movement: two large high-tech ceramic bearings efficiently transmitting power up to the cones and the date wheel. The model is offered in two articulations: the Sidewinder with cones perpendicular to the arm, and the Starcruiser, with cones in line with the arm.

The piece is hefty, measuring 47mm by 50 mm by 16 mm. The case alone is made up of 53 components for the Starcruiser has and 57 for Sidewinder. On the first cone are the hour and day/night indicators while on the other are the minutes;

the date indicator is around the movement. The cones are covered with sapphire crystals with anti-reflective treatment – a brilliant invention considering their unusual shape. Both versions are available in 18-karat white gold/titanium or 18-karat red gold/titanium.

If the timepiece does not equip Büsser and friends to discover galaxies, it’s good enough to turn them into stars. —MARC ALMAGRO

