



A buttress is typically a stone structure that acts as a support or reinforcement for a main building. Olden cathedrals typically have flying buttresses

On the case back of the Horological Machine No. 2, you'd discover an architecture that resembles flying buttresses

# MB&F AND THE TEMPLE OF TIME

AESTHETICALLY AND RADICALLY DIFFERENT BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY IS HOW WE WOULD DESCRIBE THE TIME-TELLING MACHINES FROM MB&F. GOOD THING THEY SIT WELL ON THE WRIST TOO. BEST OF ALL, INSIDE EACH AND EVERY PIECE IS A 'GIFT' – AN INNOVATIVE HEART WITH A SOUL FILLED WITH INTENSE CHARACTER, MAKING SUCH TIMEKEEPERS TRUE TEMPLES OF TIME.

BY TIMMY TAN, IRENE ANG & LIVIANA LOKA



*"You make a living by what you get but you make a life by what you give."  
~ Anonymous*

The MB&F Horological Machine No. 1 which was introduced in 2006 features a tourbillon and 7 days of power reserve thanks to 4 mainspring barrels

It was definitely apt for watch retailer The Hour Glass to name its exhibition 'Tempus – The Temple of Time' which was held in Singapore during the third quarter of 2007 (August). There were many things for watch enthusiasts to discover and among other things, we found MB&F (Maximilian Büsser & Friends) with the magnificent HM1 or Horological Machine No. 1 and only the 'engine' for his second conception or 'invention' – the HM2.

While 'The Temple of Time' was a macro-level description of the exhibition, it was at the 'Independents' Booth' that we found the true horological enlightenment on a micro-level, thanks to MB&F. This brand, we felt, was the modern 'Temple of Time' because not only are the forms of his watches unlike any other, so are the engines or movements.

The HM1 introduced in 2006 was the very first example and its automatic movement for the HM1 was developed by Laurent Besse and Peter-Speake-Marin. Shaped in the form of the figure eight, it was a big statement piece featuring four mainspring barrels that provided seven days of power reserve when fully-wound. "It was the most emotionally-charged piece," says MB&F's founder, Maximilian Büsser. "My four barrels represented my two parents and my two daughters," he adds. [Editor's note: refer to TimeWerke Special

Issue for the story of how MB&F and HM1 came to be.]

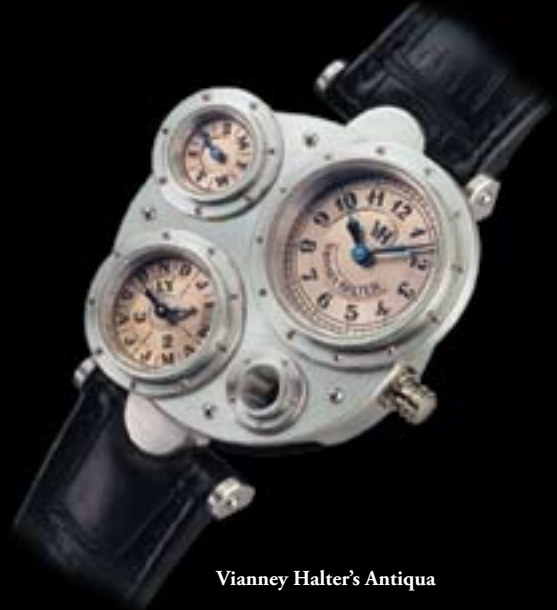
The HM1 was limited to 90 pieces which will be produced over three years and as of late 2007, some 25 pieces were already delivered. Singapore is considered a large market for MB&F as seven pieces out of the 25 were delivered to this small country which boasts of a strong community of watch collectors. We saw components of HM1 being produced over at the Dimier factory (the same facility manufacturing Bovet and Dimier timepieces). "It was a positive development for Pascal Raffy to take over STT



This movement for the HM2 was all that was showcased when Maximilian Büsser was at Tempus – The Temple of Time. It stumped practically everybody as to what he was creating



Vianney Halter's Trio



Vianney Halter's Antiqua

(which was subsequently renamed Dimier); the quality controls at Dimier has improved greatly," says Büsser.

One glance at the HM2 and another brand comes to mind. That brand being Vianney Halter. But are we contradicting ourselves having just mentioned that MB&F timepieces are unlike any other?

Well, Büsser concedes that he does admire Halter's works. "It was more than 10 years ago that I first saw [Vianney Halter's] Antiqua and I was shell-shocked! It was the very first time a watch had moved me and I went up to St Croix to meet Vianney Halter. Vianney and his Antiqua represents the first big kick I got from the horological industry. You never forget your first love," he explains.

However, place the Antiqua or even the curved rectangular Trio beside the HM2 and any similarities vanishes. "Placed side by side, there are no design cues," argues Büsser. "The only thing is the finishing, that's all. For the HM2, we used different textures of satin finishing and these can be visualised by little lines of polished light on the surface," he explains.



MB&F HOROLOGICAL MACHINE NO. 2  
INTRODUCED IN 2007

*“While the HM1 and HM2 are drastically different pieces, these timekeepers, to us, are similar in the sense that they are ‘temples of time’ reflecting the new world of horology.”*

~ TimeWerke

Photography: Tang Portfolio

MB&F Founder Maximilian Büsser

*“Ordinary people think merely of spending time. Great people think of using it.”*

~ Anonymous

While Halter’s Antiqua left a lasting impression on him, it was actually Büsser’s childhood toys that led to the look of the HM2. The case of the HM2 was inspired by Meccano sets (the mechanical version of Lego) that Büsser used to play with, making structures such as the Eiffel Tower.

On the case back, you’d discover a totally architectural look. Observe the ‘flying buttresses’ that you’d mostly find in most cathedrals found in Europe. This, we think, is very apt given that MB&F watches are like temples of time.

The case, as you can imagine, is highly complex as it is made out of 102 parts, what with the flying buttresses, the bolted portholes and the sliding crown guard.

While the HM1 featured the long power reserve, the main highlight of the HM2 is its jumping hours and retrograde minutes, not to mention the retrograde date. One main challenge was the co-ordination between the jumping hour and the retrograde minutes. Once the retrograde minute hits 60, the indicator must ‘fly back’ to zero and the jumping hour must change instantaneously. Not only that, the other challenge was not to utilise excessive energy.

To achieve his aims, Büsser employed the talent of Jean-Marc Wiederrecht of Agenhor, who by the way was awarded the ‘Best Watchmaker Prize’ at the Geneva Watchmaking Grand Prix in November 2007 [Refer to page 112 of this issue for a full report].

Büsser first met Wiederrecht some 10 years ago in his capacity as Managing Director of Harry Winston

**The base plate of the HM1 and other components were produced at the Dimier facility**



FEATURES:

- JEAN-MARC WIEDERRECHT (AGENHOR) DESIGNED FUNCTIONALITY REGULATED AND POWERED BY A GIRARD-PERREGAUX OSCILLATOR AND GEAR TRAIN
- 28,800 VIBRATIONS PER HOUR
- 349 COMPONENTS INCLUDING 44 JEWELS
- 22K ROSE GOLD DOUBLE HAKKEN ROTOR
- RETROGRADE DATE AND BI-HEMISPHERE MOON PHASE DISPLAY
- JUMPING HOURS AND CONCENTRIC RETROGRADE MINUTES
- SILVER AND RUTHENIUM DIALS
- ANTI-REFLECTIVE TREATMENT ON BOTH SIDES – DIAL SIDE
- ANTI-REFLECTIVE TREATMENT ON SINGLE FACE – DISPLAY BACK
- 59MM BY 38MM BY 13MM CASE IN EITHER 18K WHITE GOLD/TITANIUM OR 18K RED GOLD/TITANIUM (102 PARTS FOR THE CASE ALONE)
- WATER-RESISTANT TO 30M
- BLACK HAND-STITCHED ALLIGATOR STRAP WITH 18K GOLD AND TITANIUM CUSTOM-DESIGNED DEPLOYMENT BUCKLE
- COMES WITH A PRESENTATION BOX INTEGRATED WITH A RÜEGER THERMOMETER

LIMITED TO 125 PIECES IN WHITE GOLD AND 125 PIECES IN RED GOLD, DELIVERED OVER 3 YEARS

The retrograde minutes

The jumping hour

The sliding crown guard

The retrograde date

The bi-hemisphere moon phase means that you can visualise the phases of the moon for both the Northern and Southern hemispheres



Timepieces. Wiederrecht is regarded a specialist in retrograde and jumping mechanisms and it was time to leverage on his talents.

According to material from MB&F, “The usual method of activating jumping hour indications is to store energy in the minutes before the change to power the jump; however, while this energy is being accumulated it takes power from the balance causing it to lose amplitude – an effect detrimental to timekeeping precision. Wiederrecht’s solution was as brilliant as it was simple: he designed an ingenious mechanism such that when the minutes fly back, a snail on the minute mechanism hits the hour star causing the hour to jump. The hour jumps instantaneously with the minutes because it is triggered by the minutes and, as the jump is powered by the energy of the minutes flying back, it has virtually no effect on the amplitude of the balance.”

We witnessed the result with Büsser demonstrating not only the hour jump but the minute indicator’s flight back. When the minute indicator hits 60, it instantly flies back; the return to zero being so swift, you’d have difficulty catching the return flight of the minute indicator.

The solution may sound simple enough but the creation and assembly is another matter altogether – there are 349 components in the movement construction. Try putting all these components together and making them work in harmony!

Now apart from the Meccano inspiration, Büsser’s childhood comic hero Grendizer (aka Goldorak) returns to play as the oscillating weight is once again the Double Hakken rotor. (In HM1, the rotor was inspired by Grendizer’s Double Hakken weapon). One of the blades of the Double Hakken rotor was micro-machined down to a “razor-sharp edge of 0.2mm”, so sharp it is “like a razor blade in 22-carat gold,” quips Büsser.

Apart from the jumping hour and retrograde minutes, there is also the retrograde date and bi-hemisphere moon phase display. This means that the moon phase display can indicate the phases of the moon for both northern and western hemispheres. The sliding crown guard clearly tells if it [the crown] is either in our out and allows for quick time setting and date changing.

As compared to the HM1, more of the HM2 will be made and at a more affordable price vis-à-vis the HM1. [The HM1 is priced at around \$235,000 or US\$170,000 while the HM2 is retailed at around S\$93,000 or US\$67,000.]

The HM1 or the HM2 – which do you fancy? Possibly the HM2 which is more like a men’s toy? For Büsser, the HM2 is akin to a “little boy expressing himself”. While the HM1 and HM2 are drastically different pieces, these timekeepers, to us, are similar in the sense that they are ‘temples of time’ reflecting the new world of horology. ■

