

Unique in their own way

For connoisseurs the acronym AHCI (Horological Academy of Independent Creators) stands for some of the most exceptional watches

BASELWORLD, hall 5, first floor. The members of the Horological Academy of Independent Creators share a booth that is minuscule compared to the huge stands of the major prestigious luxury labels. But it is one of the busiest places of the entire show: every year it attracts watch enthusiasts from all over the world. It is really easy to get in contact with the independent watch-makers. Enthusiasts from all over the world as well as many journalists come to chat with them and view their distinctive timepieces. This is why no visit to BASELWORLD can be considered complete without looking at the enormous creativity on display at the AHCI stand.

All kinds of complications

Thomas Prescher from Tann in Switzerland is renowned for his artistic Tourbillons and is presenting a Perpetual Calendar this year. All of the displays features are on a central dial. Only the leap year is displayed in a small window at the 6 o'clock position. The hours, minutes and months are displayed on the external indices. The week day and date share the inner ring feature. The mechanical computer behind the watch is an automatic movement produced in-house. The new piece is available in two different case sizes – 39 or 43 – mm and comes in white, rose or yellow gold or platinum.

Marco Lang from Lang & Heyne in Dresden is also back at BASELWORLD this year. At his small yet refined manufacturing site in Dresden, he has been producing distinctively simple yet luxurious watches which reflect the traditions of watchmaking in Saxony for many years. The company's new piece for 2009 comes with the simple appearance typical of Lang & Heyne with an enamel watch face which makes simplicity a key principle of the design. And yet it also represents a spectacle of watchmaking which has never before featured in this form: an anterograde date

display. Unlike the retrograde display, where the hand constantly springs back to its original position, with the Conrad the Great the hand jumps forward so as not to conceal the Lang & Heyne logo. The new manual wind movement calibre V powers the mechanics of the watch with a jumping central seconds hand and a so-called seconds remontoir whereby the escapement provides constant power and the accuracy of the movement is improved.

Inspired by the past

The regulator dial was inspired by historic regulators which provided an accurate reading of time in the observatories of the 18th and 19th centuries and is one of the identifying features of watches by Rainer Nienaber from Bünde. This year, the German watchmaker is presenting a new version of the model. The special thing about this version is that the small seconds display features in the bottom half of the face. An exquisitely elaborate manual wind movement – the calibre Unitas 6376 – ticks away in the stainless steel case. The tactful



Focuses on the beauty of the mechanic: Pendulet movement with Tourbillon by Paul Gerber

watch, where the time can be read discreetly on the side of the case, is a speciality of the Danish watchmaker Svend Andersen, now based in Geneva. This co-founder of the AHCI has secured himself a reputation as the watchmaker of the impossible with his complicated watches and pays tribute to a famous personality with the new Montre à Tact: the reformer Calvin, who worked in Geneva 500 years ago.

Paul Gerber of Zürich is one of the most ingenious watchmakers of our time and is a master of complex mechanisms which are frequently produced on commission for renowned manufacturers. He produces watches and clocks in all colours and of all sizes. This year, he is presenting a pendulet movement with a tourbillon which focuses on the beauty of the mechanics. The watch is powered by the

artistic skeleton-worked calibre 25. A power reserve of eight days is available thanks to the two barrels.

The watch-maker Philippe Wurtz of Alsace has made a name for himself producing precision pendulum clocks. They are characterised by the fact that all of the components are produced and refined by hand, for striking craftsmanship and aesthetics. The skeleton construction means that the planetary gears with their gold-plated wheels and plates decorated with Geneva stripes can be admired from all angles. This year, a new version of the Sarlat wall clock is being exhibited, a precision pendulum clock with a regulator dial. The separate indications feature a delicate seconds hand and striking minutes hand. The hours are represented as three-dimensional numbers. The suspended movement is a

particularly special feature of the Sarlat and takes the form of a V. Thanks to this special movement construction, the ball-bearing axles and diamond-coated trains, the gravity escapement functions without lubrication.

Another technically refined feature which ensures precision is the compressed air compensator. This eliminates any deviations of the pendulum caused by atmospheric conditions using a small precision pump which measures the air density in the hermetically sealed case. It is not the pressure of the air, as is often assumed, but rather the density of the air which affects the pendulum. The pump regulates this air density and eliminates any fluctuations caused by the humidity and temperature of the air. The construction is patented.

All functions at one glance

The NT 2 table clock was designed and constructed for people who want to stay in contact with the world both for business and personal reasons. Matthias & Sebastian Naeschke have incorporated all the functions and displays needed for international communication in this business clock. The clock comprises a perpetual calendar, calendar week display and world time display. Another special feature of the business clock is an additional clock face on the reverse. This shows the time as a 24 hour display. The hour hand on this clock face can be adjusted by the hour to suit any time zone. Despite its complexity, the business clock does not appear overloaded with features. Instead, it seamlessly combines classical watchmaking with modern design. A timepiece of the very highest quality encompassing the uncompromising craftsmanship of these masters of their profession. (sz/sh) ■

Conrad the Great by Lang & Heyne

Montre à Tact by Svend Andersen

Front side of the Matthias Naeschke table clock NT2 with perpetual calendar

