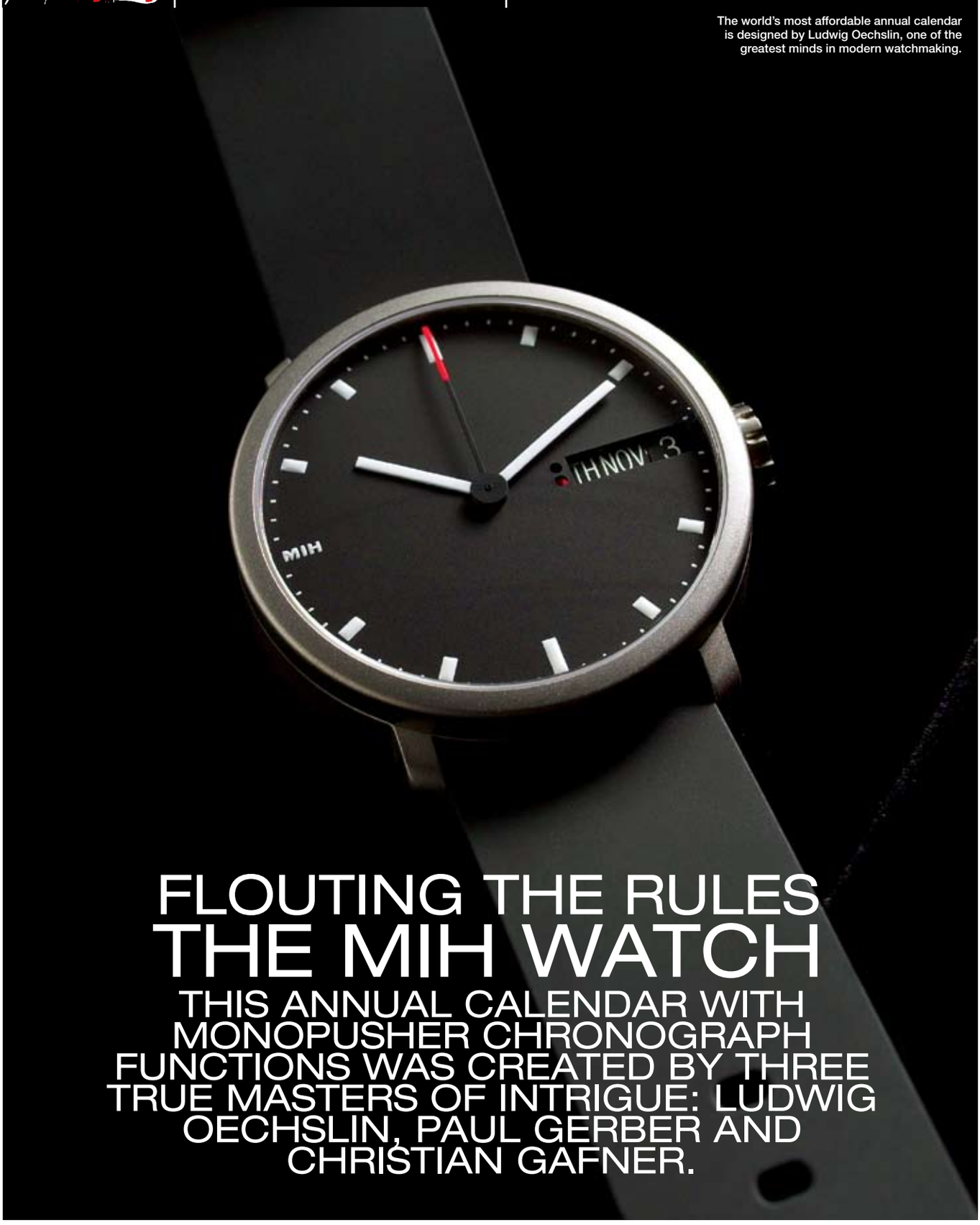
The world's most affordable annual calendar is designed by Ludwig Oechslin, one of the greatest minds in modern watchmaking.



FLOUTING THE RULES
THE MIH WATCH

THIS ANNUAL CALENDAR WITH MONOPUSHER CHRONOGRAPH FUNCTIONS WAS CREATED BY THREE TRUE MASTERS OF INTRIGUE: LUDWIG OECHSLIN, PAUL GERBER AND CHRISTIAN GAFNER.

IS IT AN ACT OF SUBVERSION, a revolutionary statement or just one incredibly cool watch? To some extent the MIH annual calendar chronograph is best described as all three. For starters, the MIH watch is in a 44mm-diameter titanium case that exudes a real Bauhaus-inspired design austerity thanks to industrial designer Christian Gafner, who's also done projects for Swiss Army sunglasses. In terms of complication, the watch is an annual calendar, meaning it will automatically compensate for the alternating 30 and 31 day-cycle of the months. You will only have to change the date once per year at the end of February. Here is where it gets interesting... the calendar mechanism that drives this mighty complication is comprised of only NINE pieces. Moreover, the information for this mechanism has been placed in the public domain — it has not been copyrighted or patented. At a mere five thousand Swiss francs, this watch is also most likely the world's most affordable annual calendar and is currently sold only in two places: the Embassy (the famous Swiss retailer) and the Musee International d'Horlogerie (MIH). While most museum watches are quartz driven design-heavy trinkets, the MIH watch represents a phenomenal advancement in simplifying calendar watch technology.

That the MIH watch flouts the horological rules is no surprise once you recognize the man behind this remarkable creation. Ludwig Oechslin is the former collaborator of Rolf Schnyder and the man who created Ulysse Nardin's Trilogy of Time (the series includes the Astrolabium Galileo Galilei, Planetarium Copernicus and Tellurium Johannes Kepler); the incandescent Freak watch where the escapement acts as the watch's minute hand; the Ludwig Perpetual, which is the world's first synchronized perpetual calendar where the date can be set backwards or forwards; as well as the Sonata, the world's first alarm watch that can be set 24 hours in advance. In 2001 Oechslin took up the role of curator for the Musee International d'Horlogerie in La Chaux-de-Fonds. Part of Oechslin's agreement with the watchmaking museum is that he not engage

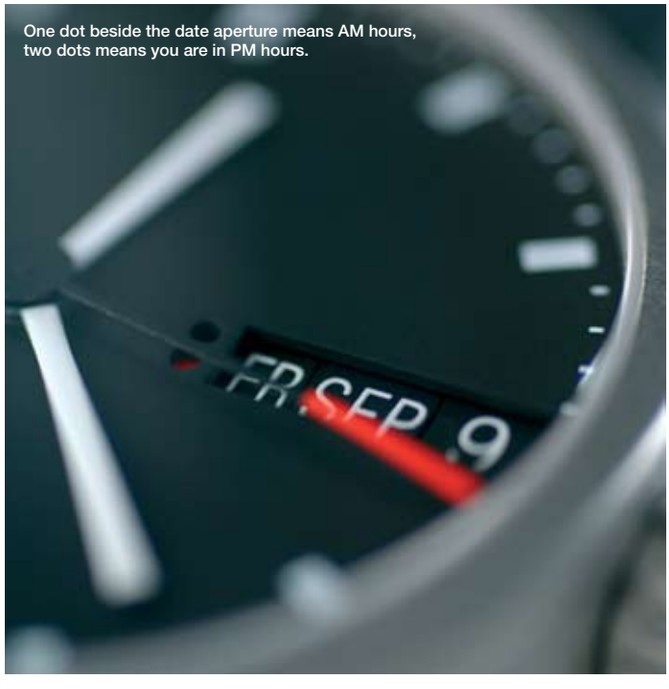
To keep the dial clean, the monopusher chronograph's minute counter has been transplanted to the watch back by Paul Gerber.

Only nine pieces are needed for the entire annual calendar mechanism.

in any commercial venture, but around 2003 he began tinkering with an idea for a radically simplified annual calendar watch with day, date and month displayed co-axially at 3 o'clock on the dial. A dilemma. Then, around the same time he found himself saddled with a costly restoration for a major clock made by Daniel Vachey. With great clarity of purpose he arrived at a plan: he would create his watch and sell it to raise money for the museum's restoration projects.

After touching base with Embassy in Lucerne to assure himself an external point of sale, Oechslin then met up with the famous independent watchmaker Paul Gerber who would do the actual watchmaking. Oechslin's calendar mechanism would be based on the epicycle gears that he also used to create his famous perpetual calendar mechanism at Ulysse Nardin. The command center of Oechslin's calendar mechanism is a three-level column wheel that activates the change over for three concentric discs displaying month, date and day and that are viewed through the aperture at 3 o'clock. How do date changes get synchronized? The date is changed using the mechanism from the Valjoux caliber. This mechanism also drives the month disc in months with 31 days. The first level of the column wheel joins the weekday disc with the month disc. The second level, which changes the weekday disc, is driven by a stud plate of the hours wheel. The third level changes the date only in months with 30 days. The hours wheel (which rotates twice a day for 2 x 12 hour periods) also powers a unique AM / PM indicator located beside the date aperture. One red dot shows that the 12-hour cycle is for AM hours while two red dots show that you are in PM hours. As fans of Ulysse Nardin's Ludwig Perpetual know, one advantage of epicycle gears is that you can set synchronized date mechanisms either forwards or backwards. So it is with the MIH watch, creating the only annual calendar we can think off with this unique feature.

As to the base caliber for the MIH watch, Paul Gerber decided that to power this mechanism they needed a consistent, hard-working movement with good torque for the date change — and so he chose the Valjoux 7750 chronograph caliber. However, rather than suppress the chronograph function, Gerber decided to create a monopusher chronograph and in lieu of cluttering the dial with a minute counter, Gerber created an aperture on the back of the watch where he placed a small jumping minute counter. In addition he placed the reset heart piece for this counter in front of it so that when the reset function is activated you can observe the reset lever striking and slamming it back to zero. ★



One dot beside the date aperture means AM hours, two dots means you are in PM hours.

Ludwig Oechslin curator for the MIH and independent watchmaking legend Paul Gerber executed the designs for the mechanism of this unique marvel