

Paul Gerber & young talent Anny Weber present the Cal. 55W, a unique ultra-slowbeat watch for the Festival of Time 2023, Waterford, Ireland

The Cal. 55W invites to discover the aesthetic, acoustic and haptic qualities of watchmaking in unusual ways. It came to life by the mutual inspiration of an accomplished master of the impossible and the ambition of an up-and-coming talent

One does not read every day that one of the most admired master watchmakers who slowly prepares for 'retirement' (whatever that means for a passionate watchmaker!) revises his plans because he feels challenged by a young watchmaking talent with ambitions. Exactly that happened when **Anny Weber** knocked on **Paul Gerber**'s door to seek for (even more) advanced tuition on top of her watchmaking training in school.



(image kindly provided by Paul Gerber)

The result is the **Cal. 55W**, an ultra-slowbeat watch with an oversized balance and a 2Hz escapement, a watch where Anny proved herself on Paul's prime discipline: using space that's not available!

The watch is first shown public today at the **Festival of Time*** in Waterford, Ireland, and will be auctioned for charitable causes by **Phillips in Association with Bacs and Russo** in May 2024.

'*the eclecticum*' already had the chance to handle the piece and we're excited to share our first impressions. So here we go:

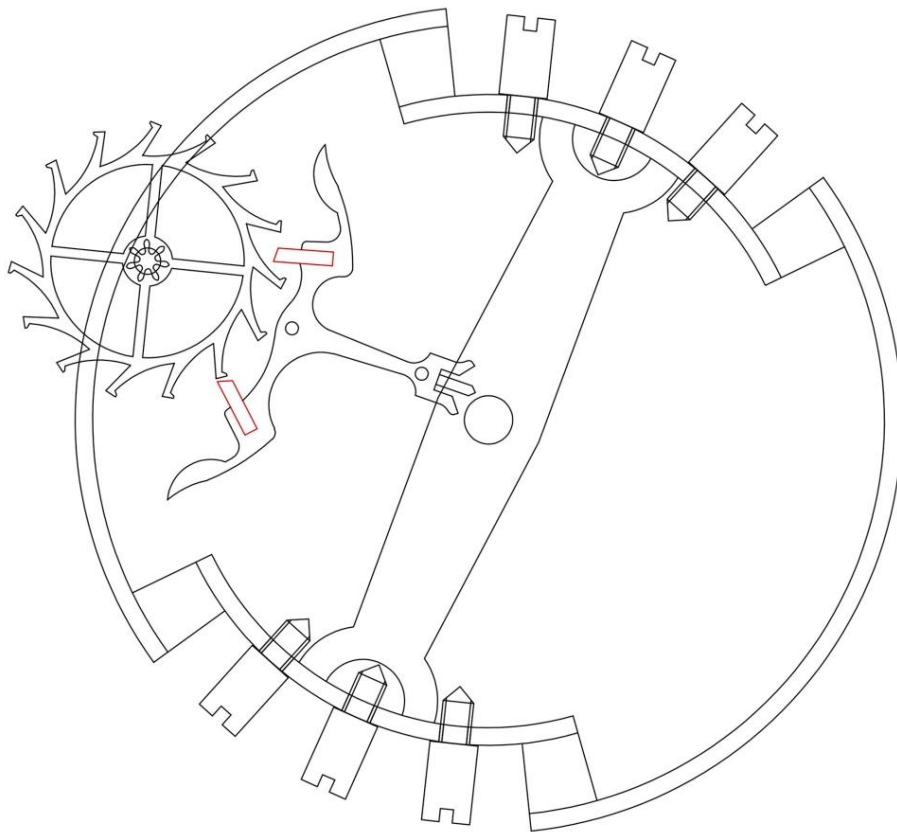


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As many of you know, Paul Gerber offers probably the most immersive watchmaking course of us laypeople, where not only gets to assemble one's 'school piece', but where one gets to drill parts, chamfer, polish and heatblue them, and finally puts together and regulate one's own watch. *the eclecticum*'s Ornatus Mundi took part in such a course, and can attest to the in-depth instruction and hands-on work.



Paul now offers even a second level to his course, where one creates a complete and unusual 14400 Ah / 2 Hz escapement with a beautiful oversized and exposed balance and a moustache pallet. The balance alone is 19mm in diameter and thus is larger than the movement's radius! This watch is the base for the piece unique watch for the Waterford Festival of Time, thus Paul is essentially going 'back to school' with this...



(finished Cal. 55W movement, image kindly provided by Paul Gerber)

When an apprentice challenges the master on his home turf...

While Paul was working on the first parts for the watch, he was approached by a young watchmaking apprentice, Anny Weber, who felt she needed an additional challenge to her training curriculum, and thus she turned to Paul for additional tuition. For her school watch, she also wanted to develop a complication which combines two of her passions (hint: there're more...), horse riding and watchmaking: a 'jumping horse' watch with a horse that jumps in 1h increments on the periphery of a UNITAS pocket watch movement – sounds straightforward but Anny had to precisely control the large jumps... That massively exceeded the requirements set by the watchmaking school in Grenchen and attests to Anny's ambition – we'll cover Anny and her watch in a separate article later this year!



(Anny Weber and her 'Jumping Horse' school watch)

When Anny watched Paul working on the Cal. 55W, she felt something is missing, which resulted in the following conversation:

Anny: *“Paul, with the slow frequency and the moustache pallet, this movement also needs a Breguet spiral”*

Paul: *“Anny, there is only space left for a flat spiral, and besides, have you ever done a Breguet one?”*

Anny: *“Let me give it a try!”*



And there we are, Anny, who had never shaped a Breguet spiral before, succeeded with her fourth trial (!), not without having to slightly tweak the balance bridge, and managed to set it within the existing 1.2mm height available. Quite a feat, and she is rightfully proud of this achievement – as is Paul, who is well known for finding space where conventional wisdom tells ‘there is none!’, and who thus got challenged on his own master discipline!



(counting the Breguet spiral coils, image kindly provided by Paul Gerber)



(the screwdriver indicates how little vertical space Anny had for the Breguet spiral)



(the large balance complete with Breguet spiral)



(escapement with large balance and Breguet spring...)



(... and moustache pallet)

This is a timepiece that invites to discover the aesthetic, acoustic and haptic qualities of watchmaking in unusual ways!

(feel the beat of the slowbeat movement and watch the breathing of the Breguet spiral, here with a conventional pallet still)

A spirit of Ireland...

In terms of aesthetics, the watch is unique in several ways: first, there is the dial in Paul very own design he uses for the school watches, but with a twist: when festival organiser Johnny McElherron first saw the initial designs, he thought to turn Paul's typical vertical guilloché by 90° so that it resembles the waves on the sea at Waterford's harbour. Paul also added a 'Festival of Time' engraving under the hour track.



(the final 'water waves' dial, image kindly provided by Paul Gerber)

Finally, Paul had the idea to bring a hint of most famous Ireland's heraldic emblem to the piece, a golden harp on green background. But not only this, it had to be done in Paul's typical ironic fashion: a plaquette with a brass 'Waterford 2023' engraving surrounded by green luminous material – the latter an idea from Anny!



(a glowing 'Waterford'...)

For completeness, here's the full list of technical specifications:

- Cal. 55W (Waterford), piece unique, exclusively made for Festival of Time by Paul Gerber & Anny Weber
- manual movement, diameter 36.6mm, height 7.25mm
- exposed oversized 19mm balance with large screws
- frequency 14400 Ah / 2 Hz
- escapement with moustache pallet and Breguet hairspring
- ratchet with recoiling locking pawl
- finely hand-decorated plates and bridges with luminous „Waterford 2023“ plaquette and a „One of One“ engraving
- guilloché dial especially made for the „Festival of Time“
- 42.0 x 14.2 mm stainless steel case

Phillips to auction the watch for charitable causes

Finally, Paul and his wife Ruth decided to offer this watch to support charitable causes which consider particularly worthwhile:

- to support the organisation of future instances of and promote the **International Festival of Time**
- to support the **‘Join Our Boys’ Trust****, a charity registered in Ireland dedicated to raising awareness and to offer practical support for families with kids suffering from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in Ireland
- to support **Anny Weber** in her watchmaking career development



This is a generous gesture, and to our knowledge the first time a watchmaker has decided to contribute to a watchmaking festival to this extent.



When **Alex Ghotbi**, Deputy Chairman, Watches and Head of Watches, Europe and the Middle East at renowned watch auction house **Phillips in Association with Bacs and Russo** heard of this piece and its intention, he immediately offered to feature this piece as a charitable cause in the **May 2024 watch auction in Geneva** (here we at 'the eclectic' are a bit proud to help making this happen). Until then, the watch will travel the world with Phillips' other selected pieces, so collectors from all over the world will have a chance to experience it – and we all hope for a great result of the auction in support of worthwhile beneficiaries, but also for a watch so unique in its conception and in the story of its creation!

We'll let you know in time once the auction is approaching!



(Anny and Paul, quite proud..., image kindly provided by Paul Gerber)

While Paul and Anny worked on the watch, Paul & his wife Ruth decided to change their retirement plans, that were to have no employees anymore, and offered Anny to work with them for some time which she gladly agreed to – and there we are.

We all know how many excellent watchmakers got their watchmaking training at Paul's – so all the above points to an amazing talent we should watch closely!

In the coming months, we will share a more in-depth story of the watch and for sure we will present to you Anny Weber and her fantastic début watch!



(Paul and Anny are presenting the Cal. 55W to Festival of Time organiser Johnny McElherron in the Medieval Museum in Waterford, Ireland)

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1. *) The **International Festival of Time** is organised by Johnny McElherron in association with Waterford Treasures and takes place annually in Waterford, Ireland, this year between 22 and 24 September 2023, with watchmakers and brands such as Rune Bakkendorff, Simon Brette, Cyril Brivet-Naudot, Garrick, Paul Gerber, Marc Jenni, Martin Klock, Kudoke, John McGonigle, Schofield, Sidereus, Patrik Sjögren (GoS), Andreas Strehler, Kari Voutilainen and Zeitwinkel attending.
See <https://www.waterfordtreasures.com/event/international-festival-of-time-2023/>
 2. **) '**Join Our Boys' Trust**, a charity registered in Ireland: <https://joinourboys.org/>