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THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL WATCH MAGAZINE EUROPE



Special SIHH & Geneva Time Exhibition

- New movements: Patek Philippe, Pèquignet, de Bethune
- Interviews: Jean-Christophe Babin, Philippe Merk

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The Off-SIHH salons in Geneva: GTE and other private shows



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Broadway has its Off-Broadway shows and now Geneva has its Off-SIHH shows. There are many independent brands—some well-established, emerging, new or revitalized—that are seeking to prosper in the shade of the prestigious *Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie* (SIHH).

This is fair enough, since all major events tend to incite various annex events, held on the outskirts. The difference this year, however, is the number of these independent brands—not all—that have left their salons in the various lakeside hotels to come together in a new show called the Geneva Time Exhibition (GTE).

Organized by Florence Noël and Paola Orlando, founders of Luxeco, this new show brings together 35 exhibitors, coming from all over. You might even say that it resembles a mini-BaselWorld. There are as many brands working in the highest tradition of timekeeping as there are those seeking to break with tradition in order to find new expressive avenues. Precious in-house movements share the stage with pieces intended for a much larger market. Some companies take pride in their historic origins—in some cases dating back to the 17th century—while others were born hardly a few months ago.

GTE is a mixture of watchmakers, jewellers, artisans, lone wolves and jet setters. It is a world that, in its own way and in defiance of the current economic crisis, showcases the fabulous diversity of the watchmaking microcosmos and its continuing richness. The following is a short overview of some of the brands at the GTE, but in no particular order. It is not entirely complete because some of the members had not yet produced their first pieces as Europa Star went to press.

A matter of rollers

Three brands, at least, present displays on wheels or on rollers. One is Cabestan, whose Winch Tourbillon Vertical can already be considered one of the ‘ancestors’ of watches using roller displays. Jean-François Ruchonnet, a tireless breaker of new ground, designed this vertical tourbillon on rotating drums driven by a ‘rocket chain’, in 2004. It was called Sea and was to be the second element in a trilogy (with Earth giving rise to the V4 of TAG Heuer), which resulted in the Winch Tourbillon Vertical, while a third piece, Air is still in the making. Thanks to Andreas Stricker, who invested in this venture, Cabestan now has its own small independent manufacture in the Vallée de Joux.



WINCH TOURBILLON VERTICAL by Cabestan

Another independent watchmaker working on roller displays is Antoine Prezioso. With his Time Tube, he solidifies his position as a watchmaking maverick, playing freely with forms, displays and materials. Often a forerunner, we owe him the first rusty watches (well before Romain Jérôme), as well as timepieces carved from meteorites, the tourbillon 3 Volution and more recently the B-Side. The very rock 'n roll Time Tube is, as its name implies, a tube (carved in a material chosen by the client but created in a limited number of 28 per material) into which an automatic movement is vertically inserted, which drives a digital display for hours and minutes, while the seconds are shown on the side of the tube. The winding is carried out by a toothed wheel on the side. Hats off to this amazing piece!



TIME TUBE by Antoine Prezioso

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