

LIMITED TIME

## THE TRADITION OF MODERNITY

Some of the most exciting new timepieces spring from the minds and hands of Swiss watchmakers who possess abundant skill and imagination, but extremely limited production capabilities. The rarity of their watches—fewer than 500 pieces a year—defines exclusivity. Two such small manufacturers, Hautlence and Urwerk, are breaking the barriers of time, one watch at a time.

BY ELIZABETH DOERR

### HAUTLENCE

**Hautlence** is the result of two passionate watch industry veterans: Guillaume Tetu, the technician, and Renaud de Retz, the idea man. This pair shares a view of the future of watchmaking in the third millennium that takes traditional technology and shoves it outside the box for a while.

Consciously deciding to not limit themselves by the existing concepts of mechanical watchmaking, these two have created a new movement with many innovative features that is the distinct calling card of the Hautlence brand. Visible from both the back and the front, this new hand-wound movement is simply called HL.

The hour disk, located to the left of the dial, displays the current hour by means of a jumping action propelled by the connecting rod (located horizontally along the bottom of the dial). When the minute hand reaches the end of its arc, its motion allows the connecting rod to propel the disk forward one space, thus moving to the next hour. Subsidiary seconds are also displayed in the lower right-hand corner of the dial at 5 o'clock. The mechanism is framed by an innovative 16/9 TV screen case whose dimensions of 43.5mm by 43.5mm ensure that it can peek out from underneath a cuff.

There are nine models in the Hautlence HL collection; they are available in combinations of rose gold, white gold, grey gold, titanium and DLC-coated black titanium for \$41,900 to \$48,900.

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### URWERK

Felix Baumgartner and Martin Frei—better known to the watch world as **Urwerk**—are two young men with a common philosophy. Baumgartner, a third-generation master watchmaker, and Frei, a free-thinking designer, have made it their goal to discover how far they can take time and space. Accordingly, the masterpieces that emerge from their workshop near Geneva intensely explore these themes.

The two met in 1995 when Baumgartner was just 20 years old. "We wanted to introduce something completely innovative, and chose to build upon a universal heritage in order to forge our own path," he explains.

What emerged looks like nothing else in the world of watches. The time is shown on an ingenious satellite system. While this may look complicated to the untrained eye, with a little practice it is no more difficult to read than a regulator. Three or four revolving satellites (depending on the model) seem to float within a sphere of sapphire crystal, with the satellite showing the current hour gliding along the minute scale at the bottom of the dial.

This past spring, Urwerk presented a new evolution of this concept called the **201**, which features a retractable hand extending from the correct number to point to the minute as it makes its way along the scale. Additional displays on the dial include a power reserve indicator and a control board that informs the wearer of service intervals.

Urwerk's 201 is available in rose gold, white gold, platinum, or black PVD-coated platinum for \$125,000 to \$178,000.

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Germany-based Elizabeth Doerr started writing about watches in 1991. Her reporting appears regularly in *Wristwatch Annual*, *International Watch and IW Ladies*, *DuPont Registry*, *Cigar Aficionado*, *World One (Germany)*, *Luxe (Australia)*, *Tiempo de Relojes (Mexico)*, *Plaza Watch (Sweden)*, and *WATCH (Holland)*.



HL S / HAUTLENCE



FELIX BAUMGARTNER, MARTIN FREI / URWERK



GUILLAUME TETU, RENAUD DE RETZ / HAUTLENCE



201 / URWERK