

WRISTWATCH ANNUAL

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and Antiqua lines continue to provide inspiration for budding watchmakers. A more recent member of the group is self-taught Konstantin Chaykin, author of the Decalogue, which displays specifically Jewish time units—the helek and regaim—on the rear. He also created a Moslem clock, but the work he seems especially proud of is a unique timepiece that manages to display the Orthodox Easter. Kari Voutilainen, a perfectionist watchmaker hailing from Finland, is now at home in Môtiers, Switzerland. His timepieces are classic in appearance, but pack a punch on the other side. “I like technical watches,” the reserved Finn explains and pulls out one of his famed decimal repeaters: While most repeating wristwatches strike the quarter hours, Voutilainen’s specimens chime in more logical ten-minute intervals. Volker Vyskocil literally makes his whole timepiece. This self-taught watchmaker, originally a mechanical engineer, creates just a handful of timepieces in the space of one year—and each one of them is truly the work of the man whose name graces the dial; he constructs everything with his own two hands.

Another new name is Aaron Becsei from Hungary and his series Dignitas, whose dials make harmony of asymmetry and whose retrograde hands jump as well. The diagonal tourbillon is particularly eye-catching and is supposed to function for the watch when it is worn and when it is resting. But when it comes to tourbillons, the name Thomas Prescher looms large. He created a set of three wristwatches comprising a single, a double, and a triple axis flying tourbillon outfitted with a constant force mechanism. “A tourbillon for me is not like a



The eternal struggle against gravity goes on: above Rudis Sylva's harmonious oscillator with two opposing balance springs; left Aaron Becsei's Diagonal Tourbillon



tourbillon for the rest of the industry today. For me it is an expression of art.”

Aniceto Jimenez Pita's timepieces are perhaps a little more accessible than some of the other independents' creations. A self-taught watchmaker living in Barcelona, Spain, he is best known for his patented TSM time-setting mechanism, which well illustrates his drive to find new winding and setting systems for his watches (not all of his watches have crowns).

Beat Haldimann has won a Gaia Award for craftsmanship-creation with two difficult areas of high watchmaking: flying tourbillons and resonance.

No list could be complete without mention of Peter Speake-Marin and his automatic Caliber SM2 featuring a highly decorative signature rotor that opens a view onto a base movement with German silver bridges and base plate. And there is Stepan Sarpaneva who will let a smirking moon glare out of his dials and lure the reader into the mysterious world of northern Europe.

Independent watchmaking is more than just a curiosity, it is a kind of innovation engine. The independents create a space that can inspire established brands as well as young and creative watchmakers. One young newcomer is Marc Jenni, whose Prologue series features a large selector button to help the user choose functions. And there are the likes of Jacky Epitoux and the brand Rudis Sylva, which features the “harmonious oscillator,” two hairsprings working at 180° angles from each other that are supposed to cancel out gravity effects entirely.

Independent watchmaking has become the subject of several books. The AHCI released one to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. Conceived by Speake-Marin and written by Ian Skellern, *The Hands of Time* charts the history of the AHCI and chronicles the 2010 rendition of the academy with biographies of current members and photographs of their work.

A feast for the senses, *12 Faces of Time* released in 2010 gives an especially intimate view of the life and work of twelve watchmakers, including Journe, Halter, and Dufour. This book written by Elizabeth Doerr and photographed by Ralf Baumgarten will not only attract die-hard aficionados of high watchmaking, but anyone interested in artistic photography and beautiful imagery.