



# It's a Hoot



The two versions of the JWLRMACHINE are the purple (white gold and titanium) and pink (rose gold and titanium) watches, available in four pieces of each colour. In purple, the JWLRMACHINE features a breast of engraved amethyst and two cabochon amethysts for the eyes. There are approximately 0.96cts of diamonds (as there are in the pink version), and 5.17K worth of purple and blue sapphires decorating the case. In pink, the breast is an engraved quartz block and the eyes are rubelite cabochons. The sapphires on the case are in pink, purple and blue. Both versions are capped off by a cabochon rubelite on the crown.

Swiss creative lab MB&F, known for its horological machines, has recently collaborated with 152-year-old French high jewellery house Boucheron on a new *haute joellerie* version of the Horological Machine No.3 (HM3). Named the JWLRMACHINE, it has delighted and intrigued both the jewellery and watch worlds since its launch at the end of last year.

## Maria Doulton

JWLRMACHINE is its name. LOL, I say! Laugh Out Loud: translation for the over 16s. Or if you are really tickled by this strange fowl it could be a case of ROFL. (Roll On Floor Laughing.) This is what happens when the extravagant creativity of Place Vendôme jeweller Boucheron meets an equally *outré* watchmaker MB&F (Maximilian Büsser and Friends) - the five-year old 'creative horological laboratory' with a penchant for SMS-style abbreviations.

The 152-year-old jewellery house Boucheron and MB&F have let fly their latest collaboration: a £166,000 bejewelled horological owl. And what exactly is a bejewelled horological owl you may well ask? This elegant bird is in fact MB&F's Starcruiser Horological

Machine No.3 dressed up by Boucheron in some very extravagant plumage.

Stalwart QP readers may have seen the original HM3 in its relatively pared down version when it was unveiled in 2009. Time is read off the rims of the two cone-shaped 'eyes' and the central battle-axe shaped rotor provides energy to the movement that sprawls out like a futuristic cityscape. Have another whisky and you might see a flying alien-transporter pod flitting in between the galactic freeways and neo cosmic architecture of the original watch. Likewise jewellery buffs will recognise the hand of Boucheron in the glistening curves of the owl, that is one of this Parisian jewellers' trademark beasties.



Left: The original HM3 white gold Starcruiser. The piece was also available as the rose gold Sidewinder model.



Below: Developed to display the machine's beautifully finished movement in operation, the original HM3 reveals harmoniously crafted bridges, rapidly oscillating balance wheel, gearing and distinctive battle-axe shaped automatic winding rotor. The same movement is contained within JWLRVMACHINE.



### Horology as art

"Two artists coming together," or "a performance art piece" is how Max Büsser describes the JWLRVMACHINE. The idea of horology as art is dear to Büsser who is keen to show his watches in art galleries. CEO of Boucheron Jean-Christophe Bedos says of the collaboration: "What I liked about this project was the provocative approach. We like to push the boundaries of excellence and competence. But the pleasure comes from a cheeky boy attitude to luxury.

"We try to shake up the complacency of the watchmakers and the certainty that they have done it all. You might call it immature, but this is where the pleasure comes from. This is truly part of the essence of luxury to come up with something that will either shock or impress clients who have the means to invest in these pieces. We are not in the business of doing lookalikes or what has been done before. It is about stretching our competencies."

According to Bedos, Büsser was attracted by Boucheron's ability to produce three-dimensional high jewellery and the idea of doing something fun and a

little provocative came from looking at MB&F's HM3. "I said the HM3 either looks like an owl or Mickey Mouse and it came from there," says Bedos. "We gave the design team a completely free rein. The only constraints were technical as we had to adapt our jewellery work to the MB&F watch by working to tolerances of microns which is not usual for us."

Strange as he is, this owl did not come out of the blue. Boucheron has worked with other prestigious watchmakers in the past. In 2007, Boucheron launched the Mech Jungle in collaboration with Girard Perregaux. To celebrate its 150th Anniversary in 2008, Boucheron joined forces with Richard Mille to create a watch with components milled out of exotic stones.

As for the owl, this fowl is a long-standing resident of Boucheron's art deco bestiary that favours the mysterious animals of the night such as chameleons, snakes and hedgehogs. The owl ring is a dead ringer for the watch, but wearing my jewellery editor hat, I suggest that you wear one or the other, unless you are going for a road kill overkill look.



Examples from Boucheron's exotic and colourful menagerie of animals and insects that rank among the most exquisite example of jewels of this genre.



The creative powerhouse of Max Büsser and CEO of Boucheron Jean-Christophe Bedos.



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### The right mix

Max Büsser cut his horological teeth at Jaeger-LeCoultre and then Harry Winston where he was responsible for the very first Opus series, now in its eleventh year. The annually appearing Opus watches were a sign of where Büsser was heading and his interest in collaborative watchmaking. Each year a different independent watchmaker worked with Harry Winston Timepieces SA to dream up a wacky time-keeping machine. Opus partners have included Vianney Halter, Christophe Claret and the Urwerk team.

"I didn't want to diamond-set my pieces," says Büsser, over tea in London, when I get the chance to see the piece at close hand. "Boucheron really understands jewels," he adds as I try on the pink quartz version. This candy bright owl perches quite happily on the wrist and I am fascinated by the faint shadow moving under his translucent pink breast. This is in fact the rotor that, if you are in a whimsical frame of mind, you could imagine is its beating heart.

His wings sparkle with sapphires and diamonds and glossy cabochons are his eyes. There is also a purple amethyst version and only four pieces will be made of each. Any further production will be on commission only.

The entire 'bird' can be lifted off to service the watch as the gold framework is made up of five segments that are screwed down on to the watchcase. The bejewelled body comes off piece by piece and you can hold the carved rose quartz or amethyst in your hand.

On the wrist, the watch is surprisingly beautiful and is very much a Boucheron jewel with its tongue in cheek extravagance and gourmand use of colour and refined workmanship. In fact the owl sits so nicely on the wrist that I wouldn't mind if he didn't tell the time at all. And if I should get bored of my feathered friend perhaps my husband could have the carcass to wear on his wrist and I could ask Boucheron to re-assemble the owl into a bracelet. Now that is what I call a very useful watch. ☺

Further information: [www.boucheron.com](http://www.boucheron.com) [www.mbandf.com](http://www.mbandf.com)