



# Geneva Time Exhibition



They say you can't always get what you want, but in the case of two independent watchmakers, calls made to the right people in 2008 resulted in January's inaugural Geneva Time Exhibition (GTE) dedicated to the small independent makers and houses so often overlooked in the rush and excitement of bigger fairs. But did the event get it right in terms of place, time and, most importantly, price?

Michael Balfour



Between 17 and 22 January this year, the two brands that initially started the GTE ball rolling - HD3 Complication and Ladoire - were joined by 36 other exhibitors at the spacious surroundings of the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG), a close neighbour of the Place de Nations and a short bus ride from the lakeside. Each exhibitor paid SFr.13,000 for their quite small booths, to participate in an event that is clearly here to stay.

GTE coincided of course with this year's 20th edition of the SIHH next to the airport in the Palexpo halls. Its invited guests filled 47 hotels. But hotel suites were once again booked for the duration of both events by independent watchmakers specifically to attract those same visitors to Geneva - the numbers of which, were, as expected, down on 2009. GTE was seen as an ideal alternative venue, as it proved, which is why its exhibitors in 2011 are expected to number over 50. The newcomers are likely to be 'indies' who have been finding Baselworld costs too high in these difficult times. Maybe, in time, the AHCI, the independent watchmakers' group, will leave its cramped space in Basel, and move camp to GTE? It would certainly make sense.

The SIHH and Baselworld will no doubt be noting that some 5,500 watch aficionados, in whatever guise, came free of charge to GTE. And more than 500 of them were journalists. So who awaited them? For the record, the first GTE exhibitors were as follows, and given here so that readers can locate novelties on their websites: Alain Silberstein, Antoine Preziuso, Aquanautic, Artya, Aspen, Ateliers De Monaco, Ateliers Louis Moinet, Badollet, BRM, Cabestan,

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Cecil Purnell, Claude Meylan, Clerc, Cornelius & Cie, HD3 Complication, Jean-Mairet & Gillman, Ladoire, Linde Werdelin, Louis Chevrolet, Magellan Watch, Marvin Watch, MCT, Metal CH, Peter Tanisman, Pierre de Roche, Quinting, Rebellion Timepieces, Ritmo Mundo, Robert & Fils 1630, Saint Honoré Paris, Snyder and Steeman.

### Exhibitor reactions

Exhibitors' reactions have been most favourable. Alain Silberstein was showing in Geneva for the first time and will be back next year, excited as he is by 'the new generation', some of whom were in The Watch Factory (this year to be called The Watch Gallery) in the Palace Hall at Baselworld. Antoine Prezioso feels the same: "After ten years in Basel, this was our first fair in Geneva. It was excellent. We met new people, agreed a new good outlet in the US and everybody said this was better than the hotels. We'll be back, free from big groups around us." Quinting will again be at Baselworld, in The Watch Gallery, "...but back here too. Both have that good young independent flavour; no more hotels for us," said spokesman Joel Evequoz.

GTE's founders, Paola Orlando, Florence Noël and Dominique Franchino all have extensive experience in luxury goods markets. Their company is Time Exhibitions, in the plural, and their next fair will be in Mumbai this September. Each maker quoted above has signed up for it, convinced that, just as GTE has done, the new exhibition will fill a proverbial gap in the watch trade year. ☺

**Further information:** [www.geneva-time-exhibition.ch](http://www.geneva-time-exhibition.ch)



The first edition of GTE showcased 38 brands who, during a week of events, presented their latest pieces to visitors consisting of watch sector professionals, leading collectors and connoisseurs of fine timepieces.

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