



Tempus

i Singapore has long been one of the most attractive export markets for Switzerland, rivalling even Hong Kong and Japan as a destination for high-end watch houses. Its Asia-lite - rich, stable, business friendly and a consumer culture to be believed, its been a vital cross-roads ever since the East India Company set up shop there in 1819 and maintains this strong sense of being the hub of the region. All of which goes some way to explain the active participation of some 30 brands, ranging from Audemars Piguet to independents such as Vianney Halter, at the Tempus "watchfest" in Singapore.

James Gurney

(Top, from left) Jean Claude Biver (CEO Hublot), Jerome Lambert (Director General Jaeger LeCoultre), Ravi Thakran (Group Director for India, LVMH), and Dr Kenny Chan (Managing Director of The Hour Glass).



Michael Tay, Executive Director of The Hour Glass, ushers in a nouvelle vague of watchmaking innovation by organising Tempus.

Organised by Michael Tay of The Hour Glass, one of the regions largest retailers, the event caught the attention, not just for the number of brands willing to showcase their latest and best pieces under one roof, but for the level of participation. Harry Winston, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Glashütte, Delaneau and others set up workshops and demonstrations, while Antiquorum previewed their Only Watch auction pieces. The real draw however, and what really caught *QP's* attention, was the series of seminar's and discussions that took place throughout the event.

While it is possible to see most of the brands showcased elsewhere in the world, though almost never under the same roof and rarely with the same level of new and unique watches, the seminars were exceptional. Nowhere else would you see pairings such as Jerome Lambert and Dr. Franck Müller, CEO's of Jaeger-LeCoultre and Glashütte respectively, discussing the internal truths of the industry in front of a public, and well-informed, audience. And there seemed to be a candidness to the discussions that was quite remarkable, with difficulties regarding future watch servicing, price rises and other subjects the industry usually prefers not to even mention being given an airing. The whole event drew senior representatives from almost the entire top echelon of the business and in numbers that only the Grand Prix de Genève can surpass.



Richard Mille's Planetarium Tellurium had its highly anticipated unveiling at this year's Tempus. An astronomical clock, the most accurate of its kind, marries completely new celestial calculations with new solutions of complex gearing and a détente chronometer escapement.



(Left) The Gyrotourbillion by Jaeger LeCoultre features the extraordinary and elegant rotating system that comprises of a balance and two cages of the Gyrotourbillion. In order to minimise weight the external cage is developed with aerospace aluminium, while the inner dimensions are machined from aluminium and titanium. Jaeger have also installed six anti-shock devices, making the watch, which is limited to 75 pieces and finished with a black coating especially for Tempus, surprisingly resilient.

(Below) De Bethune's The Black Titanium DB24 Super Sports, created to coincide with Tempus, houses an automatic movement that features a five-day power reserve and uses a transparent sapphire rotor, offering a view of the propeller shaped balance. And like all De Bethune movements, the triple pare-chute shock resistance innovations results in a hyper robust design.

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Why did they all turn out, what were the air-miles racked up for? Partly because The Hour Glass is the region's pre-eminent retailer, but mostly for the same reasons that the company has grown to its present position. Singapore did not appear fully-formed as a mature watch market, it took the hard work and creative thinking of Kenny Chan and his son Michael, to create awareness, lead taste and make sure that a culture of sophistication grew up around horology in Singapore. Nowhere else could you get away with an exhibition entitled MOCHA (the Museum of Contemporary Horological Art). And the crowds duly arrived, plastic in hand, ready to both learn and buy.

The ultimate accolade, apart from the time invested by those busy CEO's, was in the watches the brands were prepared to show and dedicate to the event. From the unveiling of the highly curious Richard Miller/Greubel-Forsej Planetarium, to the nine special black limited editions produced specifically for Tempus from the likes of De Bethune, Richard Mille and Hublot. And you know you carry weight when Jaeger-LeCoultre are prepared to make a special edition of Gyrotourbillions just for your event. ○

Further information: www.thehourglass.com/tempus

