

Pet Project

So good, Fawaz Gruosi named it after himself

James Gurney

Can there be a more annoying brand than de Grisogono? Quite unfairly, Fawaz Gruosi's company seems to be able to match completely over-the-top glamour and frivolity with impeccable style and, worse still, impeccable watchmaking.

In his typical manner, Gruosi presented his FG One (you couldn't make it up) at a lunch in London, chatting happily through the technical presentation and charming everyone present. This is just how it is *not* done in the watch industry. But then again, most watch companies are not content to share their building with a budget supermarket either.

But charming Mr Gruosi aside, the company clearly has, or has access to, some good talent. The FG One speaks for itself in design terms and while you might question the use of both jumping hour and flyback hands in terms of long-term reliability, the watches are well put together and finished. The watch's base movement is fitted with a module that features a retrograde minutes display, a 'jumping' hour disc at 12 o'clock and a second, continuous hour disc for the second time-zone at 6 o'clock. Seconds are displayed on the lower dial, again using a flyback hand. There is also a day/night indicator next to the seconds dial. All this adds up to significant modification - and given the work required, ETA is the tractor of choice.

One consequence of the movement's additional module is that FG One is rather tall. Nevertheless, this is well hidden by its design - as ever, both original and well constructed. The details match too: cambered sapphire crystals, dials with numbers and indexes to match the case, and mobile, screw-secured case lugs for the strap. But practicalities aside, the FG One is nothing if not different.

All that remained was to enjoy the company of one of the industry's most enjoyable characters and reflect on what it takes to have Formula 1 team bosses knocking on your door for watches. ○



The crown of the FG One (named after Fawaz Gruosi's initials) is set at 12 o'clock, between the mobile lugs. The watch will be available in stainless steel, stylish 18 ct rose gold (both shown here; about SFr.15,000 and SFr.23,000 respectively), blackened steel and two-tone blackened steel contrasting with mirror-polished stainless steel lugs.

Further information: Boutique de Grisogono, 14A New Bond Street, London W1S 3SX. Tel: 020 7499 2225, www.degrisogono.com