

# Mon Amour

Roger Dubuis gets dolled-up for Valentine's Day with some lovestruck additions to the marque's ever-eclectic range

Claire Adler

FollowMe, in white gold set with 210 diamonds, with silver, satin-finished 'LOVE' dial, set with 54 rubies. Limited to 28 units, as are all LOVE variants.



An impressive 262 diamonds adorn this TooMuch. With white mother-of-pearl dial and rubies set into the 'O', this model is similar to that won at the star-studded UNICEF auction last month.

At the 'La Dolce Vita' charity Christmas Ball last December, a Roger Dubuis watch was auctioned in aid of UNICEF, in the company of such glitterati as Jemima Khan, Sting and Elle MacPherson. The winning bidder is officially confidential but rumour has it that the proud new owner of the TooMuch model was Trudi Styler, wife of Sting. Hers is a girly watch if ever there was one, with mother-of-pearl dial and a ruby-set heart spelling out the word 'LOVE', emblazoned across its width. The garish red leather strap attached to the diamond-set bezel merely adds to the playful effect.

But despite such frivolity, serious sophistication lies within. Like all Roger Dubuis watches – other FollowMe and GoldenSquare 'LOVE' dial models included – butch neo-classicism adorns movements that are horologically sound, epitomising a well-positioned brand commanding ever more respect throughout the industry. 2005 marks a decade since the establishment of a company that has now had a presence in the UK for two years.

Roger Dubuis has set out its stall as watchmaker of the highest standards. Similar to such eminent houses as Patek Philippe, Roger Dubuis makes all its watches to the exacting specifications of the Poinçon de Genève. The requirements for 'Geneva Seal' watches mean that levels of finish and accuracy are extremely high.

### The Genevan Society

It was 1995 when master horologist Roger Dubuis teamed up with now-CEO Carlos Dias – the forty-something, Portuguese-born businessman with a background in publishing, furniture design, fashion and – no, you would not have guessed it – a PhD in political science. They named themselves the Société Genevoise des Montres. Four years later, they were granted permission to exhibit at the prestigious Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie, changed their name to Manufacture Roger Dubuis SA and established themselves in the American market, all in the same year. Meanwhile, the opulent style of Roger Dubuis watches served to capture the attention of the Asian market as early as 1997 and that of the Middle East in 2000.

The company now boasts six collections, nine calibres and, impressively, eight international boutiques. Geneva's rue du Rhône store was the first, opening in 2002, followed by Paris and Dubai

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in 2003. Last year witnessed Roger Dubuis opening doors in Jakarta, Singapore, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur and even launching jewellery.

But never one to rest on its laurels, Manufacture Roger Dubuis continues to evolve in breathless fashion, honing its unique niche within *haute horlogerie* and the fashion world alike (recent advertisement campaigns and unofficial endorsement from *la famille* Beckham has lent an edgy and, dare we say it, 'metrosexual' appeal). Two collections originally brought to the market in 1996 – Hommage and Sympathie – have recently been updated both technically and aesthetically. They now sport new cases, original dials, diamonds to set off mother-of-pearl dials and, for lovers of old-world techniques, Geneva enamel painting – one of the rarest and most complex of its kind. As for the ladies, a collection of gold bracelets has been added to the TooMuch collection, as well as the LOVE dial variants, also available in the FollowMe and GoldenSquare formats.

### Out and about

Roger Dubuis' other recent creations are the Sports Activity Watches. The 'SAW' collection unveiled last April to a slightly bewildered press – particularly those trying to turn the square bezels. These are high-tech and rugged timepieces, seemingly made for those more enamoured with the idea of being athletic and sporty, rather than doing any sport at all. But quite apart from this questionable validity, they do well to retain the aesthetic spirit of Dubuis. The EasyDiver (derived from the existing Sympathie model), AcquaMare (GoldenSquare) and SeaMore (MuchMore) are all produced in limited editions of 28 pieces for the gold version, 280 for the steel and gold version and 888 for the steel version. Intriguingly, each caseback is engraved with the mysterious inscription 'Just for Friends'. Presumably aiming to engender a sense of intimacy with the Roger Dubuis brand, one cannot help thinking this is rather superfluous: to like these watches is to fall in love... 'LOVE' dial or no. ○

GoldenSquare in 18-ct rose gold set with 96 diamonds. Both black and white mother-of-pearl decorate the LOVE dial, with 37 rubies on the 'O' motif. Note that this motif appears on the strap loop too.

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