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Matthias Naeschke table clock

# BASELWORLD 2011

## THE PEAK SHOWCASE OF THE WATCH, CLOCK AND LUXURY INDUSTRIES

**Martin Foster reviews watches and clocks and the strong industry recovery  
following the 2009 global meltdown.**

**BaselWorld 2011 opened on Thursday 24th March for a week of fine luxury watches and timepieces  
from the top makers in Switzerland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, China and around the world.**

**We should briefly pause here to contemplate the size and scale of this amazing annual event. It is a week-long mega-event on a huge scale. Exhibitors construct luxurious, deeply-carpeted multi-story stands on their allocated floor-space for the comfort of their agents and buyers from around the world.**

There were over 30,000 people involved in the lead-up preparation to the fair bringing in the stands and goods for exhibition. This involved over 7,500 heavy goods trucks carrying over 5,200 tons of steel, 130,000 cubic meters of other materials and creating stands with 25km of walkways for the visitors. There were 1,892 exhibiting companies, about a third of which were watch and clock brands.

This 39th edition of the BaselWorld watch and jewellery show ended on a clearly optimistic note, with show organisers revealing a 2.5 per cent increase in visitors. This was coupled with an 18.1 per cent rise in Swiss watch exports over the first months of 2011 which exceeds the same months of the record year 2008 and reaffirms the strength of the recovery that began in early 2010. Furthermore this is consistent with record exports of Swiss watches in 2010 (20.1% increase over 2009) of 25.1m pieces and 29.8% of these were at prices exceeding SFr.3000. The main markets were France followed by Singapore and China.

François Thiébaud, the president of the Swiss Exhibitors' Committee, pointed out, "2011 appears to be following in the footsteps of 2008, the industry's benchmark year for its remarkable results."

In the three or so years before the 2009 financial crisis there was a very competitive buzz in the technological milieu between the major companies for the most innovative R&D. And today, technological advances are again recovering momentum and the universal adoption across the hi-tech brands of the new silicon materials for the escapement components continues apace.



**Breguet Réveil Musical watch** – based on the new Breguet self-winding movement Cal. 777 incorporating a silicon escapement and a Breguet balance-spring, the Réveil Musical houses a fabulous musical mechanism. A disc carrying pins in the manner of a Polyphon acts on the 15 metal teeth of the comb. The dial, which is connected to the pin-bearing disc, performs a complete turn during the 20 to 25 seconds while the tune is being played. Case, round in 18K yellow gold, case band finely engraved with a musical stave. Reasonably priced at about SFr.60,000.

Despite the crisis that struck the entire watchmaking industry in 2009, Breguet stayed on course without laying off a single employee whilst continuing to invest in R&D. This proactive policy spawned innovative pieces such as the Réveil Musical or the Type XXII watch, the first mass-produced mechanical chronograph with a silicon escapement operating at a frequency of 72,000 vib/Hr (10Hz).



**Breguet Jewellery Set. La Rose de la Reine** 200 cm long string of pearls composed of 330 Akoya pearls, with its 18 carat yellow gold brooch adorned with a unique hand-sculpted cameo floral motif. Bow paved with 52 TW/IF-VVS diamonds (0.43 ct). In the same collection a bracelet composed of 84 Akoya pearls, a ring in 18 carat yellow gold, paved with 88 TW/IF-VVS diamonds (0.72 ct) and a pendant in 18 carat yellow gold, adorned with a unique hand-sculpted cameo floral motif. All pieces engraved with the Breguet secret signature.





In 2001 Harry Winston launched The Opus Series – a creative initiative to ‘reconstruct and redesign’ time by partnering with the industry’s finest independent watchmakers. Each (annual) Opus reflects a collaboration of generous patronage with leading horological innovators.



**Harry Winston has unveiled the Opus Eleven, created in partnership with Denis Giguet (MCT). Three overlapping cylinders on three levels are configured to deconstruct time – the main circle is the hour's domain, flanked by two pavilions. One sub-circle shows the minutes on a jumping disk for the tens and a running disk for the units, the other shows off the action of the big titanium balance-wheel. Note the current hour displayed in the middle of the dial is '11'.**

In its eleventh year of this tradition Harry Winston has produced the Opus Eleven and perhaps this is one of the most amazing of this breathtaking concept series. The mechanism is finished in the most traditional manner of classic watchmaking, in sharp contrast to the engagingly crazy display on the dial for the change of the hour. The appointment has been fixed and the hour comes apart at its end, leaving its particles to explode outwards and be turned into new hours using a screwball combination of differentials and categorically un-round triangular toothed wheels. It's an extraordinary sight to see.

To mark the 2011 Basel Fair, Hublot presented a minute repeater wristwatch featuring two ‘cathedral’ gongs, a tourbillon and column wheel chronograph, with carbon fibre bridges housed in a case, itself made from carbon fibre.



**Hublot 'Cathedral' Minute Repeater, Tourbillon and Chronograph Ref. 704.QX.1137.GR. Skeletonised Cal. HUB 8100 30mm, flying tourbillon, minute repeater with cathedral chime gongs, manual wind, 37 jewels, 404 components, frequency 21,600 Vib/hour (3 Hz), Hublot Balance with adjustment inertia-blocks, power reserve 120 hours, bridges carbon fibre, 48mm case 'King Power' in black matt carbon fibre, crystal sapphire with interior anti-reflective treatment.**

Besides the carbon fibre, the case is also fashioned with materials such as titanium and rubber. The minute repeater, activated by means of a lever situated between 8 and 10 o'clock, sounds the hours, quarter-hours and minutes. Its two ‘cathedral’ gongs (one for hours and the other for minutes) are double the length of a regular gong. The manual-winding mechanical movement boasts a 5-day power reserve. The hour and minute indicator is situated centrally, for a conventional readout. The all-black carbon fibre presentation with the included high-level complications makes a serious statement about its owner.

NOMOS Glashütte is one of a very few completely independent watch makers and does not belong to any corporate concern – unusual in this industry. For 2011 NOMOS has considered the needs of the constant traveller – and people who travel a lot know them by heart – and they're also on your ticket and baggage tag – the codes for the major airports. Instead of the entire names of the cities, these space-saving abbreviations appear in the indicator window of the new Tangomat GMT.

**NOMOS Tangomat GMT with in-house calibre, automatic wind, world time indicator, 40mm steel case, domed sapphire crystal, sapphire crystal back, silvered white dial, second time zone at nine o'clock and 24-hour indicator, heat blued steel hands, water-resistant to 3atm, Horween Shell Cordovan strap.**





**Patek Philippe Perpetual Calendar Chronograph Ref 5270, Cal. CH 29-535 PS Q, manual wind, column-wheel chronograph, chronograph hand, instantaneous 30 min counter, and subsidiary seconds, perpetual calendar with day, month, leap-year cycle and day/night indication in apertures, analog date, moon phases, 41mm 18K white gold case, water-resistant to 30m. Large inset is the movement, visible through the crystal case-back. Expect to pay about SFr.150,000.**

Eagerly anticipated was the news that Patek Philippe was expanding its classic chronograph collection with the introduction of its very latest perpetual calendar, a complication that has always occupied a place of honour in Patek's catalogue. The Patek Philippe seal guarantees the technical, functional and aesthetic excellence of this new haute horlogerie flagship model. This superb Patek (Ref. 5270) and a red Porsche are about the same price. If you're having a bad week and can't afford both then go for the watch – not red but it's still an easy choice because you won't stumble on this Patek in any used-watch market.

The AHCI stand is for the independent makers who can be found in the one place where they are not swamped by the jaw-dropping size of the main fair. The ingenuity and the exquisite finishing they achieve is a fine tribute to their thorough training, inventive thinking and horological tradition.



**Eva Leube, a new member of the AHCI, exhibited this fine arched watch with 56mm case and sapphire crystal to the top and sides. Expect to pay about 98,000 Euros for the #1 of this unique Australian-made series.**

Eva Leube is the latest initiate into the exclusive AHCI membership and she exhibited her latest hand-made watch on the AHCI stand for the first time. And she makes a first for Australia by producing the very first Australian wristwatch. Since 2004, Eva's unique pieces with their complicated mechanisms have found their way into the homes of collectors around the world. Now living in Sydney, Eva exclusively builds custom-designed, bespoke watches. At 56mm in length, her singularly unusual wristwatch sits comfortably around the entire back of the wrist. Sapphire crystal to the front and sides makes the movement viewable from any angle.

***“Naeschke clocks lead the industry for absolute attention to detail, standards and finish.”***

Clockmakers Matthias Naeschke and Sinclair Harding were on the prestigious AHCI independent makers stand with very fine new clocks for BaselWorld 2011.

Matthias Naeschke exhibited a new regulator wall clock and an exquisitely beautiful classic table clock with marble base and bevelled glass canopy. The beautifully proportioned parts including hardened steel arbors and highly-polished pinions with jewellery and ball bearings where appropriate, speaks volumes for the blend of fine clockmaking traditions and modern technological values. Naeschke clocks lead the industry for absolute attention to detail, standards and finish.



*“Elegant and discreet, this piece will grace the highest offices of the land...”*

Bob Bray of Sinclair Harding Clocks can be regarded as the UK counterpart of Matthias Naeschke. Sinclair Harding produces a range of clocks based on Harrison's H1 chronometer and early sea clocks from the 19th century and also the more ornate of the English skeletonised bracket clocks of the later periods.



**Matthias Naeschke table clock.** The exquisite detailing of the gilded movement illustrates the highest industry standards set by this exclusive maker. Note the eight fine tapered arms of the escape wheel. Matthias Naeschke is the world's only maker and restorer of pipe-organ clocks. Expect to pay about €12,000 for this truly elegant clock.



**Erwin Sattler LUNARIS table clock with Cal. 2004,** power reserve 8 days, silvered dial, subsidiary seconds dial, moon phase, passing chime on the full hour, winding, hand setting, correction of moon phase, and fine adjustment on the back, 12 ball bearings, 11 jewels, height 23 cm, width 16 cm, depth 8 cm.

They have made good business year after year at BaselWorld and Bray says of 2011, “As always, we have done well, every year I come expecting to do nothing and the first morning I thought that this would be the year. But we were off the mark by the end the day with a good prototype order. Friday we saw orders from Italy followed up on Saturday/Sunday with good orders from Germany and the United States. Monday we wrote orders for Canada and Iran, with China chipping in on Tuesday. Wednesday we had a rest (and took time to see the show), before taking the last order for Germany on Thursday. Unfortunately with all the work we now have, the order book is full until next year.” The smile on the face of Bob Bray show how unfortunate this really must be!

Erwin Sattler's Lunar is table clock uses their Cal. 2004, which is new in the catalogue for BaselWorld 2011. Its wheels are gilded, the pinions and stems are hardened, and all ball bearings are of stainless steel. The observer and the listener can hear the signal for each full hour; indicated by one simple clear passing chime of a bell. Elegant and discreet, this piece will grace the highest offices of the land – perhaps hinting with the passing bell that it is time for coffee.

*“...even if you only ever do it once you will have found watches, clocks and tools you will probably never have seen before.”*

FORTIS, prominent in the Swiss watch brands since 1912 is well versed in the history of aeronautics and space travel. The company uses its experience for developing chronographs for pilots, cosmonauts and astronauts.

This strong contact allows FORTIS to test their watches in the most extreme conditions which has enriched the inventive work of the company as well as gaining experience and knowledge that can be integrated into new timepieces. Extreme test conditions for this year 2011 includes the 50th flight of the ultra sounding rocket TEXUS (funded by European Space Agency) and the SHEFEX II (Sharp Edge Flight Experiment) rocket launching in October from Woomera, Australia, carrying FORTIS automatic chronographs as payload.

It follows that the watches developed under these conditions are robust and whilst eschewing any delicate aesthetic pretensions, make a strong statement on the arm of the wearer.



**FORTIS B-47 BIG BLACK**, based on the Cal. ETA 2836-2 automatic, modified by FORTIS. Big day/date format with the distinctive big indices are coated with black luminous material, sapphire crystal with anti-reflective coating on both sides, unidirectional bezel with 60-minute scale and a luminous capsule. Shown here is the 'Black Monster' in a steel/PVD black case. Expect to pay about €3000.



**CHRONOSWISS Timemaster Cal. C 733 split-seconds chronograph**, automatic wind, 28 jewels, power res 44 hrs, dial solid 925 silver, blued steel and gold-plated hands, date window at 3 o'clock, chronograph split sweep seconds, 30 min counter, 12 hr counter, tachymeter scale, 1/4 and 1/8 seconds display on dial, 44mm case body and case back in 18K gold, DLC-coated steel bezel, front and back with domed anti-reflective sapphire crystal, screw-down gold case back, water-resistant to 100m.

The CHRONOSWISS source of inspiration for the Timemaster Split Second was motor sports, which is obsessed with fractions of seconds. Founder Gerd-Rüdiger Lang has performed timing duties at sports highlights such as Formula 1 racing and the Olympic Games in Moscow in the 1980s.

The Timemaster Split Second is his first rattrapante chronograph to show quarter and eighths of seconds, and it includes a rotating bezel ring with an integrated tachymeter scale. Two red Porsches can be split-second-timed across the line with this fine chronograph.

This early Spring period in Switzerland can be variable but when the warm late afternoon sun shines on the plaza in front of Hall 1 and a cool beer sits easily in the hand, then the daily turmoil evaporates into peace and exhausted tranquillity. Many changes will be evident next year as Basel Messe rebuilds the precincts of Exhibition Square. Plan to be there and see this spectacular display of this fantastic industry for yourself – and even if you only ever do it once you will have found watches, clocks and tools you will probably never have seen before. Plan early and plan well – it is a big event.

BaselWorld 2012 opens its doors on 8 to 15 March. ■  
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