

WATCH MARKET REVIEW

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Icons of Time
Showcasing effigies of time

TAG HEUER

Tribute to Jack Heuer

CASIO
Tough Match

RAYMOND WEIL
Musical Veins





THE BRAND IS ALMOST TEN YEARS OLD. HOW HAS THE JOURNEY BEEN?

Our first product came out in 2004-2005. Of course, a creation like this has its ups and downs. It had a good period of success, but after 2008 there was a little slump. The worldwide economic crisis was really tough for all the independents. That period was good to think what we were really and what we wanted to do in the long-term. There was also a change of shareholding with MELB holdings taking over the company. Since then the company is developing well with new collections. After this, the main change we see is in the credibility of the brand, especially for retailers and the press.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS...

Since we started with limited editions we will also be celebrating with the end of old limited editions. We will organize a watch show and events across the world. We will explain the future- what is the base of Hautlence for the long term even with respect to the marketing and advertising approach. We are also thinking of worldwide ambassadors for building the brand.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACE, ESPECIALLY AS A RELATIVELY NEW GROWING BRAND, IN NEW MARKETS?

The first thing of course is to make the brand known. Many newcomers are on the scene every year. It takes time because with our small production we are of course considered a niche brand and we need to make ourselves known slowly first by collectors and connoisseurs before being known more widely. In terms of products, challenges include establishing good networks with retailers and maintaining creativity. The product side is quite okay since it is my background. Distribution is more surprising..

IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE HOW HARD IS IT TO COMPETE WITH THE OTHER, OLDER BRANDS?

The big difficulty for independent brands is that the big groups are taking up more and more space and budget for marketing. They are also taking a lot of place in shops. It is difficult for us to put our foot in the stores because of the pressures of the big groups. It is not easy in a difficult market. Events like this help us do something different and attract those customers who we cannot attract in the shops all the time. So, this strategy change helps.

ONE OF THE STRIKING DESIGN FEATURES THAT YOU FOCUS ON IS THE DIAL. HOW HAS THE RESPONSE TOWARDS THAT BEEN FROM THE CUSTOMERS?

Hautlence is known for its design. For new collections we wanted to establish strong designs based on our DNA. The brand is known for cases and styles and thus it is important to develop and work on unusual design and architectural pieces. People are already responding well to the designs. The new Destination is especially evoking a lot of interest! Since beginning we are producing interesting displays and dials. Now the goal is to continue the same DNA but with a new price point. Our goal is to reach 1000 pieces a year in 3-5 years. Now we have 35 points of sales and we will soon have more. With the new collection the story is different.

WHAT ARE YOUR OBSERVATIONS OF THE INDIAN MARKET?

It is a strong and good market. We are establishing the brand name here. We have been working here for 3-5 years. I can see that there are many Indian connoisseurs and collectors. The retailers have local customers. It is not a market based on tourists. For me that is really important. When you see people interested in watchmaking art, we see the potential.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR LATEST LAUNCHES IN INDIA.

We are presenting for the first time a model called HLRQ. It is a redesign of our model, the HLQ. We have seen that people enjoy rose gold and so we will offer that. In 2014 we will redesign the case. We will do the avant-garde for HLRQ. It will be a strong design linked to architecture with strong and new materials.

VIEWS OF ICONS OF TIME...

It is incredible because it was the first presentation of niche and collector brands to the connoisseurs. For us, it was important to start in this way. We have done tests with retailers but that was always opportunistic sales. Now, we are catching the attention of buyers. It was the first step. It was a success for everyone!



HAUTLENCE

Rising Star



HAUTLENCE, whose name itself is an anagram of Neuchâtel, the city that is birthplace of the watchmaking art, has established itself in the horological domain by pushing boundaries of traditional watchmaking codes, taking inspiration from the past and combining this with innovative mechanical solutions borrowed from other high-tech industries. Designing and developing all movements in-house, the company has its own contemporary watchmaking workshop in the heart of the Swiss watchmaking metropolis, La Chaux-de-Fonds. As the group gears up to celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2014, Guillaume Tetu, Co-Founder, CEO, Hautlence talks about plans for the future.

