

DESIGNS IN TIME

A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE TIMEPIECE DESIGNS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE...



VERTICAL TIMING

"You create things and ask yourself, 'Why'? But I dream of things that never were, and I say, 'Why not?'" This somewhat appropriate quote from George Bernard Shaw opens **Cabestan's** website, a company that turns the craft of watchmaking on its head – or side, to be precise. The unique timepieces are entirely built vertically with rotating drums pulled by a fusee chain revealing the time. This system of wheels, pinions and drums in brass, steel, nickel or aluminum dictates the watches' appearance in the perfect example of form-follows-function design. Setting the time is done via a nautical winch, or 'capstan', on the upper right-hand side of the case by using a small winch-handle stored in the folding buckle of the bracelet. "Why not?," asks Mr Bernard Shaw... Probably because it's not entirely practical, but who can't love the raw mechanical appeal of that exposed fusee chain.

PRICE TAG: Upwards of 3.5 million Baht
Available at *Yafiro (Hong Kong and Singapore)*



OTHER-WORLDLY

Portuguese industrial designer Nuno Teixeira has developed a wristwatch concept that represents the exact time when the sun is positioned directly over

the equator. The two low-relief semi-spherical displays represent the sun (hours) and the earth (minutes). The look is very *2001: A Space Odyssey* and that should be enough to attract eager fans of futuristic design, even if its astrological capabilities will be wasted on the average man.

PLAIN AND SIMPLE

Designer Iskender Asanaliev from Turkey is the mastermind behind the extraordinarily minimal wristwatch, **On Air**. While the red LED shows the minutes in numerals, its position points to the current hour, so the time in the picture below would be 2.35. To keep the design as clutter-free as possible, the display also works all setting functions. To adjust the time you need just push the center of the display for five seconds and the LED flashes; push the upper and lower corners of the display to set the hour, and the right and left corners to change the minutes. Currently the watch is only a concept design while Iskender is searching for a manufacturer.



BLIND PRECISION

Who says that in the mobile phone era watches are an outdated accessory? California-based designer David Chavez is putting functionality back into the wristwatch with this spectacular device designed for the blind. His **Haptica Braille** watch displays the time via a dial dotted with Braille numeration. As the movement rotates it orders the Braille dots into a synchronized pattern to give a digital readout. Those of us who aren't visually impaired can simply marvel at its sexy eighties-revival looks. In fact, it's so good-looking it makes you want to take up Braille just for the excuse to wear it.



CHEAP THRILLS

Here's a couple of companies making innovative ultra-modern watches that are available at prices that'll barely dent your pocket, and that's a rare thing in the world of designer horology...



TOKYO FLASH

Nobody does eccentric quite like the Japanese, and oddball watch company Tokyo Flash holds up its country's reputation with this line of bafflingly hard-to-read LED watches. Timekeeping is displayed by a range of flashing lights that arrange themselves in various formations that – if you've studied the mathematical diagrams that each watch is supplied with – can tell you the hours and minutes of the day. They feature other unique twists also, like the **Pimpin' Ain't Easy** model (pictured), which illuminates itself with a light display every two minutes between 6pm and 1am – the 'pimpin' hours'.

PRICE TAG: 3,000 – 10,000 Baht
Available at www.tokyoflash.com



THE ONE

German designer Anton Kraft came up with the idea for these LED watches based on computer binary code back in 1996, but production did not start until 2004 when he teamed up with a company in Hong Kong with the necessary technical know-how. The **Split Screen** collection displays the time by adding up the number on the left-hand side to show the hours and the right side to show the minutes. The model pictured shows the time at 1.12. There is also a limited edition collection available displaying images designed by German pop artist Josef Bauer.

PRICE TAG: 8,900 – 14,000 Baht
Available at all leading department stores



WAR TIME



The **U-Boat** story goes that Ilvo Fontana was commissioned by the Italian government to create a special watch for its U-Boat crews and airline pilots during WWII. For political reasons the project never made it to the production line, but in the year 2000 Italo Fontana, Ilvo's grandson, turned the original sketches into the familiar U-Boat designs on sale today. Now Italo has created a watch that does more than just take inspiration from those initial designs: the **U-1942** is a faithful replica of the very first U-Boat design.

The watch is seriously big – just short of 65mm in diameter – but it's also made of titanium, which makes it reassuringly light for such an oversized model. The most unique feature has got to be that protruding left-hand crown on a hinge pivot, apparently designed so it could be operated by gloved hands. Whatever the function, the result alongside the studded rotating bezel makes for a striking design. The darkened case is water resistant to 400 meters thanks to an innovative clipping gasket that keeps the crown attached firmly in place, aided further by two O-rings. Inside the watch is a Swiss Uvitas 6497 manually wound movement – simple, functional and reliable. Only 29 U-1942s are going to be made so competition to get your hands on one is bound to be steep given the number of devout U-Boat fans around the world.

PRICE TAG: From 91,800 Baht
Available at *U-Boat boutique (Ground Floor CentralWorld)*



ROYAL GOLD

Re-igniting the original fusion between rubber and gold of the first **Hublot** watches, the **King Power** line pushes design to the extreme to create a nice fusion of power and elegance. While the first King Power models in 'all black' provided an interesting study in tone and shade, legibility took a bit of a beating, as did the finer details of the watch that were lost under the swathes of darkness. In comparison, this rose gold version really shines. The matted finish is fantastic and the intrigue of Hublot's sandwich case construction stands out to great effect. Although the movement is nothing special (the watch uses a standard jumping split-second movement from La Joux-Perret), that's not unusual for watches of this kind, which generally look for new and innovative case designs and combine them with tried and tested customer complications.

PRICE TAG: Available on request
Available at *PMT The Hour Glass (M Floor Siam Paragon)*

END OF AN ERA

Concord has released what may very well be the last model in its C1 range. Word is that with the departure of the company's CEO this year, it is now looking for an all-new design for its flagship model. Until that time it has presented us with this latest derivative, the **C1 BiRetrograde**. The name refers to the two retrograde hands that point to the date and day of the week, visible through a semi-opaque sapphire screen. One of the most interesting features of this new model has to be the black outline scales on the dial, which lend the watch some needed legibility given how busy the face is. The BiRetrograde is also being targeted exclusively at the upper end of the market, the only case choices being rose gold and platinum.

PRICE TAG: Available on request
Available at *Cortina Watch (1st Floor Erawan)*



ANGULAR ROTATION

Launched in 2004 by Robert Greubel and Stephen Forsey, **Greubel Forsey** has since made a name for itself as a producer of modern tourbillon watches that derive their power from a patented constant force device called *Différentiel d'Égalité*. The limited edition **Invention Piece III** pays homage to the brand's third watch model, the Tourbillon 24 Secondes Incliné, which features a single tourbillon cage inclined at a 25 degree angle to perform a rapid rotation in 24 seconds. The new timepiece keeps the same tourbillon cage but displays the minutes and hours concentric to one another, with the hours distinguished by a red indicator and the minutes by a blue one. The watch is available in three materials; white gold, rose gold and platinum. Each version is limited to 11 pieces.

PRICE TAG: 18 million Baht
Available at *Yafiro (M Floor Siam Paragon)*

