




HYT PRESS REVIEW

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HYT H1 Red2 – Full REVIEW (live photos, specs, price)

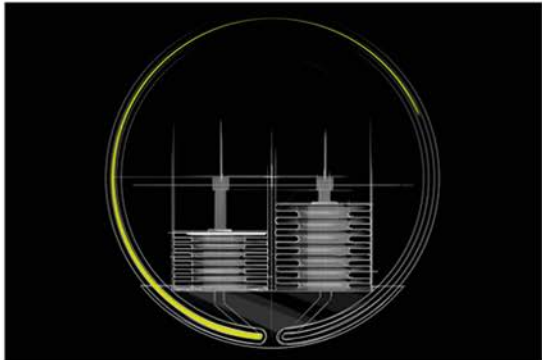
By Brice Goulard

29/07/2014 Independent Watchmaking Other Display Reviews

We, at Monochrome-Watches, love [independent watchmaking](#), very [unusual displays](#) and audacity of creation. [HYT Watches](#) had always been on our radar because it brings everything a young and 'unchained' Manufacture should: innovation, boldness, no compromise, unconventionality and that little slice of craziness that we love. Until recently our experience with the brands and their timepieces were based on (too) fast hands-on reviews during exhibitions such as [Baselworld](#) and the likes. It is now time to feel the experience of having a HYT H1 Red2 strapped on the wrist on a daily basis.

What is HYT Watches?

Although the introduction of the [HYT H1](#) is quite recent (during Baselworld 2012), the idea of a "water watch" was on Lucien Vouillamoz' mind since 2002. After a few attempts and more researches, the idea had proved to be utopia, because of a missing technology. A few years after, Lucien Vouillamoz, a former nuclear engineer with a degree in thermodynamics, decided to reconsider the project and his research, which led to a completely new idea, involving the use of two flexible reservoirs attached to each end of the same capillary.




The design of the watch and creation of the concept was lead by Vincent Perriard, now the CEO of HYT Watches. The development of the movement was made by Jean-François Mojon and the teams of Chronode (that is also famous for the creation of several MB&F movements, such as the [Legacy Machine 2](#) and the [HM5](#)).

The concept of the HYT H1 is now available in several editions, such as seen during [Baselworld 2014](#) or more recently with the new [Iceberg Edition](#). The fluidic concept also takes place in an even more exciting edition, the [HYT H2](#), created together with Renaud & Papi (AP's development department.) Now we know that the H3 is in development and HYT promised that it's going to be even more technical, complicated and compromise-free.


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Overall appearance

The HYT H1 Red2, as well as every of the HYT watches, is unusual. It clearly redefines the way to tell and read time, by introducing the worst enemy of a movement into it: liquid. However, the idea of using water or any other fluid to measure time is not new. It's even one of the oldest way. Back in ancestral Greece, people were using 'clepsydres' or [water clocks](#) to measure intervals of time. However, we can't reduce the HYT's concept to such a rudimentary idea. The use of a fluid replaces the hour hand. The HYT H1 mixes both traditional watchmaking elements of a mechanical movement with a brand new and innovative capillary filled with liquids (with an S because there are actually two different liquids - we will get back on this later).




What the dial and movement of the HYT H1 perfectly emphasize are these two distinct elements - mechanical and fluidic - linked together by two pistons. The H1 is a concept watch, the first of its own but what we can already tell you after wearing it a few days: it is a very achieved and realistic concept. This may be the first and largest surprise of this review. It's a wearable and resistant watch that can be on your wrist on a daily basis, just like with any other 'classical' watch.

The design is another story, with a very solid shape and assumed choices of colours and layout. It's not everyone's watch for sure, with its huge dimensions, its pink gold and titanium case, a red liquid running around the dial or a unique and custom-made grey strap. The HYT H1 is available in various editions - titanium, black DLC coated titanium, blue coated titanium or even a translucent neon-green case - but all have a huge personality. It is a modern and resolute interpretation of the 'nouvelle horlogerie' trend that has to be assumed by the owner. It won't fit everyone's tastes but it is not the goal anyway.

Features and Display

Even if using a unique technology, the HYT H1 relies on a traditional display called 'regulator' to indicate time. A regulator separates minute and hour indications in two distinct sub-dials. In the context of the HYT H1, you'll find the hours indicated by a retrograde tube filled with 2 liquids. The red liquid starts its journey at 6 o'clock and then follows the tube to the other side. Once arrived at 18:00, the liquid goes back to 6 again. Simple in appearance, the way to achieve such a display is in fact highly technical.



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Lecteur

How does the fluid technology work?


The hours indication relies on 3 separated elements: a glass tube, 2 liquids and 2 pistons/reservoirs. The idea that led to the H1 consisted of two flexible reservoirs fixed to each end of a capillary. In one was an aqueous liquid filled with fluorescein (here in red), and in the other, a transparent viscous liquid. To keep them separate: the repulsive force of the molecules in each liquid, with a meniscus to mark the boundary between the two. As the hours go by, the fluorescent liquid advances. The meniscus, in the shape of a half moon, marks the breaking point with the other fluid in the tube, indicating the time. At 18:00, the fluorescent liquid comes back to its original position, going backwards.

The two pistons create a pressure or a depression to make the liquids move. While the time goes forward, the left piston pushes the fluorescent red liquid into the glass tube while the right piston expands. Once arrived at 18:00, the process reverses and the right piston compresses to send the red liquid backwards to its original position/reservoir.

The main constraint was to create two liquids that couldn't mix with each other, not with high or very low temperatures or various pressure conditions or when the watch undergoes a shock.

The minutes use a traditional display and are indicated at 12:00 in a separated sub-dial. On the left of the minute-counter sits a rotating wheel that shows the seconds and on the right side, the 65 hours power reserve indicator.


The HYT H1 may ask a slight adjustment period in order to be comfortable with time-reading. Once you're used to its display, it is an easy watch to read, even during the night as the indexes and hands are filled with luminous material.



The face of the watch offers a great depth and emphasize the different elements that compose the watch. Around the dial sits the fluidic indication, the top part shows the timing indications and of the bottom part the mechanical components, meaning the two pistons. There is actually no real dial as all the elements are attached directly to the movement's main plate. The whole interpretation gives a very technical, even industrial, feeling that fits perfectly to the idea of the innovative mechanism.

Case and Strap

The HYT H1 comes in a robust 48.8mm x 17.9mm case. This a large watch, however its size is due to the movement and not just for aesthetic reasons. The use of pistons required some extra space compared to a classical movement. The Red2 edition has a two-tone case, made of 18k pink gold (for the lugs and bezel) and of titanium (central part of the case, caseback and the 6-engraved dome upon the crystal). Usually, two-tone watches are seen as old-fashioned, but in the all-grey context of the HYT H1 Red2, the use of the pink gold gives an extra warm atmosphere. In addition, the use of a full brushed (for the titanium) and shot-peened finish (for the pink gold) prevents the shiny effect. The finishing of all the elements is of course in line with what you can expect from a €40.000 Euro timepiece. The angles are sharp but not cutting, the brushed parts are perfectly executed and the assembly is made up to high standards.



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The case has a complicated construction and a complex shape. The raised sapphire crystal is also quite an amazing piece. But what surprised us mostly, while wearing the HYT, is how robust it is. It's a watch that you can use for sport activities and, when equipped with a rubber strap, it can even be used for diving. It has a water resistance up to 100 meters (1!), thanks to the use of a screwed caseback and crown. Furthermore the crown is protected by a large (and skelotonized) band on the side of the case. The HYT H1 may be a concept watch and a technical demonstration but it is also a sports-watch.



All HYT watches are usually delivered on an integrated rubber strap with a classical pin buckle. The 'washed' grey tone of this alligator strap fits perfectly to the dial of this Red2 edition. The quality of this strap is absolutely stunning and it gives the watch some extra comfort as it is softer than a rubber band. It is closed with a deployant buckle, also executed in titanium.

How does it feel on the wrist?

You won't be surprised to know that this HYT H1 is a big and heavy machine. Looking at the photos is enough to understand that it has nothing in common with a small vintage chronograph such as a [Heuer Camaro](#) or a dress watch such as the [Girard-Perregaux 1966](#). And clearly, that was not the goal here. We told you, the H1 is a big watch because the movement is big. At 48.8mm, it has a strong presence on the wrist and it is quite heavy (around 150 grams) but the shape of the integrated strap helps to balance it.



The other aspect is the look of the watch itself. Clearly far from usual horological codes, the HYT is something that you'll have to assume. The combination of the grey dial, the red liquid, the pink gold accents and that stunning alligator strap is extreme, highly cool and feels like an outstanding object. It is not discreet, it won't fit under your cuffs and you won't be able to hide the fact that you're wearing something special. Indeed, it is a concept watch. And that's also what potential buyers are looking for with the likes of HYT, MB&F, MCT or Hautlence. Mission accomplished!

Movement


The HYT H1 shouldn't be reduced only to its fluidic system. The entire movement deserves some attention, both on the technical and finish sides. Of course, the 'piece-de-resistance' is the hydro-technological part that sits on the lower part of the movement and around the dial. But the other challenge was to power such a complication. In order to make those two pistons move, the need of energy is considerably larger than with a classical movement - that has to power simple rotating hands. With the help of a twin-barrel, the H1 boasts a very comfortable 65 hours power reserve - an impressive number considering the mechanism that has to be powered! The bellows' conception also helped to reduce the need of power as they are made from an extremely fine alloy and which are highly supple and resistant. Their specially researched shape allows for the reduction of energy required for their compression, absorbs shocks and ensures rock solid waterproofing.

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The top part of the movement is more classical with a traditional balance wheel and a gear train, highly visible through the opened bridges. What is less traditional is the link between the movement and the mechanical pistons system: the movement propels a cam, which pushes the piston and activates the bellows. The main challenge lay in finding an interface between the mechanical movement and the hydro system in a closed, waterproof circuit. They had to be assembled separately to keep them independent, and then made to operate simultaneously. A real challenge that works fine on a daily basis. The only precaution is to move the crown slower than on an usual watch when setting the time – the liquid can't move as fast as a classical hand.



Apart from being technically advanced, this movement is also a real pleasure for the eyes. All the bridges are opened to show the technical elements and every part is finish by hand, with hand-chamfered angles and Geneva stripes. For the story, I've showed the watch to a very trained watchmaker that works for a large and renown manufacture and after of few minutes under his scope, he couldn't find any default to this movement, both for its conception or finishing. It is an impressive engine.

Conclusion – Pros/cons

We have to admit that the HYT H1 is impressive! It is impressive because of its look, because of its complications, because of the technology employed and because it breaks some traditions. The use of a brand new way to indicate time is of course the main point of interest here but not only. The quality of the movement's finish, the strong design choices or the non-compromise spirit are also factors that appeal us. Last but not least, it is a concept watch but a very accomplished one, especially when you think that its HYT's first attempt. It is wearable, robust and reliable on a daily basis. The HYT H1 is not that far from being a tool-watch. The only question that we might have is how the liquids will age and what could be the consequences on the colour, the non-mixing properties or the fluidity?





The price is also impressive. The full titanium edition on rubber strap is priced at 'only' €45.000 Eur. It is a huge amount of money for a timepiece. But when you look at the technology employed, the finish and the details, it's certainly one of the most precisely priced concept watch on the market. Our two-tone Red2 edition here is priced at €59.000 Eur.

Trying to compare such a watch is quite hard. No other watches can argue of the same complication. So the best is to compare it to other non-comparable watches, with unusual displays such as the new [URWERK UR-105](#) priced at €63.000 Eur, the [MB&F HMS in pink gold](#) priced at €73.000 Eur or the [Hautlence HI TI 2](#) priced at around €40.000 Eur. All are very desirable watches but that rely on classical and mechanical complications to display the time, even in very distinctive ways. The HYT is really a good contender.



Pros

- The very accomplished technology
- The use of liquids
- The extreme look that is clearly recognizable
- The quality of the finish
- The wearability of the watch, even in sport conditions
- The price for such a watch

Cons

- The size that is not suitable for every wrist
- The extreme look that has to be assumed by the wearer
- How will the liquids age in a few years?
- The [HYT H2](#) is even more desirable

More HYT

