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THE WATCHMAKERS' PLAZA: JACKPOT!

JAN. 22, 2016 - 1165 READS



The group of independent watchmakers called the "Carré des horlogers" at the SIHH 2016 stood for creativity and passion for alternative mechanics. The players will ultimately become winners, but that will require some tall ordering. What's on the table?

 **VINCENT DAVEAU**
Watchonista's Contributor

The nine independent watchmakers who came to this Salon had undoubtedly made a daring choice by accepting to be at the SIHH 2016, because the cost of having a presence there is high, especially for these companies whose finances have been under some stress during these recent months of crisis. But many journalists at the event did feel that this year's SIHH would have been a lot duller without their presence, because the novelties displayed by the institutional companies were, in the final analysis, not really revolutionary. Let's put it this way: they tend to lack the sex appeal that might make them a success in editorial pages and turn them into sell-out products.



HYT H2 Tradition

There are rumors of high fees for a presence at the Salon, but it is only fair that all creative watchmakers taking advantage of the infrastructure should reach into their own pockets. It's a way of sharing the costs. And luxury has its price, namely that of excellence. But one must consider that most of the independents who came to the SIHH also have a booth at Baselworld. Not to mention the fact that the suites in the hotels in downtown Geneva, where they usually find space, are not free of charge either. So, all things considered, and given the increase in visibility, the smaller brands will probably make out fairly well in the end.

Innovation trips

The square was divided into nine little alcoves around which a number of new media buzzed, bent on boosting the fortunes of these poor exiles from the center of town. It was a space that was chock-full of products of incredible quality. Let's consider HYT first, whose timepieces with fluid displays have managed to touch even the most diehard apostles of orthodox watchmaking. These innovative and unusual pieces do give food for thought. There was unanimous approval for the Tradition reference, which is highly readable, and the version featuring a dynamo to produce light.

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