



# Hydro Seduction

After creating the first hydro-mechanical watch, Vincent Perriard's HYT plans to bring more shock to the industry.

BY YESSAR ROSENDAR

**WHEN HYT CAME TO THE MARKET** two years ago, it created a shock in the industry as the world's first hydro-mechanical watch, in which a fluorescent liquid showed the hour and a regular dial showed the minute. Normally fluids are the enemy of mechanical objects but HYT inserts fluids into the heart of a fine watch.

For this innovation, the HYT was the winner of the 2012 Geneva watchmaking grand prize for best innovative watch concept at the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Geneve, the industry's most prestigious event. "We created the concept from scratch and we created a concept that didn't exist," says Vincent Perriard, chief executive and co-founder of HYT, in an interview last October during the brand's launch in Jakarta. "It started with a very strong and easy to understand vision, it's a basic principle of mixing liquid and mechanics, but it's hard to master."

To make the watch work correctly it took three years of development. The fluid in the reservoir is made from two liquids with different densities—water and oil. The two naturally will separate but in the watch they remain mixed because of external influences such as gravity and temperature. Oil is also sticky, so to solve this problem, the brand used seven chemical coatings on the reservoir tube.

HYT co-founder Lucien Vuillamoz roughly sketched the concept in 2005, but the investment wasn't done until 2010 when Vincent, Lucien, and Chairman Patrick Berdoz got together for the effort. They started selling the watch in September 2013. Vincent previously was responsible for growing several brands such as Audemars Piguet, Concorde and TechnoMarine watches. "I was behind the concept as well, because I want to make a watch in a certain way and create something unique in the industry," Vincent says.

Originally Vincent projected that the company would only produce up to 150 watches for the first year, but the demand for the watch grew exponentially and the brand ended up producing 500 watches last year. "The demand was crazy and much more than we expected," Vincent says.

It launched its second watch the H2 that has a movement produced by Audemars Piguet. With an AP movement the H2 is currently the top of the line of the collection—each of the 15 units has a platinum case.

Within a year of its launch, the brand garnered more than 50 points of sale worldwide, and has opened its first subsidiary in Singapore and concluded its first partnership in Asia with retail and brand giant, Time International. "We are very particular about which brands we represent, but HYT was an obvious choice for us. We admire the revolution they have brought to the watch industry and know they have much more in store for us. In the meantime they are producing technical masterpieces that we are very happy to be retailing," says Irwan Mussry, president and chief executive of Time International, in a press release.

Indonesia is a key market, currently the major contributors for the brand are Europe and the U.S., Indonesia is becoming one of its biggest sales contributors alongside Singapore and Malaysia. "The market in Southeast Asia is the strongest in the world for high complication watches, mostly all the high complication watches are sold first in this region," Vincent says.

To maintain the exclusivity of the brand, Vincent aims not to grow the company into a big volume producer of timepieces. He envisions the brand to be between a small craftsmanship company and a company similar to Richard Mille that has been successful in producing strong brand despite not having a large volume production.

Longer term, Vincent aims to bring the annual production of the brand to 3,000 watches, and to support this plan the brand already has new products in the pipeline for the next five years. "For the next five years, we know every year will be getting better, the H1 and the H2 are only the appetizers because what is coming in 2016 and 2017 is really interesting," Vincent says.

Some products hinted by Vincent are the H3 and H4 that will be introduced in April; the H4 will feature a technology that eliminates one weakness of the current collection. The user of the H1 and H2 will not be able to see the time in the dark, the new watch will have a dynamo and with a push of a button it will generate its own electricity and able to produce a flash for three seconds.

To diversify the portfolio the brand will offer various price points for its timepieces, the H3 and H4 will be priced higher than the previous collection and in 2016 the brand will launch a collection that is priced more aggressively and more affordable than the H1. "We decided to continue to invest in research and development, because we found some great ideas that could change the game in the watch industry in the future," Vincent says. With several products in the pipeline for the next five years, including some great innovations, the brand aims to make more splashes. "We want to be a highly respected and innovative brand, and continue to innovate, surprise and strike the industry," Vincent says. 

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HYT



Vincent Perriard wearing a HYT watch. Within a year of its launch, the brand garnered more than 50 points of sale worldwide, and has opened its first subsidiary in Singapore.

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