



INTERVIEW

Liquid time

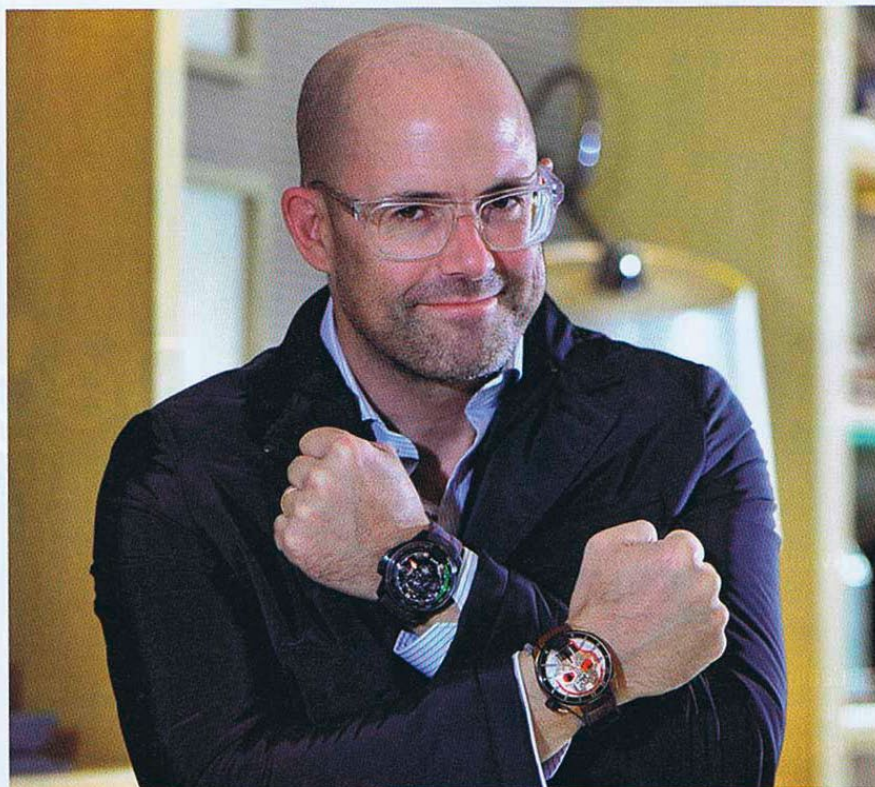
When HYT launched its revolutionary liquid-engineered H1 timepiece in 2012, it took the watch industry by storm. Since then, the company has produced a number of cutting-edge watches with the latest H4 series incorporating a light system that is powered by clean energy. By **Shoeb Kagda**

Oil and water do not mix. Nor do liquid and mechanics in watches, at least until now. For 500 years, the watch industry has been fighting hard to prevent liquids from affecting the mechanics of watches but all that is changing with the emergence of Hydro Mechanical Horologists (HYT), a company that produces watches that have liquid in them.

Launched in 2012, it is a relative newcomer to the world of watchmaking but it has already

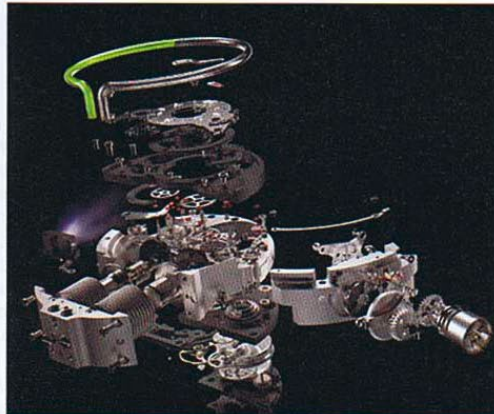
created huge ripples. Its first hybrid timepiece, the HI, launched during the 2012 BaselWorld watch fair, won three awards in the same year as the best innovative and best concept watch.

The H1 is an unusual looking watch. It indicates time by means of two liquids, one green, one clear, that flow through a tiny tube along the hour scale. Innovation has always driven the watch industry and HYT has added a new dimension.



Vincent Perriard

MOH. DEFRIZAL



To produce its watches, the company adopted technology and assembly techniques from the aerospace, chemical and medical industries. For example, the two liquids could not mix or change consistency, nor could they leak or evaporate, said Vincent Perriard, CEO and partner at HYT.

“So we learned from the other industries because we wanted to create a paradox,” he told *GlobeAsia* during a recent visit to Jakarta. “Liquid and mechanics have been enemies since watchmaking began but we are now creating a disruption that is very visible. When you mix liquid in motion, you not only master time but also pressure. These same principles can apply to many other industries.”

The concept is to use liquid to indicate the hours on the watch and analogue to indicate the minutes. It has a titanium casing and uses a movement perfected by ultra-luxury Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet.

Innovation DNA

From its very beginning, HYT has sought to revolutionize the watch industry with its technology and its design. Innovation within the industry has been incremental rather than revolutionary with companies cautious about protecting their heritage.

“We had an idea that we wanted to be innovative,” said Perriard. “We wanted to create a complex watch that did not exist and we were certain we did not want to be the new Audemars Piguet.”

‘I have been to Jakarta so many times and I see a lot of educated people who appreciate watches.’

Vincent Perriard

Founded by four individuals who all hailed from the watch industry, HYT has grown rapidly over the past three years. The company has established a subsidiary in Singapore and a boutique in Kuala Lumpur.

“The Asian market is now the most important for the watch industry,” Perriard noted. HYT does business in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan while Southeast Asia is also fast-growing.

“Asia accounts for 60% of our business with Europe making up 25%

and North America 15%,” he added. “This is no surprise as craftsmanship watches sell the best in Asia.”

HYT currently has two in-shop displays at Time Place outlets. The next step, he said, will be to have a boutique in Jakarta. “I have been to Jakarta so many times and I see a lot of educated people who appreciate watches.”

“The education makes a difference because they are looking for something different. It’s a journey for many of them.” ©