




HYT PRESS REVIEW

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FASHION & STYLE

A Skeleton Model Shows Hydrolics of HYT Timepiece

By JAKE CIGAINERO NOV. 26, 2015



From HYT, the H4 Metropolis.

PARIS — Water is a watch's worst enemy, unless the watch is made by the Swiss company HYT, which uses liquid as a key element in its timepieces. "We had a dream to create something that had never been done before," said Vincent Perriard, chief executive of HYT. "It was about creating a paradox by mixing mechanics and liquids."

The company was formed in 2012 by a group of watchmakers, bored with tradition, who called themselves "hydromechanical horologists" and designed the H1, a men's watch that uses a ring of liquid snaking along its outer edge to indicate the time.

The process: A piston compresses a flexible reservoir of colored liquid, which then travels through a capillary to push a second, but viscous transparent liquid back into its own reservoir. (The company will not identify the liquids in any more detail.) As hours go by, the colored liquid advances along the track, the repulsion force of molecules keeping the two liquids apart.

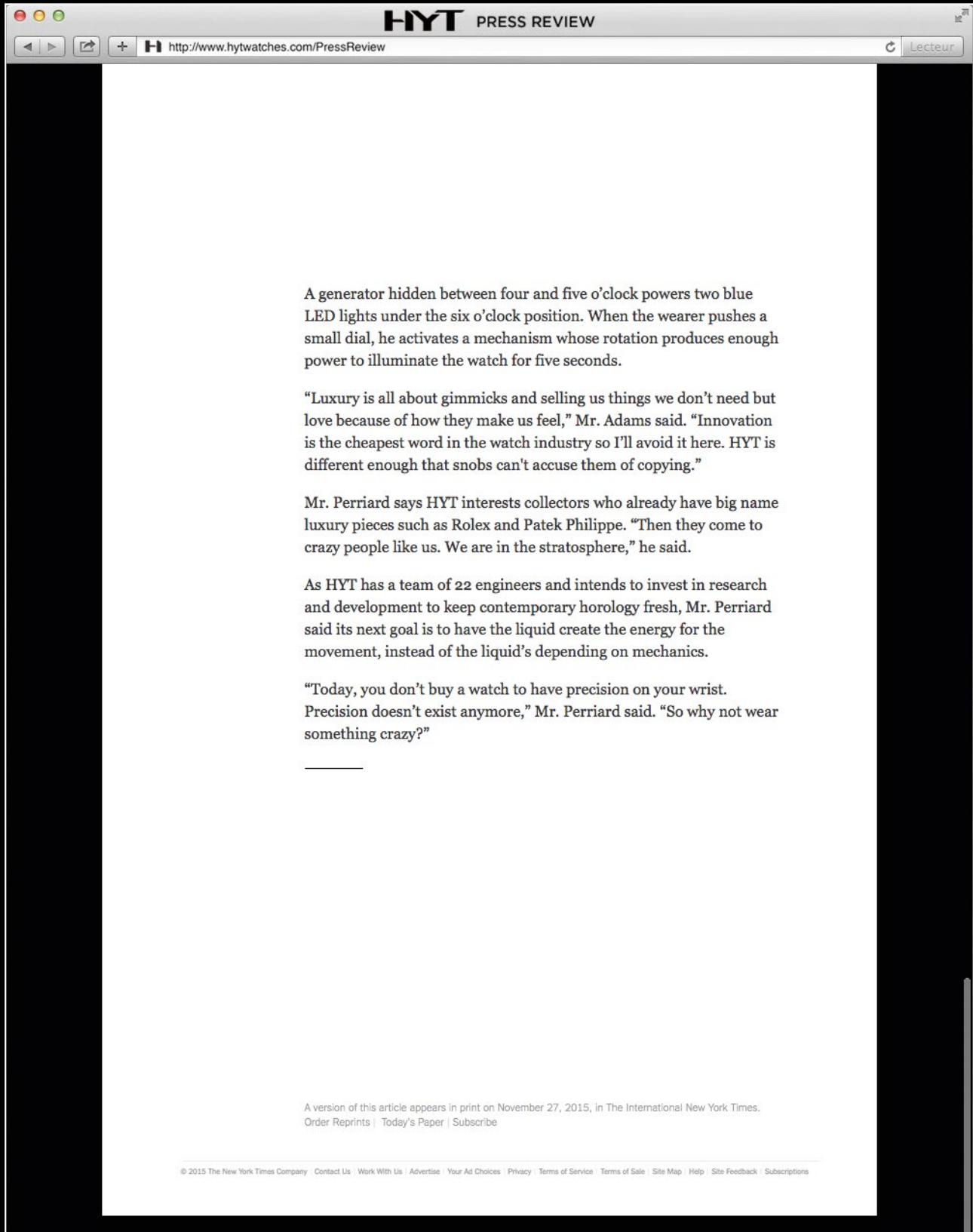
HYT, based in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, made a splashy debut in 2012 with the release of H1 at the annual Baselworld watch fair in Switzerland and by winning Geneva's Grand Prix of Horology.

The company recently introduced a skeletonized version to reveal the inner workings and added an electrical current to the H4 Metropolis (above), which is a limited edition of 100 pieces, each selling for \$94,000.

To add a bit of complexity to the watch, the Metropolis has a self-powered light to help check time in the dark or to get a better view inside the case. "Here, the light is useful and fun so it makes a real impact," said Ariel Adams, founder of the watch fan site aBlogtoWatch. "Sure it's a soft innovation but it shows a degree of courage and being authentic with their goals and purpose as a brand."

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A generator hidden between four and five o'clock powers two blue LED lights under the six o'clock position. When the wearer pushes a small dial, he activates a mechanism whose rotation produces enough power to illuminate the watch for five seconds.

"Luxury is all about gimmicks and selling us things we don't need but love because of how they make us feel," Mr. Adams said. "Innovation is the cheapest word in the watch industry so I'll avoid it here. HYT is different enough that snobs can't accuse them of copying."

Mr. Perriard says HYT interests collectors who already have big name luxury pieces such as Rolex and Patek Philippe. "Then they come to crazy people like us. We are in the stratosphere," he said.

As HYT has a team of 22 engineers and intends to invest in research and development to keep contemporary horology fresh, Mr. Perriard said its next goal is to have the liquid create the energy for the movement, instead of the liquid's depending on mechanics.

"Today, you don't buy a watch to have precision on your wrist. Precision doesn't exist anymore," Mr. Perriard said. "So why not wear something crazy?"

A version of this article appears in print on November 27, 2015, in The International New York Times.
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