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The HYT Skull: Fad, Trend, Style, Or Movement?

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Trend in watches

One trend that has been moving across the watch industry for a while is skull-related timepieces. Skulls and their depiction are not really a trend but more of a lasting style that has seeped into different industries at different times. Looking through art history, we note there has always been a fascination with skulls, and as such they provide inspiration to become popular in different areas at different times.


For this reason, making a skull-related anything is technically never a bad move, if you do it correctly and it makes sense (i.e., is coherent for you). If you do it to be a part of what you see as a trend or fad, then chances are it will be perceived as trite. "Joiners" suffer from this fate, but "drivers" and "calculators" don't, because "drivers" are seen as fresh and "calculators" as smart.

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With the skull trend, there have been those driving the trend, and many who have joined, but the calculators have largely made the best examples.

For me, the most on point and understandable skull watch can be none other than the HYT Skull. It stands out as a perfect synthesis of what the brand is about, what the brand's customer will enjoy, and what is cool about skulls on watches in the first place.



Green Eye Skull by HYT

Iron Man and capillary problems

The HYT Skull is Iron Man's watch, no doubt, and any who disagree are just being difficult. But more importantly, it is a watch that allowed HYT to stretch its already long, technically advanced legs for a radical take on the brand's patented liquid time complication. And this piece is definitely complicated, presenting new difficulties that HYT needed to overcome and a new category of time measurement, even for them.

First off, gone is the simple round capillary that depicted the hours while the minute hand ticked away. In its place is a very complicatedly shaped capillary hugging the main feature of the dial, a large looming skull.

This capillary was not a simple change; it in fact represented a huge issue for HYT. Its technical luminaries needed to figure out two large issues: how to make the time show accurately on an uneven shape, and how to make the capillary in this shape in the first place.



Bending the capillary almost 90 degrees in two places and introducing four other large angles makes for a tricky piece of glass bending. Beside getting the glass to cooperate smoothly and stay a perfectly symmetrical shape, bending almost 90 degrees introduces the possibility of kinking in the glass, which could constrict flow and alter the pressure needed for the system.



Red Eye Skull by HYT

While getting the angles between the bellows and skulls just right was a real challenge, it was the sharp angles at 6 o'clock that proved the most difficult to produce. After a long process of trial and error, the capillary was made to the specifications required and the next step could be tackled, ensuring that the liquid flowed smoothly and consistently to tell time.

Slight adjustments were made to the cam-driving system to allow for the new flow rates required, and the lines coming off the numerals were used to help point to the accurate position of the fluid at the appropriate time.

This makes for a very unconventional time display, even for HYT, especially with the lack of a minute hand. This means that the way the time is told on the HYT Skull is not for those concerned with tenths of seconds but rather with the gradual passing of time, just like life.

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Memento mori

In that sense the Skull also helps remind us of our mortality and also to not stress over every minute of our lives. In the center of the skull the bellows poke through a bit, acting as teeth, and in the eyes one sees that life still exists. The right eye (or left if you are the skull) is the power reserve indicator, slowly moving and changing from red to black as the reserve winds down. The left eye (or right from his view) displays seconds, spinning away the seconds that lead you to your own mortality.

But, really, they are reminders of life, and living in the face of certain death.

The size of the case has grown to a stately 51 millimeters, which should be large enough so that the concept of mortality never strays far from sight. A smaller watch hiding beneath the cuff would disappear and defeat that purpose.



Green Eye Skull and Red Eye Skull by HYT

The movement is a derived from the vertical bellows of the H1, but is unique to this model. There are two versions: one in titanium with green fluid and one in titanium and red gold with red fluid, the most "Iron Man" of the two.

This watch and this skull makes great sense for HYT, especially in comparison to a variety of other brands who have made skull watches apparently to simply cash in on a trend. To me, the Skull really seems to be something that the brand would have created either way, and it cohesively demonstrates what the brand is about: strong, masculine, technical watches that follow their own design cues.

That is why I name the HYT Skull as the most on point skull watch out there. If you like mechanics and skulls, then this piece is the epitome.

And Iron Man never breaks down, unlike this article!