

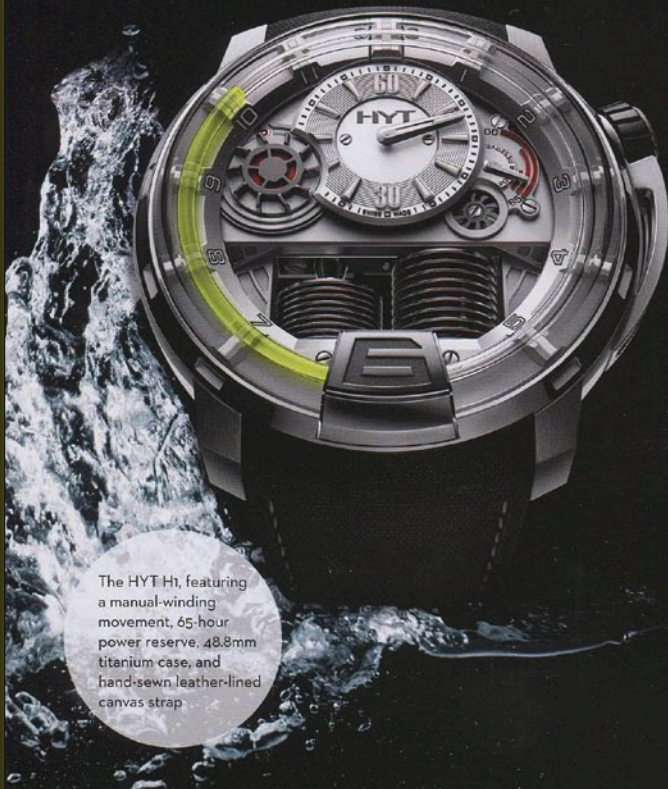


HYT

PRESS REVIEW
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« REVOLUTION »

WHATMAKESUSTICK



The HYT H1, featuring a manual-winding movement, 65-hour power reserve, 48.8mm titanium case, and hand-sewn leather-lined canvas strap

LIQUID POWER

NEW WATCH BRANDS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE SCARCE OF LATE, SO WE WERE ALL A TAD EXCITED TO HEAR ABOUT HYT AND ITS NEW MECHANICALLY-POWERED LIQUID TIME DISPLAY

BY SOPHIE FURLEY

For about a decade now, watchmakers have been looking at different ways to indicate time using systems such as orbiting satellites (URWERK), rubber belts (Claret), jumping chains (Hautlence) and bulbous domes (MB&F). The boys at HYT (the Hydro Mechanical Horologists), however, have been thinking along completely different lines with a time indication that uses fluorescent liquids inside crystal tubes, pushed by bellows and pistons. And what's more, it is all powered by the finest Swiss mechanics. (See the picture above and everything will become clearer.)

This hydro-mechanical horological marvel is the brainchild of nuclear engineer Lucien Vouillamoz, who has joined forces with some of Switzerland's leading movers and shakers to bring his project to fruition. The team is headed up by Vincent Perriard, who you may remember from his days as CEO at Concord and TechnoMarine. Mr Perriard gave us a first-class presentation of this new project, which will be launched during the BaselWorld fair this year. So let's take a peek inside.

The liquid module works using a mixture of green fluorescein and a transparent substance

whose molecules physically won't mix, like oil and water, creating a clear line that indicates the time. The substances photographed here are green and transparent, but the color combinations are limitless. So you could choose the colors of your national flag, red and blue if you are a New York Giants fan, or tangerine tango and cockatoo turquoise if you are a fashionisto!

State-of-the-art technology enables the liquids to be pushed through a sapphire-crystal capillary at a given speed, thanks to two bellows that are powered by two pistons. This avant-garde apparatus compresses and expands to displace the liquid around the crystal capillary. The pistons are large in this first model for design purposes, but can be produced in a far smaller size to allow space for other liquid-powered complications in the future, such as a date or a power reserve. In fact, HYT is already working on a second, third and fourth collection for the years to come, thanks to some solid investors who are passionate about the project.

One of the most attractive parts of this timepiece is that a mechanical movement powers all this futuristic liquid technology. This is no "off-the-shelf" movement either, as it had to be

designed from scratch to allow space for the pistons at the bottom of the case. HYT called upon the services of the well-respected watchmaker Jean-François Mojon, who has done a first-class job of creating a movement to power the liquid module in true Swiss watchmaking tradition.

What's more (and it's a big "more"), the price is surprisingly attractive for this kind of product. The average price of a futuristic mechanical watch tends to be situated somewhere between 80,000 and 500,000 Swiss francs (CHF). HYT's H1, however, is set at a very attractive CHF 38,000. "We asked some of the top retailers around the world — from Asia, Europe, Russia and the US — to estimate the price, and the majority of them said around 80K," explains Perriard. "But we really wanted to be kept it under (CHF) 40,000."

We have heard whispers from a handful of watch companies that are also looking into liquid technology and hydraulics, so this is definitely going to be a trend to follow. But HYT has set the bar very high, and the price unexpectedly low, so it will surely be a "hyt" (excuse the pun!). ★