



THE NEW FACE OF TIME



The Skull Maori showcases the aesthetic possibilities of HYT's range of fluid-engineered watches.

By Adi Soon

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When HYT first showed its Skull Watch in February this year, it was one of those moments when one could feel that their unique concept of using fluid to tell the time had been stepped up to an all-new level.

This already-exciting concept, having been expressed in the H1, H2, H3 and H4 watches, now faced a unique problem: how to make the fluid move through bends. The H1, H2 and H4 had a circular track along which the fluid would flow, while the H3, uniquely, did the same thing but linearly along a straight path. Intuitively, of course, both these methods are relatively easier since the fluid has no obstacles to resist its progress.

What the Skull did, however, in contrast to the H-series watches, was to demonstrate that the fluid could move around bends. As explained to me by famed master watchmaker Dominique Renaud (now working at HYT), the difficulty in creating a watch like the Skull, where the liquid flows along a complex shape, was working out how to control the force of the flow through the bends.

With the Skull, therefore, HYT has demonstrated a mastery of the more complex nuances of their fluid flow technology, and then, with considerable theatricality, decided to showcase this technical ability in an aesthetically driven watch.

The Skull arrived with much buzz from the press, and it was a layered response with first reactions being amazement at how unique and different the watch looked, followed by considerable awe at the challenges that HYT had faced in its creation.

It was clear that the Skull could be the precursor of new aesthetic possibilities to the HYT range, with many suggesting that the red version looked very much like the movie character Ironman. Yet this could also be seen as HYT's version of “memento mori” — an object decorated with reminders of one's mortality, with skulls being one of the more popular motifs used.

Of course, skulls have been used as decorations on watches before, but never like this; not with just a simple picture printed on a dial, but as an intrinsic part of the “complication” and the *raison d'être* of HYT, with all the working parts that tell the time — the fluid track and the bellows — all right in there. Simply put, no one else could have done a skull like this!

Well, we did not have to wait long for a followup to be released, and my, I fell off my chair when I saw it! The Skull Maori had rendered me speechless! This felt to me like no mere line extension, but a confident step-by-step exploration into the wondrous aesthetic possibilities that were evident right from the start.

Said Vincent Perriard, CEO of HYT, “We wanted to include unique and handmade engraving and therefore we met the most talented engravers in Switzerland. We wanted to find a theme that would be strong, provocative and visually disruptive, and we decided to go with the Maori theme.”

Indeed, take some time to understand the indigenous people of New Zealand, otherwise known as the *Māori*, and you'll realize why engraving was the method of decoration chosen. The *Māori* are, after all, famous for a type of body and face marking called *tā moko*, which differs from a normal tattoo in that the skin is carved by chisels, or “*uhi*” rather than punctured. This leaves the skin with grooves rather than a smooth surface. In other words, think engraving versus painting, or three dimensional versus two. That, in a nutshell, is why the engraving makes so much sense.

Only 15 pieces of this very limited-edition watch will be made available, in black DLC-coated titanium and 5N red gold.

So can we expect more to come in the Skull family? Well, with the success of the design, there is no doubt that more will be on the way. In fact, Vincent has revealed that a new piece, called “Bad Boy” will be launched in 2016. ★