



REPORTS

MATERIAL BENEFIT

Watches are perfectly poised to gain from materials like ceramics and carbon composites. Why let performance cars have all the fun?

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TITANIUM

Titanium punches well above its weight with its excellent strength-to-density ratio. Compared to good ol' steel, the metal and its alloys offer equal or greater strength at lower weights, making it an excellent choice as a material – whether in a car or timepiece.



ZENITH PILOT TYPE 20 GMT
Created to celebrate Zenith's 150th anniversary, the Pilot Type 20 GMT features a case of brushed titanium with a blue dial and matching leather strap, and makes up a set of three that also includes a watch each from the Elite and El Primero collections. The timepiece maintains the design elements of the regular Pilot Type 20 GMT, including large Arabic numerals and sword-shaped hands, as well as an oversized onion-shaped crown. Its blue colourway, however, gives it a modern slant that contrasts with the original's blacks and browns. The watch has a limited run of only 50 pieces worldwide. (\$12,700)



HYT H3
The H3 is the culmination of what HYT has developed – so far – in its journey to utilise fluids in timekeeping. The fluid indicator in the top half tells the hour, and undergoes a retrograde motion every six hours with a corresponding rotation of the scale it is read off. The minutes indicator below it, on the other hand, moves at a higher cadence and snaps back to the left at the end of every hour. Underneath the hood of this bi-retrograde display lies a host of technical innovations, from temperature compensators to co-axial gear systems tensioned in opposite directions to reduce play. (\$395,000)

ORIS FORCE RECON GMT
Oris's new partnership with the United States Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance (Force Recon) has spawned the Force Recon GMT watch. Based on the ProDiver and intended for use by Force Recon operators, the timepiece has a 49mm case of DLC-coated titanium that is water-resistant to 1,000m. The Force Recon GMT uses Oris's Rotation Safety System, which locks the bezel in position. To turn the bezel, the wearer has to pull it up first – this prevents accidental manipulations that will throw off the measurement of elapsed time. GMT and date functions round out the watch. (\$5,500)



HYT SPECIAL

MAKING WAVES

Activities abound at HYT, from the launch of different partnerships to the release of new timepieces

The early days of a manufacture are spent looking inwards, with focus on activities such as developing new timepieces and growing a customer base. Once it has achieved critical mass, however, the manufacture gets to look outwards, and collaborate with people and organisations that epitomise its values. HYT embarked on a few partnerships this year, in a clear sign that it has entered its next phase as a manufacture. One would expect a niche brand like HYT to be selective in its choice of partners and indeed, it does not disappoint.

RC44 SAILING CHAMPIONSHIP

HYT's first ever partnership was with the RC44 Sailing Champion, as its official timekeeper. First launched in 2007, the RC44 class sailboat held its inaugural world championship in 2010, and quickly became a staple on the international yacht racing scene. Beyond their shared affinity with water, HYT watches and the RC44 also exhibit cutting-edge designs and superlative performance thanks to the industry veterans behind them. The RC44 was designed by five-time America's Cup winner Russell Coutts, and naval architect Andrej Justin, mirroring the experienced team behind HYT, from CEO Vincent Perriard to Lucien Vouillamoz, the man who developed the fluid module.

ALINGHI

Following its RC44 partnership, HYT upped the ante in competitive sailing by becoming the official watch of Alinghi. The Swiss sailing syndicate competes in multiple events globally such as the Extreme Sailing Series and the Décision 35, and has seen much success, including victories in the above events and two America's Cup wins. It's easy to see how the two entities parallel each other – Alinghi in its quest to master new and unfamiliar yacht classes, and HYT in its search for innovative ways to keep and display time using fluids.

JEAN-ÉRIC VERGNE

HYT's primary element might be water, but its appeal extends well outside of it. Case in point, the appointment of Jean-Éric Vergne as the brand's first ambassador. Hailing from the world of motorsports, Vergne is currently a test and development driver with Scuderia Ferrari in F1, and will be racing for DS Virgin Racing in the 2015-16 Formula E season. The Frenchman has climbed up the ranks in racing, with championships in Formula Renault and the British Formula Three along the way. Given their similar circumstances – each has had several accomplishments and is poised to achieve even more – HYT and Vergne are a natural fit, and look set to provide mutual support for the upcoming endeavours.



HYT CEO Vincent Perriard (second from left) and Dominique Renaud (extreme right) with the RC44's designers



Alinghi on their D35 catamaran



Jean-Éric Vergne and Vincent Perriard



THE H2 AVIATOR

Ever the contrarian, HYT disregards the industry norm of unveiling most of its novelties at BaselWorld. Instead, new timepieces are announced throughout the calendar year when they are ready. The manufacture's latest novelty is the H2 Aviator – HYT's first aviation-themed watch.

For the uninitiated, the H2 is HYT's sophomore collection. The watch displays the hour and minutes via its fluid indicator and central hand respectively, and each offers a different visual spectacle. The former marks the hour via the boundary between two immiscible liquids, the meniscus. Twice a day at six o'clock, this meniscus undergoes a retrograde motion back to the left, before resuming its clockwise movement. Meanwhile, the central hand makes a jump every hour between the 30-minute markers.

HYT has retained all the above features in the H2 Aviator and kept the fluid module's bellows in their signature V-shaped arrangement. The watch has, however, been given a makeover. Legibility is the name of the game here – like the flight

instruments that inspired its design, the H2 Aviator can be read at a glance, unconventional layout notwithstanding. To achieve this, HYT first applied a matte black DLC coating to the case and movement. This background is then overlaid with high contrast elements. The Arabic numeral indexes marking the quarter hours, for instance, have been magnified and rendered in red, with the central hand similarly enlarged and tipped with a red arrow. The hour, on the other hand, is read off the fluorescent yellow liquid in the fluid module.

Another noteworthy aspect of the H2 Aviator is its Kevlar covered strap. Although best known as a choice material in making body armour, Kevlar is actually popular within the aerospace industry as well, in applications such as helicopter rotor blades. Besides its unique texture, which enhances the appearance of the watch, Kevlar's technical slant also matches the H2 Aviator's mechanical complexity.

The H2 Aviator will be available from October 2015, and comes in a limited run of 40 pieces.

Pair it with:
AN OVERSIZED TIMEPIECE



HYT H3 in titanium and platinum,
\$395,000



Panerai Mare Nostrum Titanio
in titanium, \$58,100



Romain Jerome Skylab 48 Speed Metal
in PVD-coated steel, price unavailable



Custos Challenge Chrono II Carbon Honolulu
in carbon, \$26,017



Franck Muller Vanguard Carbon
in carbon, \$19,881



Perrelet Turbine Pilot in steel, \$9,990



Seven Friday M2.2 in rose gold plated
stainless steel, \$2,390



Aviator MIG-35 in steel, \$1,099



Seiko Prospex SUND49 in steel, \$560

Curiously, some of the most avant-garde timepieces of the last decade have few or no complications at all, but are extremely complex watches

