



EUROPE EDITION

All Europe - EEC
Central & Eastern Europe, Russia

N° 307 3 / 2011 June / July



CHF12 / €10 / US\$10

BASEL EXTRAVAGANZA

The search for the perfect watch

Slyde in 18-carat rose gold by HD3



Official Opening Day

HD3 launched its Slyde claiming that the timepiece 'was a revolution in universal time.' So it was with a certain eagerness that I met up with Jorg Hysek who had already presented Slyde in Geneva in January and Pierre Maillard had mentioned it in his report on the week's revelations in *Europa Star* 1/2011.



Jorg Hysek

Slyde is a fascinating concept that brings all styles and mechanical complications to a single case using brilliant and very sophisticated technology that allows the user to surf through various watch applications by sliding one's finger across the tactile screen either vertically or horizontally, much like you would do on an iPhone or the various smartphones.

Basically what this means is that you can have a 'watch computer' on your wrist and change its appearance to suit your whim or the occasion. Additionally, via Internet you can recharge and download customized models.

I like Jorg Hysek. He is an original in the watch world and he has had to overcome many difficulties and disappointments over the last few years that would have destroyed a lesser man. Having re-built his business and then faced yet another crisis when his movement manufacturer went bankrupt, Hysek turned to the avant-garde, the creation of a virtual watch –

Startimer Pilot Regulator by Alpina



'whose only limits are the boundaries of the imagination.'

The illustrations here show the creative concept and the finished timepiece and I sincerely hope that it is successful – there's certainly been great interest in Slyde. However, I can't help feeling that watch aficionados want something mechanical rather than computerized. If the target audience is the younger generation of computer whiz kids, then I'm not sure that they will be prepared to spend the type of money that HD3 is asking for Slyde when they have a similar styled tool that not only gives a visual reading of the time, but also acts as a telephone, a Global Positioning System (GPS) and encyclopaedia. So who's left – overpaid bankers, millionaires, the man that already has everything? I can certainly see it being used at Wostep or other horological schools where it would have obvious educational advantages in training young watchmakers. But what worries me most of all is that by this time next year, someone in China will have come up with a clone that will be priced low enough to attract the kid next door.

Champagne and a sarnie

Lunchtime on the opening day means the annual press conference at the stands of **Frédérique Constant** and **Alpina** with champagne (orange juice for the abstemious)

and canapés during the presentation by Peter Stas, the brands' CEO.

Frédérique Constant is very much involved in various classic car events such as the Peking to Paris Motor Challenge, consequently it came as no real surprise that the brand introduced a Vintage Racing Chronograph (43 mm) in stainless steel with different dial options. Equipped with a Calibre FC-396 movement which is visible through the caseback, it has the Peking to Paris logo engraved on the watch's rotor. A Junior Ladies Collection was also presented with very elegant 26 mm stainless steel watches with guilloché and mother-of-pearl dials, or even one with diamond-set indices.

The new Alpina Startimer Pilot Collection however, was what I personally found the most interesting. Inspired by the original Alpina designs from the 20s and 30s of the last century, the first model in the collection is a basic three-hand date with an automatic Calibre AL-525 movement; then there is a model with an off-centre date hand using an in-house Calibre AL-710 automatic movement; there's an automatic chronograph model with a Calibre AL-860 movement and finally the watch that caught my eye, the Startimer Pilot Regulator (44 mm) with a circular date counter situated at 6 o'clock and the hour indicator between 9 and 11 o'clock. Equipped with an automatic Calibre AL-950 movement with a 42-hour power reserve, this handsome timepiece is destined to a great future – well at least to the 8,888 pieces of the Limited Edition.

Ebel

Breakfast at Ebel, sounds like a movie but in fact it was a press conference, five or six tables, each with an Ebel representative: coffee, croissants and watches. The croissants tasted fine, the chronographs gave me heartburn!

Marc Michel-Amadry, Ebel's former amiable President and Creative Director made the presentation of the new models at my table, two of which made a very strong impression on me, the new Chronograph in the Classic Sport Collection and a sumptuous pendant watch called 'L'.