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# Swiss Fairs Review

## *Upheavals to the Formats*

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The Swiss timepiece exhibitions have all now morphed out of recognition. Brand releases, industry PR events and new promo announcements are coming thick and fast, as discussed in the September *HJ*.

As we also indicated in the September *HJ*, regular monthly updates will be presented and at the same time we will be taking advantage of the opportunity to present new timepieces from both the major and the smaller brands.

The pragmatically named Geneva Watch Days was the only independent Swiss fair in Covid-wrecked 2020. It ran from 26–29 August using luxury Geneva hotels.

Credit goes to the initiative of several major Swiss high-end watch brands which came together to create the independent Geneva Watch Days. These included Breitling, Bulgari, De Bethune, Gerald Genta, Girard-Perregaux, Moser, MB&F, Ulysse Nardin and Urwerk. Finally, on opening day there were 17 brands exhibiting by appointment for their agents, press and clients and held in boutiques and hotels across downtown Geneva.

Now there is debate as to whether this event was held contrary to prevailing Covid health advice and readers may form their own opinions about this.

At the fringes is further debate querying whether we still need watch fairs or even physical retailing? Time alone will provide the definitive answer. It would, however, be a brave decision indeed to eschew the personal contact provided by trade fairs together with the opportunities to meet like-minded people, to enjoy industry collaboration, pricing comparisons and competitive product research. We can only wonder how many cashed-up buyers would be at all happy about sending off large sums for a watch they have not physically handled or seen in the flesh?

Until 2020 we had trade fairs promotionally labelled with names such as ‘Baselworld’ and the pretentious ‘Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie’, but we now have more fluid and less focused events such as Watches & Wonders together with the MCH Group’s proposed HOURUNIVERSE.

According to the MCH Group, its HOURUNIVERSE platform will be run throughout the year and, as with the decades-long pattern of the industry, will present an annual live show. The current plan is this new show will have presentation dates co-ordinated with the Geneva-based Watches and Wonders events in April 2021.

The HOURUNIVERSE website carries the promotional subheading ‘It’s We Time’. Now I wonder, does anybody beta-test this global material? With such a promo tag, we might regard this as the first flicker of pub humour to emerge in this very formal luxury industry? It certainly hugely amused me!

Many will regret that the new HOURUNIVERSE show has been put back into Basel, extinguishing hope of escape from the finely honed board game of visitor-gouging across Basel city. But as the MCH Group owns the Basel exhibition



**Rolex**  
**Oyster Perpetual 41**

Rolex presents the new generation of its Oyster Perpetual watches, bringing a new model to the range: the Oyster Perpetual 41, cal. 3230. Self-winding, hour, minute and seconds hands with stop-seconds for precise time, blue ‘Parachrom’ hairspring and bidirectional self-winding via its ‘Perpetual’ rotor giving a power reserve of 70 hours and rating at -2/+2 sec/day (after casing). Waterproof to 100m. Expect to pay about £4700.





## A. Lange & Söhne (Glashütte) Zeitwerk Minute Repeater

A. Lange & Söhne (Glashütte) minute repeater, cal. L043.5 in white gold with dial in deep blue. A historical first in a mechanical watch, the Zeitwerk Minute Repeater combines a jumping digital display with a decimal minute repeater. As a sequel to its launch in 2015, it now also comes in a 30-watch limited edition with a 44.2 mm white gold case and a deep-blue solid silver dial.



## Miki Eleta Passage of Time

Miki Eleta – AHCI Exclusive Clockmaker has made this 'Passage of Time' clockwork complication. The clock features a retrograde minute display on the right with a blue background and the hour is shown on the left on a rotating, skeletonised dial. The small sun and moon symbols indicate the day and night hours. The days of the week with their planetary symbols – Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn – are indicated on the smallest skeletonised disc on the right above the centre. The time of day can also be read here as the days of the week shift in quarter steps. With a myriad desirable complications.

Height: 70 cm Width: 44 cm Depth: 30 cm Weight: 20 kg  
Power reserve: eight days.







**Bulgari**  
**Octo Finissimo**  
**Tourbillon**  
**Chronograph**  
**Skeleton Automatic**

Bulgari exhibited a record-setting Octo Finissimo watch at the Geneva Watch Days exhibition in August. The new Octo Finissimo Tourbillon Chronograph Skeleton Automatic is said to be the thinnest-ever watch that combines the following: automatic winding with mono-pusher chronograph, tourbillon and ultra-thin skeletonised movement. Just 50 pieces will be made of this sleek piece, each retailing for about £120,000.



**Seiko**  
**Grand Seiko Sport Spring**  
**Drive Chronograph GMT**  
**60th Anniversary**

Grand Seiko Sport Spring Drive Chronograph GMT 60th Anniversary. With 30-minute and 12-hour registers on the right hand side, the second time zone is displayed from the centre and with power reserve indicator and date window. The SBGC238 features the Spring Drive cal. 9R96, and combines the beauty of a mechanical movement, the practicality of automatic winding and the precision of a quartz oscillator. A column-wheel chronograph, 72-hour power reserve, accuracy at  $\pm 0.5$  sec/day and 200 m water-resistance. Expect to pay about £42,000.

complex, then this provides flexibility for synchronisation with the big shift of industry events to Geneva. It may also provide some hope that lessons have been learnt and they will be more reasonable with the costs to exhibitors?

The Hong Kong Watch and Clock Fair is bigger than any of the other annual European watch and clock fairs and is promoted by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC). As we know, Hong Kong is beset by political instabilities adding to its global Covid worries and the annual September (2020) fair has been cancelled.

The HKW&CF has announced it will migrate the fair online, consolidating it into the online HKTDC Autumn Sourcing Week. The online exhibition will be held from 16–27 November 2020, enabling the industry to continue exploring business opportunities.

Meanwhile, the 37th Hong Kong Watch & Clock Design Competition, which aims to discover new design talents for the industry, will proceed as planned and the results will be announced in October.



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