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# Hong Kong Watch & Clock Fair 2023

*A Return to a Real Time Event*



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The 42nd Hong Kong Watch & Clock Fair (HKW&CF) made a much-anticipated return to the physical format, straight onto centre stage of the imposing Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre looking out onto Hong Kong's bustling Victoria Harbour.

The 42nd HKW&CF included the eleventh Salon de TE, organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), Hong Kong Watch Manufacturers Association Ltd and The Federation of Hong Kong Watch Trades & Industries Ltd.

Following the resumption of global flights and travel, the way was again open to visit this comprehensive exhibition of the assembled watch industry makers from around the world. Globally, Covid is receding, China politics is on the back foot, the Russia/Ukraine conflict is contained for now and (with great relief to us all) the global status of the HKW&CF re-emerged strongly and in good shape. In all of the circumstances the HKTDC has rightly maintained its official 'stay cool – business as usual' policies.

The biggest of the watch industry footfall trade fairs has now set aside the boring frailty of online seminars. Adding excitement to this return to physical trade fair reality were the typhoon storms crashing onto Hong Kong for the week of the fair and which closed the modern HK Exhibition Centre for the whole of Friday, disrupting appointments and diary arrangements. It belted rain onto HK at the historically record rate of six inches per hour.

Politics, rain and typhoons notwithstanding we can note that the fair administration is independent and free from vested interest. This provided the widest possible scope for products where, contrarily, there is still a hint of proprietorial influence wafting around the Swiss fairs.

So what were the numbers and stats generated by the 2023 HKW&CF? Well, of course we need to be conscious that after a few years away from public exposure there are inevitable differences. Exhibitor staff changes, products change, agents and buyers have new interests and the distribution/balance of discretionary buying power grows and/or changes hands. Last but not least, the review journalists 'mature' by a few years as well.

Organisers reported that approximately 15,000 buyers from 95 countries/regions came to the HKW&CF and, under new hybrid arrangements, online access actually continued until 16 September, providing additional opportunities for buyers to browse products and conclude business.

HKTDC Deputy Executive Director Sophia Chong said: 'As the world's leading watch and clock fair, we are delighted to see more than 700 exhibitors attended our first watch and clock fair since Hong Kong reopened. Many exhibitors even received orders on the spot... There has been a satisfactory



**PTS Resources**

PTS Resources was established in 1991 and developed various mechanical movements in China. The company now makes custom movement parts, including pinions, wheels, rotors, main-plates and bridges, with competitive pricing and services, including for coloured movements. These calibres have 72hrs power and a vibration frequency of 28,800v/h.

increase in attendance from Mainland China, the Middle East and ASEAN countries, which added to the fair's vibrancy.'

Exhibitors came from seventeen countries and regions. The Swiss Independent Watchmaking Pavilion (SIWP) and Francaelat returned to the fair, while the International Luxury Group (ILG) made its debut. Together they showcased a



## Memorigin

Memorigin was the first Hong Kong brand to specialise in the tourbillon complication, integrating with oriental arts to produce tourbillon watches with prominent cultural features. In each watch: 'Memorigin seeks to ignite inspiration and courage to seize opportunities, conquer challenges and realise dreams, creating infinite miracles ahead.'



## Kingwear

From Kingwear, this smartwatch combines multiple functions. The Kingwear factory is located in Shenzhen, China, with 12 production lines, more than 500 staff and the capacity to produce 3.6 million smart watches annually.



## Pierre Lannier

Pierre Lannier has been a major designer and manufacturer in the global watch industry since 1977. Founded 45 years ago, the brand has always put French watchmaking expertise and French chic at the heart of its ambitions.



## Memorigin

### 'Love Collection - Friends'

From the Memorigin 'Love Collection - Friends', this diamond encrusted flying tourbillon features lovebirds and a squirrel on the floral embossed skeleton dials. It has a 72-hour power reserve, manual wind mechanism, a diamond embossed stainless steel case and alligator strap. Expect to pay around £18,000.



## Kieninger 'Kupola'

A Kieninger 'Kupola' solid brass mantel clock. Seven bevelled and partly curved crystal glasses form a dome above the bell chime. It has a silver-plated calendar dial with moon phase, second, date, day of the week and month indication, easy adjustment of all functions, and a 24 carat gilded open grid allows a view of the bells. Limited/numbered edition.



## Witschi 'Witschi Air'

Witschi presented its new Witschi Air, the new 'smart', wireless version of the ChronoMaster table microphone, with full built-in smart measurement electronics. It can recognise twelve test positions and facilitates the comprehensive measurement and analysis of rate deviation, beat error and amplitude. With its rechargeable battery it is wireless/Bluetooth, or can be operated via a USB port straight into a laptop.

variety of Swiss and international watch brands. ILG Chief Operating Officer Chavadi M.S. said Salon de TE was an excellent platform for identifying business partners and OEM suppliers. 'We have achieved very satisfactory results at the exhibition that far exceeded our expectations. We have identified Asia-Pacific retailers and distributors as potential business partners. The Hong Kong Watch & Clock Fair and Salon de TE are truly international. We will return next year.'

For readers with a statistical interest, the HKTDC commissioned a market study interviewing around 900 exhibitors and buyers for their views on topics such as market outlook and product trends. The survey found nearly 60% of respondents expect overall sales to grow in the next two years. Most respondents consider South Korea, Australia and the Pacific Islands, North America and Japan to offer the best growth prospects among traditional markets, while India, the Middle East, Mainland China and ASEAN countries are the most promising among emerging markets.

In terms of product trends, 26% of respondents expected smart watches to continue as the most popular watch category, followed by mechanical watches (22%), automatic watches (16%), and quartz analogue watches (14%). They consider fashion watches (34%), smart watches (32%), and leisure type watches (23%) to have the highest growth potential in future.

The HKW&CF was divided into categories to help guide buyers and visitors to their particular interests. These were:

- Complete Watches
- Clocks
- Machinery & Equipment
- OEM Smart Watches
- Packaging & Display
- Parts, Components & Accessories
- Trade Services

The watch types in turn were categorised as:

- Chic & Trendy, featuring trendsetters and fashion-driven brands.
- Craft Treasure, showcasing mechanical watches and flawless craftsmanship.
- Renaissance Moment, for classic and elegant watch brands.
- Wearable Tech, for a series of smart watches with the latest technology.

Helping with this, the HKTDC's Click2Match service is a brand new Scan2Match function providing a useful tool for the collector/exhibitor. Buyers used the newly launched Scan2Match function to scan the exhibitor QR codes and bookmark their favourite exhibitors or browse product information.

The debut 'Guo Chao' theme also attracted much attention. A number of heavyweight Chinese watchmakers showcased timepieces that blend Chinese cultural elements with exquisite craftsmanship.

In the halls of the fair can be found a full range of quality and price-point watch categories of mechanicals, complications, quartz and smart watches together with tools, parts, crystals, testing equipment, machinery, display stands, packing and presentation materials and all associated services. It is a one-stop sourcing platform for international buyers, with prices ranging from £1 to well into the tens of thousands.

In terms of aesthetics and quality, Chinese watchmakers are strongly closing the gap with their Swiss counterparts. Concomitantly, the Swiss are recognising the broader opportunities of proximity to China – and the HKW&CF is an ideal crossroads of these cultures. Thus a large part of the special attraction of the Hong Kong fair is, of course, its access to and from China and it is clearly the doorstep into China for European makers just as it is the doorstep to the West for China makers.

Within the HK/China sphere is the example of PTS Resources Ltd. PTS was established in 1991 and developed various mechanical movements in China. The company now makes custom movement parts such as pinions, wheels, rotors, main-plates and bridges, with competitive pricing and services.

Of the tools exhibitors, there were representatives of both the European and China makers and some have wide ranges of hand tools and parts. Bergeon bench tools and Witschi electronics were amongst nineteen exhibitors of parts, tools, testing, packaging and presentation materials.

The Watch & Clock Design Competition is a stimulating creative initiative in local watch and clock design. Under the theme of 'Game Code' for the student group and 'The Beauty of Perspective' for the open group, winners were announced at the fair, and winning pieces were on display during the fair at Hall 1 Concourse.



## Kieninger 'Domino' Skeleton Clock

Kieninger exhibited its 'Domino' modern skeleton clock with finely finished ebony two-door case with faceted glasses, integrated key compartment, passing strike movement with seconds display and one-piece special pendulum, together with a silver-plated oval dial.

The annual Hong Kong Watch & Clock Fair will open its doors again in September 2024 (TBC). The HKW&CF is an industry/trade fair but the last day is open to all-comers. Industry registration is easy so come and enjoy this biggest of the horological fairs in the wonderfully vibrant city of Hong Kong, the doorstep into China. Plan a holiday and visit this colourful city for yourself.



## Tam Kwok Tung 'Scroll Bar'

'Scroll Bar' by Tam Kwok Tung, sponsored by Wincy Horological Ltd, winner in the Open Group of the 40th HK Watch & Clock Design Competition.