

Maitres du Temps is a new watch company bringing together talented master watchmakers in an entirely new horological concept. The result, an exclusive and unparalleled inaugural timepiece aptly named Chapter One. *MillionaireAsia's* Joann Chia chats with founder Steven Holtzman and master watchmaker Roger Dubuis.

Maitres du Temps: Dawn Of A New Chapter

The world's most exclusive atelier and watchmaking's finest artisans are working together to concoct alchemy unprecedented in the history of horology. Founded by Steven Holtzman, a man with nearly 3 decades of experience in the watch industry, the idea behind Maitres du Temps is to bring together groups of the most talented master watchmakers to collaborate and develop exclusive timepieces - the most innovative projects imaginable.

For Maitres du Temps' inaugural project, Holtzman teams up with master watchmakers Christophe Claret, Roger Dubuis and Peter Speake-Marin, each bringing their unique blend of watchmaking to the table. Chapter One hence became the intoxicating fusion of Claret's undisputed mastery of high-end complications, Dubuis' rich lifetime of experience in haute horlogerie, and Speake-Marin's unique ability to bridge the very best of both traditional and modern watchmaking.

"The goal is to have a mix of personalities, so we could have



different influences from different people. I like the idea of putting a French man with an Englishman and a Swiss man, and then having me somehow in the group to blend all the different flavours," says Holtzman.

The Beginning: Chapter One

Evidently, the first piece from Maitres du Temps is, befitting the great men behind it, a world-first combination of complications with tourbillon, mono-pusher chronograph, retrograde date, retrograde GMT, and two idiosyncratic rolling bars at 6 o'clock and 12 o'clock, indicating the day of the week and phase of the moon, respectively. And carved at the back of each watch is a philosophy which Maitres du Temps hopes to infuse into its projects: "Masters and their craft - a lifelong pursuit of excellence."

A tour of the dial reveals central coaxial hours, minutes, and chronograph 60-second counter, tourbillon and day of the week roller at 6 o'clock; retrograde GMT at 9 o'clock; 60-minute chronograph



counter and precision moon phase roller at 12 o'clock; and retrograde date at 3 o'clock.

By industry standards, Chapter One is a very big, heavy and complicated watch. The challenges, Holtzman shares, lies in its exclusivity, complications and price points. However, the ease of both reading and adjusting Chapter One's many indications disguises the fact that this is a world-first combination of complications crafted from 558 components. "We knew it was going to be a big watch because there are so many things going on and a lot of complications involved. There were many things we had to do just to make it fit comfortably on the wrist and not look like a thick giant strap of a leather jacket. We had to make a classic. It was certainly not an easy road to get started on."

The other consideration, for this first watch, was to establish a DNA for the brand and to have something which people can eventually identify with. As such, consistent themes had to be put in place, for instance, the concept of the rolling bars and the overall appearance as a traditional, classic timepiece. Each development, Holtzman assures, will have a sense of continuity and consistency while at the same time having enough of a change to make each timepiece more interesting, different, and unique.

The Watchmakers: Roger Dubuis

And how do three master watchmakers, each with his own opinion and concepts, work together without stepping on each other's toes? "It is always difficult to have two watchmakers working together, so you can imagine three. It becomes a very high risk operation. What's interesting though is that each watchmaker has his own vision of the project, his own techniques and solutions, and this makes it interesting for three of us to hear and learn about the ideas and find a common solution that everyone could accept," says renowned 70-year-old master

watchmaker Roger Dubuis. "But because of my age, it also gave me the opportunity to cut the corners of the other two so that it was possible to collaborate!" he quips.

in particular, being one of the most important markets because of the increasing education and appreciation for watchmaking. "The goal is to sell it to someone



From left: Mr. Peter Speake-Martin, Mr. Roger Dubuis, Mr. Christophe Claret & Mr. Steven Holtzman

Through *Maîtres du Temps*, Dubuis shared his precious knowledge to create unique complications, entirely modern in inspiration yet expressing the most traditional values in craftsmanship. His rich depth of experiences in watchmaking coupled with a passion for the technicalities of horology makes his contributions to the project significant in influencing the finished shape, components and traditional spirit of the watch.

The Future: Chapters Two And Beyond

With five new projects due to be released in the next three years, Holtzman seems to have little trouble keeping time. He sees the Asian market, Singapore

who truly appreciates collaboration, uniqueness, and the concept of independent watchmakers. Because of the traditional and classic styling, this timepiece will appeal to a collector who appreciates complication, sophistication and something different."

It is not by mere chance that the bold and curvaceous three-dimensionality of Chapter One is more reminiscent of a streamlined supercar than a wristwatch; one can envision that this timepiece runs as smoothly as the contours of its beautiful body indicate. This timepiece shimmers in glorious complexity, a celebration of the men behind it. One can only wait in anticipation for the new chapters to unfold. ■