



# Jewellery Time

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## Basel Fair, a Watchmaker's View

by Dean A. Lindsay

The Basel Fair as most will know is huge. On the two occasions that I have attended, I have never been to the jewellery section. I have only been to the watch section and the tools and machinery sections. The tools and machinery are exhibited in a pavilion which houses three levels.

The only exhibitors of interest to watchmakers in this section are Bergeon, Witschi, Greiner-Vibrograf and Beco Technic. There are one or two others, but the majority of displays related to manufacturing of both watches and jewellery. You may order from the fair at a discount. Every conceivable tool and machine required by a watchmaker is on display and each exhibitor has staff to demonstrate, provide prices and delivery dates.

The watch hall has multi levels. Most of the brands are displayed but not all. I skip brands to look at what is of interest to me. International Watch Company, A. Lange and Sohne, Jaeger-LeCoultre and others that produce exclusive, skeleton and complicated pieces. Of special interest to me was the Academy Horology Creators Independent display, a group of individuals who produce hand-made complications.

Andreas Strehler



I spoke with a watchmaker Andreas Strehler who described two pieces he was exhibiting. He has constructed a time piece called Zwei (German for two). The watch displays minutes and hours and the

date and month. That seems nothing extraordinary, except Strehler uses just two hands and one dial for all four indications. The push button on the upper left edge of the watch switches between the display of minutes and hours and date and month. When the button is pushed the hands move from their normal position to the current date and month, taking the shortest path. The watch has a small indicator in the back with a sun to indicate night and day.

The other piece exhibited was a desk companion which indicates time by means of a removable pocket watch. The other indicators of the companion are two dials to indicate a perpetual calendar. The perpetual calendar has no memory as this is housed in the watch. The hands in the companion are driven by a separate mainspring. You can remove the watch at night

Andreas Strehler's perpetual calendar



and on weekends and on returning to the office you place the watch back in the companion. The watch then resets the perpetual calendar. The hands rotate to the correct day, date and month.

The mechanism of both watch and desk companion remain a secret to the maker. We only see the elegant finished article.

Zwei - simplicity from intricate mechanics.

