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SUPERNOVA / STEPAN SARPANEVA

PAPILLON / ANDREAS STREHLER

THROUGH THE DIAL

Independent watchmaking is as diverse as the day is long. Two independent masters of horology, with varied cultural backgrounds, illustrate this with watches that are as different as day and night—though this might not be readily visible from their outward appearances.

BY ELIZABETH DOERR

STEPAN SARPANEVA

Stepan Sarpaneva comes from a country where day and night provide a natural landscape with contrasting appearances as the year wears on. Finland, jet black in the winter and stunningly sunny in the summer, is home to this talented watchmaker with a penchant for horological character study.

Upon completing studies at the prestigious Watchmaking School of Finland and the Watchmaking School of Switzerland, Sarpaneva spent a decade honing his skills in some of Switzerland's most prestigious factories, specializing in complicated timepieces. Moving back to his beloved Helsinki in 2003, he courageously set out to become an independent watchmaker—individually crafting each of the 55 to 60 or so timepieces that leave his little workshop every year.

Sarpaneva's collection revolves around two starry-eyed base models: **Korona** and **Supernova**. While the stellar Korona model provides a home to the powerful character of Sarpaneva's lurking moon with its one-of-a-kind facial expression, Supernova does justice to its name with a case design that seems to burst from the wrist. Handmade in a modified hardened stainless steel called Stavax ESR, this 40mm monoblock case is startlingly complex and unusually dynamic—attributes that also perfectly describe Sarpaneva and his work.

Supernova's skeletonized dial and hands (both handmade) display an unusual moon phase indication in addition to the time and date. The watch is reliably powered by a modified ETA base with a "Turbiini" rotor that Sarpaneva fashioned to spin like a turbine visible through the sapphire crystal case back. The Supernova models are crafted in limited editions of ten watches each and retail for \$16,600. The Korona series retails from \$10,200.

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ANDREAS STREHLER

Most *aficionados* of watchmaking will associate **Andreas Strehler** with timepieces he has developed for other companies, and indeed the lion's share of Strehler's company focuses on such developments—**Chronoswiss's** Chronoscope, **Maurice Lacroix's** Le Chronographe and **H. Moser's** Perpetual 1 among them. Strehler's own brand of horology, thus far relatively limited, is rarely seen on the wrist, making the watches he signs with his own name true rarities.

A pragmatic Swiss watchmaker, one of Strehler's most talked-about inventions to date is a patented "switching indication system." This complication allows a watch to show one event at a time; if the watch is showing the time, the press of a button on the case shifts the hands to show the date instead. Another press of the button brings the hands back to the current time. The differential gear that Strehler utilized to create the system is one he also used in **Harry Winston's** Opus 7.

Strehler's latest work of art, produced in 20 pieces per year, is called **Papillon**—so named because of the visible, skeletonized bridges on the dial that almost take the form of a butterfly's wings. A triangular point at the top of the upper bridge points to the current hour on a revolving disk, while a similar point directly across the way at the bottom of the dial points to the current minute.

The oversized, skeletonized gear wheels only add to the diaphanous illusion, making the nonexistent dial a superb work of art. These gear wheels are unique—not only because of their size—but because one contains 192 and the other 175 gear teeth, allowing the movement to work without a third transmission wheel. This, combined with the twin spring barrel design of the manually-wound movement, provides the watch with up to 80 hours of power reserve. The Papillon comes in a 42mm white gold case and retails for about \$131,800.

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