

savour the moment

TIMEcraft

**SPECIAL REPORT
OF THE WATCH FAIRS
2008**



TAKE CHARGE.*

*CHRONOFIGHTER OVERSIZE COMMANDER
TITANIUM AND CARBON FIBER
HAND-CRAFTED IN SWITZERLAND
www.graham-london.com Ref. 20VATCO.B01A.K10B

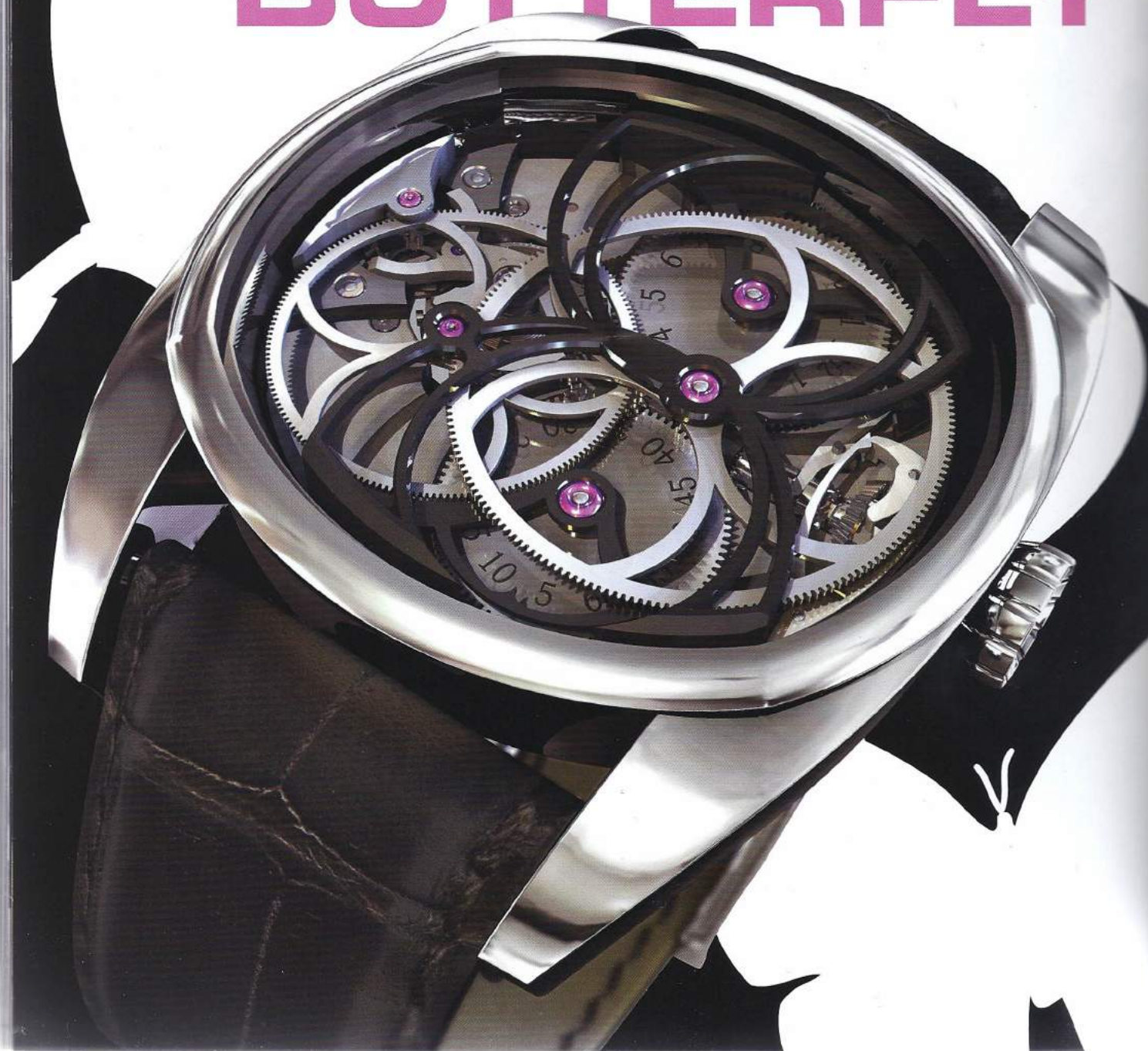


GRAHAM
LONDON

TIMEcraft's session with Andreas Strehler discussing his new watch, the Papillon, quickly reveals that this butterfly stings like a bee.

BY DAVID KHOO

FLOAT LIKE A **BUTTERFLY**





On the name-card, Andreas' designation is a simple one: *uhrmacher* is all it says, or 'watch-maker'. Unfortunately, the problem today is the fact that this term has been bandied about far too often by all and sundry to have any significant meaning.

However, a conversation with the unassuming Mr. Strehler quickly demonstrates that this couldn't be further from the truth — at least as far as he's concerned. Most casual observers associate the term 'watch-maker' with grumpy old 'wrinklies', so upon making his first acquaintance, the first thing one often needs to do is to reconcile the image of the youthful Andreas with his (pre)-occupation!

His deceptively simple creations often conceal intricate complications that throw up an inner beauty and depth upon closer scrutiny. He presented his first creation: the perpetual desk calendar, which was a clever combination of desk calendar and pocket watch. A year later, the 'Zwei' appeared, which could switch displays like a digital timepiece, yet was wholly mechanical in nature.

His face really comes alight when he discusses his life's work and he isn't afraid to combine modern production processes and elements with traditional complications. No novice to the world of horology, he has worked for Renaud et Fapi and collaborated on projects with the Greubel Forsey duo (Stephen Forsey and Robert Greubel) and Giulio Papi, as well as developed movements for watch-manufacturers like Chronoswiss, H. Moser & Cie and Harry Winston.

However, it wasn't long before this butterfly slowly emerged

from its chrysalis. Encompassing more than a dozen employees, his watch engineering company, Uhrteil AG, was conceived to produce truly exceptional pieces, both for private individuals and well-known brands. This created a stable basis for him to work on his personal project. He understands that it is not enough to have 'one-off' pieces, because they are "impossible to sell", he wryly admits.

He unstraps the Papillon from his wrist for us to scrutinise and we're surprised at how thin and light this pre-production piece is. If you think it bears more than a passing resemblance to Harry Winston's Opus 7, you're positively right, since it shares a similar DNA and philosophy to the magnificent Opus, with Andreas' company responsible for the entire production of the Opus 7.

The Papillon boasts the same open-frame movement as the Opus 7 that proves it is possible to be complicated, yet simple, as rather than a stifling dial, the gorgeous movement is exposed in all its glory, with the technical aspects of the timepiece rising to the forefront.

From both the front and the back, one is really able to appreciate

VISITS WITH...

"The watch is intended to give the impression of a continuous flow of time. In fact, the wheels turn so slowly (once in 150 seconds) that any movement is imperceptible."

~ ANDREAS

There's no mistaking the intricate inter-linking concentric wheels that form the wings of a stylised butterfly, Andreas' own logo

every element of the timepiece, although he admits that some of the finishing and decoration has been kept deliberately nondescript for fear that anything too complicated would become too 'messy' in execution.

However, there's no mistaking the intricate inter-linking concentric wheels that form the wings of a stylised butterfly, Andreas' own logo. In creating the watch, he found that the curved elements always led him back to the butterfly, which is an appropriate symbol of metamorphosis.

The two discs for the hours and minutes also serve double duties as the mainspring barrel although a quick glance makes it difficult to see how this is accomplished, since there's no apparent connection between the various components.

The main problem that had to be addressed was the fact that spring barrels normally turn too slowly for the display of minutes and too fast for the hours. In the Papillon, the spring barrels are not firmly tied to the sequence of the train, so the time display can be adjusted by means of the hand setting.

Andreas says: "I wanted to have the movement itself as the watch's main feature." In fact, it is the individual structural elements of the Papillon that endow it with its strong aesthetics. Using two giant gear wheels with 192 and 175 teeth respectively also means that there is no need for a third wheel, although this isn't entirely for aesthetics either since the double spring barrel arrangement and absence of one gear wheel results in energy savings that help extend the watch's life.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS **ANDREAS STREHLER 'PAPILLON'**

TYPE

Mechanical, manual winding

DISPLAY

Mysterious hours and minutes displayed by the gears themselves

POWER RESERVE

72 hours, double mainspring

SIZE

Tonneau shape: 33.20 x 33.00mm, thickness 6.9mm

FREQUENCY

2.5Hz / 18,000 A/h

JEWELS

19

MATERIAL

Rhodium-plated white gold 88g

DIMENSIONS

Diameter 42mm, overall length 52mm, thickness 10mm, interhorn 23.5mm

DIAL

Two toothed sapphire wheels, for hours and minutes

CRYSTAL

Anti-reflective sapphire

STRAP

Black alligator with tang buckle in rhodium-plated white gold

WATER RESISTANCE

30 metres