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As  
Switzerland's  
show season gears up,  
we look back to November  
2012 and the annual  
extended horological  
weekend known as  
SalonQP.



# THE LONDON LOOK

Elizabeth Doerr

Throughout the galleries of London's Saatchi Gallery, "better than ever," was a common refrain over the course of the much-anticipated, three-day event known globally as SalonQP. With more than 50 brands, there was certainly something for everyone as demonstrated by the newsfeeds on Twitter and Facebook, which were abuzz with images of big brand offerings from Girard-Perregaux, Piaget, Zenith and Bulgari, a host of cutting-edge independents like MB&F and Stepan Sarpaneva, as well as hometown favorites.

## WATCH THEIR HANDS

The ground floor of the Saatchi was awash with major brands exhibiting not only high-quality timepieces, but also demonstrating unique crafts to the well-informed visitors. Jaeger-LeCoultre ran a large-scale

Masterclass – a place for laymen to try their hands at an aspect or two of watchmaking. Hermès brought Delia Ionescu from its Swiss leather workshop to demonstrate the art of crafting the brand's unique straps. Vacheron Constantin had a rose engine along for the ride, not only for the *manufacture's* professional craftsman to demonstrate his skill, but also for the visitor to SalonQP to try out for him or herself. And, last but hardly least, Jaquet Droz brought an enameller from the La Chaux-de-Fonds factory to demonstrate the rare and exquisite craft practiced there.

## EXTRA SPECIAL

On opening night, it was hard to know where to turn. Corum ambassador Ben Ainslie – a five-time, world record-holding Olympian – was on hand to chat with visitors about the recent Olympic summer and how he uses his watch during racing.

Over at the TAG Heuer booth, visitors had the pleasure of speaking with resident rocket scientist and the man behind the Mikrogirder, Guy Sémon. Bremont's

- 1 The entrance to Chelsea's Saatchi Gallery during the three days of SalonQP.
- 2 The walls of the Gallery's ground floor announce 2012's participants.
- 3 Omega's Pierre Gueguin samples the culinary delights of the fair.
- 4 Opening night crowds gather in front of Gallery 1's Jaquet Droz stand.
- 5 *Made in Chelsea's* Jamie Laing and Oliver Proudlock lap up the horological delights on show.
- 6 Olympic sailing champion Ben Ainslie CBE with Corum's Helen Kirkup. Ainslie was presented with a Corum Admiral's Cup Legend 42 Tourbillon Micro-Rotor on the first night of SalonQP.
- 7 SalonQP founder James Gurney and Jaeger-LeCoultre CEO Jérôme Lambert, unveil the new AMVOX7.
- 8 Bremont's Nick English with friend, TV adventurer, travel writer and actor Charley Boorman.
- 9 The party atmosphere added to the general buzz of the show.
- 10 James Gurney discusses the MikrotourbillonS with TAG Heuer's Vice President of Science and Engineering Guy Sémon.
- 11 Visitors take in the delights of Harry Winston – which included both Opus 12 and the fascinating Histoire de Tourbillon.
- 12 Bell & Ross's Michel Bouchard mans the stand.



# THE LONDON LOOK

stand not only boasted co-founder Nick English demonstrating a pocket watch that had belonged to Admiral Horatio Nelson (as well as Bremont's own Victory limited edition), but one could also have run into TV star and adventurer Charley Boorman there.

A special treat for the international audience was Jaeger-LeCoultre's unveiling of the Amvox7, which took place on opening night in the presence of Aston Martin CEO Dr. Ulrich Bez and the Swiss watchmaker's Global Technical Marketing Director Stéphane Belmont.

## INDEPENDENTS

This year's SalonQP marked more independent watchmakers exhibiting than ever before. MB&F's Maximilian Büsser explained that this was certainly due to the close relationship that the independents share with one another. "Word of mouth regarding the knowledgeable, enthusiastic visitors and excellent location means news has traveled quickly," he confirmed.

Andreas Strehler displayed his unique Butterfly, while Badollet showed off the Ivresse, which was the talk of Baselworld 2012. Christophe Claret's Soprano competed with the melodious chimes of the Grönefeld brothers' own minute repeater. Finnish watchmaker Kari Voutilainen's masterpieces were also in great company alongside the superb finishing of Laurent Ferrier's traditionally-styled movements, while Ressence's minimalistic brand of watchmaking continued to enchant the British public as much as other markets. And HD3's Slyde, now under the wing of former Zenith CEO Thierry Nataf, showed its stuff next to the Italian design artistry of Giuliano Mazzuoli.

## ALL ENGLISH

To say that English watchmaking may be experiencing a renaissance is certainly to put it mildly. This edition of the show saw more English and English-inspired watchmaking than ever before – and one must pose the question as to whether SalonQP has perhaps had a hand in the resurgence by its very existence?

Robert Loomes impressed not only this journalist but also other visitors to the show with his 'all English' wristwatches. Outfitted with 'new old stock' Smiths movements, Loomes has

found suppliers within Britain to furnish him with other components such as case and crystal. Naturally, crowd-pleaser Speake-Marin, unveiled a new model at the show, which has become one of the English-Swiss brand's perennial favourites: the highly acclaimed and temptingly priced Spirit II.

Two brands debuted at the show: Meridian and Thomas Mercer, the latter with a clock based on the original Mercer marine chronometer that is a stunning, modern *objet d'art*.

Germany was also well represented at SalonQP with Munich staple Chronoswiss, one-handed master MeisterSinger, and UK favorite Nomos as well as the BMW co-designed and co-branded timepieces shown by Ball Watch.

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

The accompanying programme of lectures and talks was punctuated by discussions exploring the elegant, and at times intricate, world of women's watches given by Maria Doulton of *The Jewellery Editor*. Additionally, SalonQP played host to the only UK showing of the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie's *Mastery of Time* exhibition, which is based on the book of the same name by historian Dominique Fléchon and contains significant artifacts and timepieces tracing the ingenuity of humankind in marking time.

The lectures by English icons Roger Smith and Peter Roberts – who introduced a lifelong dream with his 50-piece limited edition watch bearing his own name (see page 58) – enchanted the public. However, it was perhaps Giles Ellis of Schofield Watch Company who elicited the most laughs with his entertaining talk on design.

## THE APPRENTICE

And the icing on the cake? Two days after Sotheby's auction of Dr. George Daniels' watch collection, SalonQP hosted a preview screening of *The Watchmaker's Apprentice*, a film about the late independent watchmaker and his only apprentice, Roger Smith. The hour-long documentary by a filmmaker located on the Isle of Man was not the final cut, but was a special edition for a truly special event.

I would have to agree with the chatter of the galleries. – yes, I would definitely say that SalonQP 2012 was better than ever.



13 Bulgari chose SalonQP as the venue for one of the Octo's first UK appearances. 14 Responding to current market demands, Frédérique Constant delivered timepieces for both men and women.

15 SalonQP favourite Piaget continues to attract the crowds.

16 Vacheron Constantin delighted visitors with demonstrations of some of the crafts used in its Metier d'Art collection.

17 The skilled hands of Hermès' leather worker.

18 The lucky few had a chance to take one of Jaeger-LeCoultre's Masterclasses.

19 The Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie's brilliant *Mastery of Time* exhibition made its only UK stop at SalonQP.

20 The recently relaunched English brand Thomas Mercer introduced an exceptional chronometer for the yachtsman of the 21st century.

21 QP magazine's Simon de Burton.

22 Roger Smith's lecture about the late, great Dr George Daniels CBE was well-received in the Harrods Seminar room.

23 Julien Coudray 1518's watchmaker demonstrated his craft to an extremely interested audience.

Further information: [www.salonqp.com](http://www.salonqp.com)  
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