

Armin Strom: a new workshop for a new start

Armin Strom, a fine traditional watch brand, is pursuing its investments and development despite the current crisis, and has just inaugurated its new premises in Biel.



Three models testifying to the creativity of Armin Strom, through a blend of tradition and modernity.

Before being a brand and making a new start, Armin Strom was a name: that of an artisan now aged over 70 and known the world over for his entirely hand-skeletonised watches. In order to perpetuate his expertise, he has decided to associate with various regional entrepreneurs and has now lent his name to a small company that aims to become a fully integrated "Manufacture" in due course. The first stage in this development process is the relocation to new and entirely rearranged premises.

This new production facility accommodates 16 highly qualified members of staff who now have a set of ultra-modern high-precision machines that will enable them to make in-house movements. Important investments

have been made with the support of the main shareholder, Willy Michel. On the basement level, alongside a few conventional machines such as a lathe, a drill/milling-cutter and a sharpener, four CNC production machines have also been installed. The main entrance is located on the first floor, which also accommodates the conference room, the watchmaking and electroplating workshops, as well as the decoration workshop where hand engraving and polishing operations are performed, along with Côtes de Genève, snailing and sunburst motifs. Finally, the second and top floor houses the management along with the sales and communication departments and the remaining meeting rooms. The company has come a long way

since the creation of Armin Strom SA in 2006, while ensuring respect for the principles defended by the famous artisan. "The Armin Strom heritage and tradition remain, of course, even though the goal is no longer to focus exclusively on skeleton watches. He is now surrounded by several young people who are in training and will necessarily contribute to future development", says the CEO Serge Michel. Meanwhile, Armin Strom is delighted with this new way of operating. "For most of my life, I've worked along in my own little corner. Today my name is becoming a brand and I'm training young people who are as passionately dedicated to watchmaking as I am. It's a huge change and a great honour for me to see my work being thus perpetuated", he points out.

From now on, and even though production is still restricted to limited series, one can legitimately refer to Armin Strom collections, of which there are currently three. The first, named Blue Chip, represents the range-entry level. This series of 400 watches measuring 46.5 mm in diameter and available in steel or rose gold in polished or gem-set versions, was created on a Valgranges base movement.

The second, the Skeleton collection, is the one that most faithfully perpetuates tradition. It comes in both men's and ladies' versions and is illustrated opposite by a model distinguished by an elegant octagonal case.

And finally, the Armin Strom company most strongly expresses the transition towards modernity through its third collection, named the Régulateurs collection (built on a Unitas base movement). The four versions, respectively called Earth, Water, Air and Fire, provide a fine opportunity to play on materials and subtle colour shades. This collection, which is clearly identifiable and yet somewhat in a league of its own, also features a nod to modern marketing techniques since it bears the trendy "Armin by Armin Strom" logo.

Meanwhile, the next stage in the corporate development is already in the pipeline, since the first entirely in-house made calibre is due to be unveiled at the end of 2009.