



MICHAEL

Bespoke



BRUGGLER

Watchmaker

It's time ...

INTERVIEW

MICHAEL BRÜGGLER



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR COMPANY?

'Behind the fascinating concept of BRÜGGLER lies a Swiss start-up with fresh values, unconventional ideas and a real passion for horology. We think that just by offering a client a huge choice of different bracelets and dial colours does not really give a fair choice in order for one to fulfil its individual watch piece dream. We wanted to put our clients' dreams for unique and individual watches in the centre of our business to visualise each individual's dream. In order to make it happen we programmed award-winning, state of the art customising software. Everyone can use our software tool for free on the web under www.bruggler.com and thousands of customers and watchmakers did already. You will understand why once you try – it is unbelievably easy to play with many different colours and materials and it is highly likely that you will get addicted to designs and chronographs even

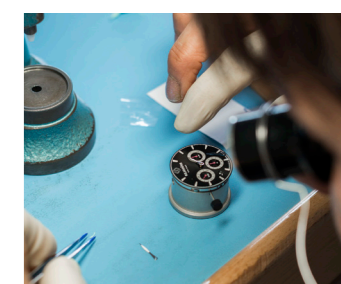
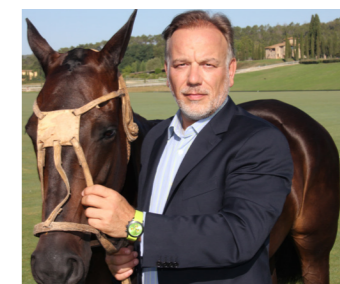
more. The realistic photo design gives our retailers the possibility to show their clients how their watch will look in its final stage. Our company brings the fine art of Swiss horology to the fingertips of every watch aficionado, collector or design addict. We are the company that realises individual and unique watch dreams.'

HOW DID YOUR PASSION FOR WATCHES OCCUR?

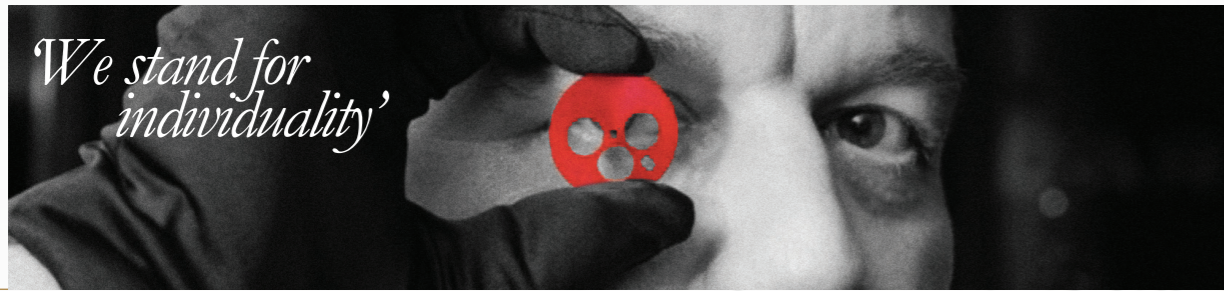
'It's not only a passion about watches that I while had growing up. It's a passion for individuality and staying true to myself. We believe that the pursuit of individuality completes the owner's personality, and we are certain that beautiful, unique things reflect those values. Actually, the business idea came from my wife. She wanted to buy a bespoke watch for me and realised that it is not as easy as buying a tailor made suit or a pair of tailor made polo boots, for instance.'

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A START-UP TO TURN INTO A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS?

'I can imagine that it is different for any start-up. We have not broken even yet but if we do, within 3-5 years we think we would be in the normal time range. We believe, however, that it is not so important how long it takes, but what is important is that we remain true to our vision while carefully listening to our clients wishes to adjust our business model over time. In order to be successful over a long time in the business of bespoke luxury, we are convinced that it is important to produce at the highest possible quality standards and improve them every day. For this reason we produce 100% of your watches in Switzerland - a rarity these days.'



• The INTERVIEW •



We stand for individuality

THERE ARE MANY 'SWISS MADE' BRANDS - DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT PRODUCING IN SWITZERLAND IS A RARITY? 'A minority of brands that are labelled with said manufacture are producing 100% in Switzerland. After all, the Swiss made label does not require much production in Switzerland. That's also why we put our label **'SWISS MADE TO MEASURE'** on the bottom of each dial. The **'MADE TO MEASURE'** part is much more important for us than the 'Swiss Made' requirement that we exceed by 40%. It is controversial as making the effort of producing a tailor made unique watch and then compromising on the quality because of high cost.'

WHERE COULD YOUR BRAND BE FOUND AND WHERE A CUSTOMER COULD GET SUPPORT IF NEEDED?

'You can purchase BRÜGGLER in different shops in Switzerland. We just started building up our global distribution network. A particular retail partner that we are especially proud of is certainly **Harrods** in London as they remain at the forefront of luxury retail. Our retail partners are introduced to the specifics of our product and assist in the process of designing a cool chronograph that just fits perfectly its owner. They take the wrist size and make sure the client has all of the needed information. In every city, we have a retail partner and we work on an exclusive basis with our retailer. We sell online only if the client lives far away from the closest retail point or just cannot reach a particular store. It is fair to say that we keep an **old-fashioned** work ethics - the way of true luxury living. We have clients inviting us to meet them at their homes, their office, yachts or whenever they are based. They like to discuss their vision with the designer and owner of the business and to have a person who is able to make a decision right on the spot.'

WHAT WERE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES YOU FACED WHEN CONCEIVING AND REALISING THE BRAND? HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM? 'One of the greatest challenges was to identify the best watch part producers in the **Swiss Jura** and then to convince them that they should work for us. Beside all this needed to be made in French! These companies are highly specialised and work for many luxury labels and deliver parts for watches that cost far

over **CHF 100,000**. Our initial is to produce something far more complex than a luxury mass product and we are still aiming for a price below CHF 10,000 - it seemed impossible for most of them. We quickly realised that to assure having low fix costs will not be sufficient. Working with the best means to pay a lot more - so we had to invent new production methods together with them in order to make it work.'

HOW MANY CUSTOMISED MODELS DO YOU OWN FOR YOURSELF?

'I have three - but as soon as we have more money, I will greatly extend this number. I receive new designs every day and I often feel like a child in a toy shop that just wants them all! Bespoke luxury items such as our chronographs are for people that appreciate the finer things in life. For most of us, they are much too expensive, although some fortunate clients buy **3-5 chronographs** for them and their wives. A top favourite is the gift card that a wife could hand in to her creative husband. My friends tried to design the **"ugliest"** chronograph with our software and asked if we would produce it. I told them that we stand for individuality and there is no such thing as an **ugly design**. Some, of course, are more eye-pleasing than others - but the important thing is to please the owner.'

We also design limited editions. Hundreds of combinations pass through our eyes each week and by now we have a good eye for spotting amazing designs. Many clients choose to go for those limited editions or use them as an inspiration when creating their own model.'

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A SINGLE WATCH TO BE MADE AND WHAT ARE YOUR PRODUCTION LIMITS- FROM ORDER PLACEMENT TO A FINISHED PRODUCT?

'In the beginning it was three weeks, today we talk about six weeks for the ones that stay within the frame of our customising software. However, we order requests by governments and big companies who wish to have their own logo on the watch. Also we work on a project where we have precious stones on the case and the bracelets. We just offered 3,500 chronographs for an anniversary - given our limited production capacity such projects take around 9 months and then again it depends on the options that have been chosen.'



WHICH ONE DO YOU PREFER - AN AUTOMATIC OR QUARTZ?

'I like both for different reasons - and own both. I like the automatic because of its incredible craftsmanship behind it. I like the quartz because it is ten time more precise and costs about CHF 1,300 - less than an automatic version. Often women choose the quartz as you can put them in the drawer for 4 month and will still show the correct time. What has been saved on the movement, however, is often spend on precious stones. We are not in the business of high complex mechanical complications. We are in the business of highly individual choices and personal advice in regards to materials and colours. To put our clients' wishes in the centre of our business and produce a unique piece of luxury for each of them is the complexity that we have to overcome every day. But we are more than rewarded by the overwhelming delight of our customers when we deliver their unique watches. We really love what we do and the moment of delivery is always the culmination of our efforts.'

YOUR WIFE AND YOU RUN A BUSINESS AROUND A PRODUCT THAT REMINDS PEOPLE ABOUT THE VALUE OF TIME. HOW OFTEN DO YOU FIND YOURSELF RUNNING OUT OF TIME?

'I was always out of time in the past. Today with the help of my wife and having a 5-weekold child, I believe I have become a little wiser. I enjoy much more each of the precious moments we have. For me, our watch has a soul and is a lucky charm - I'm sure it will be the same for all our customers. If you have a too detailed plan for your life or business and neverending appetite, you just end up all over the place. Time is luxury - we should not spoil it while measuring our hart beat and every single step or burned calorie. Being a bit of a roué myself, it wouldn't be true to say that I have achieved my personal objectives in regard to self discipline and self-restraints already, but I understand that moving towards this objectives is helping to ensure long term success and happiness.'

WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS OUTLOOK FOR 2016?

'We plan to expand our distribution network to a dozen retail partners around the globe. Besides, we just want to introduce our brand to as many people as possible for what it truly is - a unique high quality luxury product.'

DO YOU THINK THE COMPETITION BETWEEN WATCHMAKERS IS ACUTE IN RECENT YEARS?

'Frankly, I don't know. Being new on the stage, I think we are just missing a down trade. I think there is quite a stiff competition out there. Many offer to satisfy the very same needs of the client. Our clients already have many different luxury watches and start developing a wish for something more special - their unique piece of luxury. Our brand is known only to view watch aficionados and individualists that don't want to be labelled and seek social recognition by wearing a well-known brand. Often they are self-assured entrepreneurs and individuals looking for a discrete and very personal luxury items that are very rare. In fact, they see our start-up brand as well-kept secret that they share only with their close friends.'

ALTHOUGH CUSTOMISATION HAS A HUGE POTENTIAL AND INVOLVES THE CUSTOMERS IN THE PROCESS, DOES THAT OPTION COMPROMISES ON THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT?

'It is just the opposite - think of tailor made suits or shoes. The quality is clearly above the mass products. As the production is limited, the quality becomes even more important. If you spend so much time and effort into a tailor made and unique product it just does not make sense to use low quality materials.'

