



IN FOCUS

BLACK BELT WATCH | YVAN ARPA'S LATEST TWIST ON EXCLUSIVITY MUST BE EARNED
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The height of exclusivity is a watch that one must qualify to buy. The TAG Heuer SLR debuted as a timepiece available only to owners of the eponymous Mercedes supercar. Jaeger-LeCoultre's Amvox2 DBS Transponder watch unlocks its owner's Aston Martin DBS, and Aston Martin ownership is a prerequisite. Now, in a slightly different twist on exclusivity, watch industry veteran and black belt martial artist Yvan Arpa, most recently at Romaine Jerome and responsible for the Titanic DNA watch, has created a timepiece with a different kind of barrier to ownership. His customers must own something that money can't buy, something that must be earned through sweat and discipline: a black belt in the martial arts.



Above and at right: Yvan Arpa [at left above] with business partner and martial arts opponent Claudio Alessi

"This is the only watch you can't simply buy," explains Arpa over lunch at an Afghan restaurant in Bellevue, Switzerland. "My partner in this project, martial arts instructor Claudio Alessi, and I wanted to make a watch for people who share the values of the martial arts. If you have the watch and you see someone else with this watch on, you know it's someone with whom you share certain values; you immediately have something in common."

"When you have a black belt, you suffer to get it," he continues. "When you spend \$2,729 for this watch, you

have to suffer a little bit as well to buy it. You can be proud of the watch once it's on your wrist; it's like a trophy."

Black on black, the 44-mm Swiss-made automatic timepiece features a black satin-finished and PVD-coated steel case. Its textured dial replicates the fabric of a kimono. The Black Belt name appears here along with an engraved representation of a black belt, while the hands resemble shinai, traditional bamboo swords used in martial arts practice and competition, particularly in kendo. The sandblasted bezel features polished Kanji characters. And

the engraved specification "For Black Belts Only" appears on the caseback.

The watch is available through established martial arts channels—schools, tournaments, trade fairs—and also directly from the maker. Every purchaser is required to provide written proof that he or she is indeed qualified to own the watch or be turned away.

The timepiece is an attractive, high-quality Swiss-made watch, bold, understated and imbued with symbolic meaning. If you're not yet a black belt, start training!

blackbeltwatch.com



SEVEN VIRTUES

Yvan Arpa's Black Belt watch reflects and honors the seven virtues, the samurai code of conduct, associated with the Bushido warrior:

Gi [rectitude]

Yu [courage]

Jin [benevolence]

Rei [respect]

Makoto [honesty]

Meiyo [honor]

Chugi [loyalty]

DOING GOOD

A percentage of Black Belt watch sales is donated to **No Difference [a program of the Little Dreams Foundation]**, which aims to grant young people with a handicap the chance to realize their passion for martial arts.

WJ readers who are black belts are invited to order the Black Belt watch using promotional code A10BB1 to receive free shipping [a \$200 value].