

(style)

A Wrinkle in Time

THE LATEST TREND IN MEN'S WATCHES IS ALL ABOUT MANIPULATING THE HOURS.
BY KEITH W. STRANDBERG

SWITZERLAND'S WATCHMAKERS have been expertly marking time for centuries. Lately, some have switched their focus to changing how we view time itself, and Franck Muller is one of these visionaries. A watchmaking legend, Muller has created some of the world's most unusual—and mischievous—timepieces. Crazy Hours, for example, mixes up the numbers on the dial. At the top of each hour, the hour hand jumps to the correct number, which is in an incorrect position. This playful timepiece takes some getting used to, but it makes you pay attention to the passing of every moment. The Irregular Retrograde Hour, also from Muller, is in a similar vein: It shows the day's working hours in regular indices, then during lunchtime, from noon to two, expands the display, appearing to slow time so you can enjoy a leisurely repast.

Another player is master watchmaker Pierre Kunz, whose ladies collection Cupidon watch has a heart on the dial with triple retrograde second hands (each hand marks 20 seconds). Under each is a French qualifier for love: *beaucoup* (lots), *passionnement* (with passion) and *à la folie* (like crazy).

The Vintage 1945 Jackpot Tourbillon, pictured below, is a very cool and—at around \$625,000—very expensive watch from Girard Perregaux. Not only does it have a tourbillon (an 18th century mechanism thought to counteract gravity and improve a watch's accuracy), it is also a mini one-armed bandit, with slot-machine reels that turn with a pull of the solid gold handle on the side.

As intricate as these timepieces are, the watchword is not complexity, but whimsy. “We are trying to put joy into our watches,” Muller says. “Everyone needs more joy in their lives.” Life is short after all. ▀

