



Not just a pretty face

Fall for Nomos's new Neomatik collection, combining traditional Teutonic engineering with something a little more cutting-edge



Words: Eleanor Pryor

Sitting in the canteen of Nomos Glashütte's Chronometrie building, CEO Uwe Ahrendt explains how his company was one of the first watchmakers in the German town to provide such facilities for its staff. An early lunch is the order of the day – the workers are larks, because mornings are best for optimal concentration levels – although in Glashütte, deep in Saxony, there seem to be few distractions. It was here, though, in this sleepy valley, that the German watch industry was born. Today, the influence of that industry is more evident than ever – quaint houses and cobbled streets are flanked by huge factories belonging to titans such as Glashütte Original and A. Lange & Sohne, owned by conglomerates the Swatch Group and Richemont respectively, as well as a host of smaller brands.

Nomos is one of a cohort of independent watchmakers, and its prestige is undeniable. Its modern, minimalist designs, influenced by Bauhaus, set it apart from its more traditional Swiss peers, but, as a manufacturer constructing and assembling 95 per cent of its movements in-house, it has the chops to rival theirs. Little surprise, then, that although founded only a quarter of a century ago, it has garnered a cult following among collectors. It has made in-roads into new markets, including the UK, and since 2011 has seen its workforce more than double.

The brand has always placed a premium on its watchmaking skills. It is a member of the Deutscher

Werkbund, which was founded in 1907 to promote craftsmanship and high-tech methods that create products which are exceptional *and* affordable. Nomos timepieces start at £1,200 – a snip for a premium, in-house-created mechanical watch.

Earlier this year, the brand revealed the results of its latest major R & D push, encapsulating three years of work and a €15m investment: the impressive DUW 3001. It set out to create a very thin, automatic movement that would incorporate the Nomos swing system and be accurate to chronometer standard while being produced in a way that maintains its value. At a svelte 3.2mm, the result certainly fits the bill.



From top The Minimatik Champagne gains its neon second hand; the Ludwig Neomatik Champagne

But it didn't come without challenges. 'You could say that, instead of building towers, we played hide-and-seek,' explains Theodor Prenzel, deputy head of R & D at Nomos. 'The construction space between the base and three-quarter plates is only 1mm high. And it's in this space that almost all the parts – which, in other calibres are built up in modules – have to be accommodated.'

The Tangente and the Minimatik were the first models to feature the DUW 3001, but the big splash for the calibre is the new 10-piece Neomatik collection. To house the slender new movement, Nomos has updated its roster of designs, which also include the Metro, Ludwig and Orion, and introduced an element not often seen outside the realm of sporty watches: neon. In typical Nomos style, it is subtle, but eye-catching enough to elicit a second glance. One iteration has cyan highlights on a silver-plated white dial with a black strap, a second adds a flash of orange to a champagne-coloured dial set on a lighter-coloured strap – perhaps the brand's most feminine look to date.

This First Edition line ranges in price from £2,200 for a Tangente Neomatik to £2,480 for a Metro Neomatik Champagne. Although it is not limited in number, it will be available only until spring 2016. Should you find time is against you when it comes to acquiring one, however, fear not – Nomos will be revealing a successor at Baselworld. Watch this space. ●

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