

HARRY WINSTON

OPUS 6

A
HARRY WINSTON
PROJECT
DEVELOPED WITH
GREUBEL FORSEY

Harry Winston Rare Timepieces:
a 6th Opus for (highly) informed connoisseurs.

The project

Opus? Another one!?

This despite the fact that the Harry Winston team had announced a pause in the Opus production last year... However, the Harry Winston team lead by newly appointed Managing Director Hamdi Chatti was not ready to let such a rich and innovation-stimulating platform for Haute Horlogerie simply slip away.

An encounter with visionary minds

Hamdi Chatti suggested meeting Robert Greubel and Stephen Forsey in order to present the project, with no strings tied. The discussion soon developed into a passionate brainstorming session. A quarter of an hour was enough to convince the two “inventor-watchmakers” based in La Chaux-de-Fonds to plunge into the fantastic adventure. And two days later, Robert Greubel called Chatti to share the ideas they had already developed meanwhile...

Harry Winston and Greubel Forsey: a virtuoso association of exceptional talents...

Opus 6 thus took shape within record time, just six months between the first contacts and the presentation at Baselworld thanks to the close collaboration with Robert Greubel and Stephen Forsey. The French and English “mechanical architects” have been associates for almost ten years and are endowed with an obvious flair for inventive mechanical engineering, admirably displayed in their ground breaking Double Tourbillon 30°.

Born in France in 1960 and extremely gifted in the field of micromechanical engineering, Robert Greubel started repairing watches in his father’s workshop. After earning an initial watchmaking degree, he continued his studies, discovered the field of complicated horology and graduated from the Watchmaker’s School in Dreux (France). He then joined IWC as a prototype maker and took part in the development of the Grand Complication.

Initially hired as a prototype maker at Renaud & Papi, today an affiliate company of Audemars Piguet, he soon moved on to become joint managing director and a partner in the firm. Then, in 1992, he met the brilliant English watchmaker Stephen Forsey. Born in 1967 in St. Albans, the capital of England in Roman times and located some thirty kilometres north of London, where tens of thousands of marine chronometers were produced, Forsey initially worked for Asprey's in restoring antique watches. But it was in Switzerland, with Robert Greubel, that he came to excel in grandes sonneries, minute repeater, tourbillons and perpetual calendars.

The watch

Yet another tourbillon?

Yes indeed – but, as one has come to expect from an Opus, this is not just any tourbillon. Truly novel and totally apart, it makes its own distinctive contribution to the quest for precision. This double tourbillon reigns supreme, freed visually as well as from the going trains thanks to three time display counters for the hours, minutes and seconds. In a word, the ultimate tourbillon system. While the company in La Chaux-de-Fonds knuckled down to the task of integrating its movement for the project, the Harry Winston teams devoted their energies to designing an entirely original architecture for this highly technical movement.

A 30-degree double tourbillon? Strange...

In keeping with the Harry Winston spirit dedicated to “the exceptional and nothing else”, the emotion 30° could not be merely just another tourbillon. This mechanism proves that there is still plenty of uncharted territory to be explored at the very peak of Haute Horlogerie with its combination of two important technical feats. The first lies in the very shape of the system inclined at a 30-degree angle, hence its name “Emotion 30°”. Why 30 degrees? So as to enable the balance to oscillate constantly in all planes and to achieve a more perfect precision of timing.

... but exceptionally pure.

The second feat, apart from the hours, minutes and small seconds displayed on three circular counters, lies in the fact that the movement is the sole and inescapable focus of attention. That is simply because the gear trains are invisible, or rather because they have been concealed. Harry Winston and Greubel Forsey have thus succeeded in integrating this fantastic Double Tourbillon 30° mechanism within the Opus spirit, thus creating a masterful watch: the bridge is screwed to the mainplate of the movement with a balance wheel moving freely above the mainplate liberating the double tourbillon of any superstructure and thus providing an unobstructed and stunningly pure view of the mechanism, finally free of the gear trains that generally obscure visual access. The result is a genuine marvel of precision, featuring an impressive theatre that is partly due to its inclined angle, which may be admired in its full three-dimensional splendour.

Opus 6: maturity.

With its satellite hour display system, Opus V was rightly acclaimed as a watch demonstrating spectacular creativity and technical mastery. While the sober design of Opus 6 is anything but extravagant, it is nonetheless imbued with an unusually complex horological spirit entirely in tune with the two fundamental demands of the Opus concept: uniting two of the greatest talents in contemporary watchmaking, and surprising observers by the virtuosity of its movement.

Matching a complicated mechanism with sophisticated architecture

The idea being to place the movement in the centre and to build everything else around it, the challenge lay in marrying the case to the movement. Harry Winston responded by choosing a case similar to its *Ocean* collection and featuring an interior design that begins with the double tourbillon 30° and structures the case and movement on two levels while integrating the time displays. Thus, while the tourbillon system is mounted on the mainplate of the movement, the small seconds counter appears at 11 o'clock on a second level, while the third level at 2 o'clock displays the hours and minutes on two time circular counters by two co-axial discs.

The powerful symbolism of the number "6"...

This mechanism is a technical and aesthetic marvel. Many will find themselves lost for words when contemplating the purity and the ingenuity of this "terraced" construction. One need only look at the watch face on to see the figure 6 take shape, appearing by a trick of the eye on the bridge and hour and minutes sector. Why "6"? Firstly, because this is the 6th edition of Opus; secondly, it signals the year of its launch 2006; and finally because it stands for the extremely limited number of these watches that will be produced. This also perfectly suits such an innately exclusive model. And as is if that were not enough, the case designers have added another playful touch. This time, admire the watch from a sideways angle, and you will see the figure "6" transform into an ampersand (you remember, the & sign just above the figure on a classic computer keyboard!) linking the names of the two partners in this project: Harry Winston and Greubel Forsey, engraved around the edge of the dial.

Exceptional finishing for an incredible watch

Seasoned connoisseurs will recognise the superlative quality of the finishing details of Opus 6, such as the graining of the bridge, or the satin-brushed finish of the counter covers, making a splendid contrast with the midnight blue mainplate background and beautifully matching the white gold bezel. Inspired by the same spirit, the hour, minute and seconds indicators are finished in red. An attentive observer will note that the pillars of the double tourbillon bridge are an architectural accomplishment in themselves, featuring uprights shaped like the signature Harry Winston arches and which are reflected in the crown guard at 3 o'clock.

The Opus platform

A short history that speaks volumes...

The Opus platform is essentially about uniting two personalities in writing a chapter in horological history; it is a duet that is different each time, but always a bravura performance; it is the association of passionately dedicated artisans seeking to build a work that is bigger than both of them.

In 2001, Opus 1, a resonance chronometer by François-Paul Journe, made headlines in the watchmaking world. This was partly because it was the first time that two companies jointly undertook an Haute Horlogerie project, and also because it was an unprecedented technical feat – especially considering the fact that it took just 8 months to create this limited series of 18 models.

A Tourbillon with perpetual calendar on the back created by Antoine Preziuso, Opus Two was a logical extension of the concept. It revealed a family likeness transcending an albeit very different result: the Opus concept was thus conclusively launched and Harry Winston continued proving that there are still so much to be invented.

In 2003, Harry Winston and Vianney Halter took the concept to peaks of achievement as yet unscaled by Haute Horlogerie: representing an entirely new watch, Opus 3 encompassed no less than three world firsts (relating to its movement, shape and function).

While it seemed more traditional (particularly because of its case inspired by the Harry Winston *Premier* collection), Opus 4 was nonetheless a truly exceptional watch created in conjunction with Christophe Claret. This totally reversible model featured a “technical” side starring a tourbillon and minute repeater with cathedral chime, and a “romantic” side with large moon phase and dates indicated around the dial rim.

In association with Felix Baumgartner, Opus V once again caused a sensation in 2005 with a stunningly original timepiece characterised by its “satellite” hour display: 3 small cubes, each carrying 4 numerals, arranged like satellites on a three-dimensional rotating system, show the time in turn while spinning on 2 axes.

One can safely wager that Opus 6 will also create a sensation...

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THE ÉMOTION 30° MOVEMENT

Opus 6 celebrates a revolution in a revolution

Logical reasoning of the period had opted for the vertical plane because mathematics and the waistcoat pocket apparently offered no other solution. The “enlightened” minds of the 18th century could not possibly have imagined that watches would one day be worn on the wrist, and that much later a balance and its spring would be cradled in an intricate aerial ballet performed by rotating cages.

Nonetheless, at the dawn of the third millennium, two inventor-watchmakers – Frenchman Robert Greubel and Englishman Stephen Forsey – have devised the “revolution in a revolution”, by placing a Tourbillon inside another Tourbillon, in such a way that the complex device constantly cancels out variations in rate due to gravity, while doing so in all the customary positions a wristwatch may adopt on the wearer’s wrist.

For **Opus 6**, Harry Winston and Greubel Forsey have enriched the **Emotion 30°** movement with a mechanical numerical display system featuring three circular counters indicating the hours, minute and seconds. This unusual construction provides immediate and complete visual access to the precious mechanism which appears to emerge from the mists of a dream, detached from any material constraints.

The name **Emotion 30°** evokes the technical dimension of **Opus 6**, but also and above all the power of the stage thus set for a choreography truly unique in the world: that of the two rotating cages. The 30° angle between the Tourbillons ensures optimal chronometric performance within an ideal watch thickness. Likewise, the 4-minute rotation speed of the larger cage guarantees the balance optimal mobility by avoiding prolonged exposure to gravity in the least favourable positions of the watch. An inclined gear composed of a wheel and a pinion with conical-profiled teeth specifically designed for the **Emotion 30°**, demonstrates excellent transmission efficiency in driving the 1-minute cage.

Emotion 30° draws its driving force from the two fast-rotating series-coupled barrels. The power reserve is equivalent to at least three days or 72 hours.

This creative encounter between the century-old tradition of the House of Harry Winston, and the in-depth horological experience of Greubel Forsey, could not be more appropriate: inventiveness and purism, two fundamental values shared by both partners, are the chief characteristics of this Opus 6.

POWERFUL EMOTIONS

Opus 6 stages an aerial ballet performed by rotating cages...

Opus 6 is a stunning horological choreography: nothing, absolutely nothing gets in the way of the smooth, refined performance of its rotating cages, undisturbed by passing hands or superimposed gear trains. Only a midnight blue platform backdrop gently draws the gaze towards the incredible ballet of moving parts orchestrated by light and harmony.

No opening in the dial, indeed no dial at all: the Architecture of the **Opus 6** confers the leading role on the new case designed by Harry Winston and Greubel Forsey. In complete harmony with the movement, the case body serves directly as the base for the displays protected by open-worked covers.

Apart from the clearly visible third wheel which transmits the required energy of the movement in exchange for exceptional precision, the mechanism of the two Tourbillons moves freely at the speed of a one-quarter turn per minute for the large outer cage and one turn every 60 seconds for the inner inclined cage, ensuring an almost ideal position for the balance in virtually all positions of the **Opus 6** when worn on the wrist. For the 6th edition of the Opus, inventor-watchmakers Robert Greubel and Stephen Forsey wanted to create a movement entirely dedicated to the complication representing the quintessential expression of the venerable Art of Horology.

Another remarkably subtle feature of the **Opus 6** Architecture lies in its stepped arrangement of the three time displays, with the seconds indication on the left and the hour and minutes by two co-axial discs to the right.

One of the great accomplishments of **Opus 6** is the immediate aura of pristine clarity that it radiates, admirably embodying the ability to translate complexity into beauty. No superfluous decoration diminishes the power of this Work of art, graced on the case front by the no.6 index engraving that serves as a tangible link between two signatures that have decided to unite their philosophies in this superlative expression of their respective skills.