

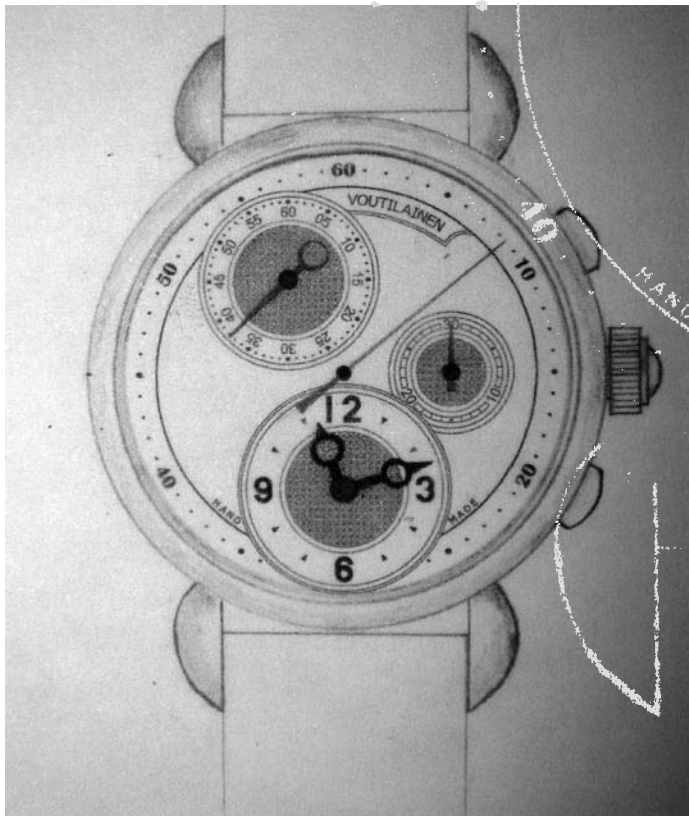
THE WATCHMAKER
EXTRAORDINAIRE PROVES
THAT SMALL INDEPENDENT
WATCHMAKERS CAN MAKE
BIG WAVES BY THEODORE DIEHL

KARI VOUTILAINEN'S CHRONOGRAPH WITH CARBON TIME OSCILLATOR

After years of work behind the scenes, Kari Voutilainen will present a new, handmade chronograph of his own design at Basel 2006. Kari's movement for the chronograph is inspired by many of the antique and classic pieces that he has had the chance to restore. "Antique watches are like little horological laboratories," he explains. "In them, you can see exactly what happens to a movement after more than a hundred years have

passed. I took inspiration from the finest examples in order to design a chronograph movement that I am sure will be able to stand the test of time."

Being produced in a limited edition of 10 pieces in 18-karat white gold, this classically built chronograph will be the first watches made with the new Carbondtime® oscillator. As yet unreleased in the market, this new, patented balance spring and balance wheel, which has been under intense and secret development for the past five years by a British consortium, utilizes carbon and ceramic materials. Besides being completely antimagnetic under all conditions, this advanced development gives remarkable chronometric results without succumbing to irregularities induced by thermal changes—the bane of all hairsprings. Today the manufacturing of watchcases is a highly automated process with handwork mostly limited to polishing during the final production stages. That, of course, won't do for Kari. "I was very lucky to have met Gideon Levingston in France and was amazed to discover that he was able to produce watch cases for me entirely from hand, starting from simple sheets and wires of gold. It takes one whole month just to make the case. It's an 18th century artform and almost never used for watches today," he said.





Voutilainen's watchcases are handmade by Gideon Levingston in France

The prototype will be shown at Basel, with production starting shortly thereafter. Voutilainen explains: "I am only able to produce about 10 watches per year. The exclusiveness of my watches is limited by what I can do with just my two hands." With two of the watches already sold, and Kari's and Gideon's existing clients being offered first prospect to order, the chance of seeing or owning one is likely destined to become as rare as a fleeting glimpse of a unicorn. ★