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# Spiders and Space Pirates: The Wonderfully Weird Watches of MB&F



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COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS

The outré Swiss brand catalogs its first 15 years of reinventing time.

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MB&F, that Swiss watchmaker known for creating the most outré mechanical modern watches today, is baring all. The brand founded in 2005 and named for the initials of its founder, Maximilian Büsser (and Friends), has released a *catalogue raisonné* that chronicles its first 15 years and all its known works. Such a comprehensive listing is common in the art world but rarer for timepieces.

Then again, MB&F is known for doing things that anyone would consider rare. The double-barreled body of its Thunderbolt is unmistakable among wristwatch intelligentsia; its owl-shaped JwlyrMachine, created with the House of Boucheron, requires the most confident of wearers to withstand its singular whimsy (and considerable weight).



The 312-page book documents every single reference the house created from 2005 to 2020, including prototypes and pieces never officially acknowledged until now. More important for serious collectors, it lists the exact quantity produced of the 160 references, along with a full color photograph of each. A 30-page introduction by Suzanne Wong and William Massena recaps the birth of the brand and chronicles its initial years.

Like the watches, only a limited quantity of *MB&F: The First Fifteen Years* will be published. Just 500 are to be sold to the public for \$170, with the remaining 1,500 offered to friends of the brand in a special protective box made of the same foam used to package MB&F timepieces.

Deliveries are scheduled for this summer. While we all wait, here are eight of the MB&F pieces we love most.





The L'Epée 1839 x MB&F ORB clock unveils itself like a minimalist beetle. Source: MB&F

## **L'Epée 1839 x MB&F ORB**

One of MB&F's "co-creations," the Orb it built with L'Epée 1839 is an ingenious manual-winding clock comprising four wing-like covers (called *elytra* in science books) that open up and swivel like a transformer to display the clock in different positions. Available in white or black, the clock is powered by a L'Epée 1839 hour-striking movement with an eight-day power reserve, and has the ability to chime on the hour like a church bell. Pricing starts at \$33,282.



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The MB&F LM2 with a blue dial; further options include purple, green, and black. Source: MB&F

## LM2

Created from 2013 to 2019, the LM2 (Legacy Machine No. 2) is one of the most iconic—and conservative-looking—timepieces made by MB&F. It was inspired by three legendary watchmakers known for experimenting with dual regulators: Abraham-Louis Breguet (1747-1823), Ferdinand Berthoud (1727-1807), and Antide Janvier (1751-1835). Built on an alligator strap with a pin or folding buckle, the LM2 series offers hours and minutes, a 45-hour manual power reserve, and a planetary differential with two flying planetary wheels. It comes in a 44mm case and a variety of color options for trim, dial, and component details such as white gold, red gold, and platinum.



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The MB&F MM3 comes in chrome (shown here), black, and white. Source: MB&F

### **MusicMachine 3**

The 13-pound MM3, with its lattice-like vertical wings, is based on the TIE Fighter aircraft from the *Star Wars* movies. Its main body is made from aluminum with lacquer finish; its distinctive twin cylinders play 35-second bits of songs from such films as *Star Wars*, *Mission: Impossible*, James Bond, *The Godfather*, *The Persuaders!*, and *Merry Christmas*, *Mr. Lawrence*. The clock was developed and crafted for MB&F design by Reuge, a premier producer of high-end music boxes, and released in a limited edition of 99, including 33 white, 33 black, and 33 chrome.





A close-up of HM6 "Space Pirate." Source: MB&F

## HM6 'Space Pirate'

The sixth horological machine known to insiders as "Space Pirate" debuted in 2014 as a limited 50-piece "Very Special Thing." Made from a titanium alloy and aluminum components, the lightweight watch is inspired by Japanese animation cartoons from the 1970s, French TV, and biomorphism, which integrates shapes from nature into functional devices, according to the book. It has 72 hours of power reserve operating at 4Hz with two spherical turbines, vertically rotating domes, and an automatic movement. Pricing at the time started at \$230,000.



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L'Épée 1839 x MB&F Arachnophobia comes in gold or black brass. *Source: MB&F*

## **L'Épée 1839 x MB&F Arachnophobia**

Another co-collaboration engineered and manufactured by L'Épée 1839, this spider clock was inspired by “Maman,” the giant spider sculpture created by French artist Louise Bourgeois. It comes with a black dome for a body and white numerals that show hours and minutes. The head of the spider holds the regulator with its oscillating balance wheel, while the other end of the arachnid holds the mainspring barrel that powers the movement. Its eight legs join the body by ball-and-socket joints and can be rotated so that the spider can stand tall or lay totally flat. The power reserve is eight days.



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HM4 Thunderbolt is large and inspired by jet engine turbines. *Source: MB&F*

## **HM4 Thunderbolt**

When it debuted in 2010—true to its name—the HM4 Thunderbolt sent shockwaves through the watch world. Made as an ode to the A10 airplane, it is characterized by two large, jet engine-lookalike turbines, with a very large (54mm-wide) titanium case and more than 300 parts in the manually wound movement. The Thunderbolt tells the time via hours and minutes on one turbine and has a power reserve indicator on the other to show how much of the 72 hours remains. Just 20 HM4 watches were made in 2010; ensuing years brought about 30 pieces annually. Pricing started at an estimated \$158,000.



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LM1 x Silberstein may look more conventional than other MB&F creations, but the exquisite details are unique. *Source: MB&F*

## **LM1 x Silberstein**

Part of MB&F's "Performance Art" series, the LM1 x Silberstein was made in partnership with Alain Silberstein, the French interior designer and horologist. An elite watchmaker, Silberstein was first to create a watch with a sapphire crystal case. LM1 x Silberstein combines playful colors and shapes in the outer shell of what looks like a traditional wristwatch. It uses the three primary colors on concave sub-dials shown in red and blue hands and yellow index markers. Those colors repeat in the three shapes of the power reserve indicator: blue cone, red cube, and yellow sphere.



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