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Heading: A Journey Through Time VIII: Asia's Watch and Jewellery Showcase



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A Journey Through Time VIII: Asia's Watch and Jewellery Showcase

BY NORMAN TAN
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A melting pot of fashion, jewels and haute horlogerie, the annual showcase held in Malaysia's Starhill Gallery continues its ascent, bringing together international and independent brands for one of Asia's most important watch and jewellery events.



"We all need air, but we also need beauty," says Russian jeweller Viktor Moiseikin. "Without beauty there is no reason to live."

I'm seated in the 'Adorn Atelier', which, in essence, is a pop-up lecture space in Kuala Lumpur's prestigious Starhill Gallery shopping mall, freshly erected to host free symposiums as part of Malaysia's watch and jewellery showcase. A Journey Through Time VIII. Moiseikin, one of the event's exhibitors, is discussing his namesake jewellery brand; ardently gesturing to a motley crew of buyers, editors and visitors alike seated conference-style in front of him.

"Designing jewellery is like cooking for me," he continues. "It's about adding different spices and ingredients to create a lasting impression. To stir emotions. Just like how you eat with your eyes, you savour jewellery even just by watching."

Returning for its eighth year, A Journey Through Time is the brainchild of YTL Corporation Berhad — a Malaysian company headed up by Dato' Dr Francis Yeoh and his son Joseph Yeoh (vice-president of YTL Land & Development Berhad, YTL Hotels and Properties) — which also owns Starhill Gallery, the venue for the event since its inception in 2007. And, in many ways, to follow Moiseikin's metaphor, the showcase is a heady concoction of various ingredients and spices.

Heralded by Joseph Yeoh as "the most eclectic showcase to date", A Journey Through Time VIII ran over eight days from 21 to 28 November 2014 and brought together private collections, first-in-market editions and special pieces from more than 125 luxury brands. Internationally renowned houses such as *Bedat & Co.*, *Breguet*, *Dior*, *Hermès*, *Hublot*, *Omega* and *Ulysse Nardin* were among the watch exhibitors, while independent brands such as *Maîtres du Temps* and *Cecil Purnell* unveiled exclusive pre-Baselworld 2015 timepieces; namely, the *Chapter One Guilloché Translucents* and the *V-16 GMT Double Tourbillon*, respectively.



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SLIDESHOW: "This showcase has gained a powerful reputation as an excellent prelude to Baselworld," says Joseph Yeoh, vice-president of YTL Land & Development Berhad, YTL Hotels and Properties.



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Add to the mix a generous serving of premier jewellery brands such as Damiani (which exhibited several award-winning pieces, including the Vulcania masterpiece necklace in white gold); Spanish brand Carrera y Carrera; and Lilla Rio, which made its Malaysian debut with rare Japanese Akoya pearls. Gübelin, the Swiss jeweller and one of the most respected gem-testing laboratories in the world, was also present and provided a seminar on red gems as a teaser to its upcoming workshop on coloured gems to be held in Kuala Lumpur on 14 and 15 April 2015 (the first time its highly sought-after classes will be made available in South-east Asia).

Spanning two floors and 30,000 square feet of exhibition space within Starhill Gallery, the renowned principals, skilled craftsmen and expert speakers (watch restorer Eric Ong’s talk on appreciating and appraising timepieces was a veritable hit with attendees) were each a distinct ingredient to the melting pot that was A Journey Through Time VIII. However, the flavours that lingered on the palette after the awards for the most impressive pieces were handed out on the final evening (as determined by a panel of judges, including Dr Bernard Cheong, the only Asian member who has presided over both the Grand Prix d’Horlogerie and the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie), were undoubtedly the nightly gala dinners.

Each hosted by a one of the major exhibitors, the black-tie dinners were a confluence of fashion, jewels, haute horlogerie and rousing live performances. From the colour and spirit of Bollywood night hosted by local jewellery brand CERES (attended by Bollywood stars, including Karishma Kapoor and Neha Dhupia), to the elegance of Jaeger-LeCoultre’s dinner (the global brand unveiling 12 exclusive pieces from its Hybris Artistica collection before heading to Singapore; a coup for locals who often play second fiddle to the Lion City) topped off with a soulful performance by Laura Wright (one of the biggest-selling classical artists of the decade), the gala nights pulled out all the stops.

“Ultimately, our objective is to solidify this showcase as a key event in the Malaysian calendar,” said Joseph Yeoh. “To not only drive tourist arrivals and increase tourism spending, but also enhance the position of Malaysia as a destination of choice for luxury shopping and dining experiences.” And as long as Yeoh and his team continue to curate a menu that centres on the celebration of beauty — that key special ingredient tying together all the diverse flavours of the showcase — then he is in good stead to achieve his ambitious goal: “To make A Journey Through Time a powerful and wonderful prelude to Baselworld.”

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