



DON GIOVANNI COSI GRANDE - NABUCCO RIVOLUZIONE CHRONOGRAPH by Raymond Weil

CHRONOZONER TC61 by Vogard

### Raymond Weil recalibrates its offer

Over at Raymond Weil, like at Maurice Lacroix, the company had decided to reduce activities and has laid off 13 people. "2009 continues the process we started five years ago of redoing our entry-level products. We have simply recalibrated the offer at the heart of the brand's DNA," explains Olivier Bernheim. He shows us 46 new models, of which 30 are entry-level, priced between CHF 695 and 2,000 (Euro 460 – 1,300), with the core of the offer situated between CHF 1,350 and 1,450 (Euro 895 – 960).

For Olivier Bernheim, whose brand is present in more than 90 countries, this strategy is double pronged: "Our markets that are situated essentially in the upper end of our offer are reassured to have a consistent offer in the entry-level and those markets that are situated in the lower-end of our range are happy to be able to offer an increased number of new products."

Concretely, the pyramid of new products presented in Basel starts at the high-end with the Don Giovanni Cosi Grande with jumping hours in gold for CHF 13,400 (Euro 8,885) or in steel for CHF 4,120 (Euro 2,730), the Freelancer in pink gold priced at CHF 11,560 (Euro 7,665),

with a feminine diamond-set pink-gold model with a mother-of-pearl dial priced at CHF 8,100 (Euro 5,370) and the imposing 46mm Nabucco Rivoluzione chronograph (movement developed with Sellita) for CHF 5,600 (Euro 3,700). On the other end is a new ladies' collection called Noemia, which features charming watches in diameters of 27mm and 32mm, with prices starting at CHF 975 (Euro 520).

### Vogard carving out its place

In 2004, Michael Vogt created Vogard, a single-product brand whose first watch allowed the time zones to be adjusted by simply rotating the bezel. The patented Timezoner System, which also includes daylight savings time, has added to the brand's success. It is available in a number of models depending on the utilization, whether at airports, golf courses, beautiful beaches, the best ski resorts and more. Intelligently constructed (the movement, case and bezel are considered 'one functioning unit') with a strong and identifiable design that nonetheless allows for many variations and personalization including jewellery models with highly creative straps, Vogard has gradually gained momentum in the marketplace with its modest rhythm of 500 pieces per year.

Attentive to the construction and continuing growth of the brand, Michael Vogt considers consistency a cardinal virtue, thus he advances step by step, by "giving sense to luxury", according to his own formula. This year, still with the same uniformity, he presented at BaselWorld the Chronozoner, a combination of a chronograph and the Timezoner System. Combining the two complications required a great deal of work on the watch's proportions (48mm titanium case) and for the reading of the chronographic functions, inspired by a car's dashboard. Working with the famous watchmaker Andreas Strehler using the ETA 7750 as a base, Vogt designed a special lever that, attached to the inside of the plate, offered him the liberty to place the winding crown at 6 o'clock, thus clearing the sides for the lever that releases the bezel. It also allowed the security adjustment of the time zones and the placement of the push-pieces at 4 and 8 o'clock. The piece's large size and ergonomics offer great functionality. Vogard has demonstrated that a small niche brand, by carving out its own place, can offer the best to watchmaking with a high but convivial level of technology and respect for the consumer and retailer (no advance marketing hype, everything is deliverable immediately).