

5 Microbrand Watches with Haute Horlogerie Dials

London, Sep 9, 2020 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - The watch market is a crowded arena of brands, designs, and exquisiteness with countless new microbrand watches emerging year after year. However, considering average sales value, ones that come within the \$1000 value almost always garners the most traction with the market and the audience. Marketing and promotional coloring also put out claims of unique and [affordable luxury microband watches](#), but for the true aficionados, their affordability and inferior quality are quickly identified. So how can amateur watch collectors and buyers spot the exciting pieces in this confusingly crowded space is a plunge into a distilled market study of identifying the ones that stand out in quality, luxury, and price.

The most crucial aspect of a watch is its dial. This is the part of the watch that is most seen or looked at and essentially defines the timepiece. If the dial is exciting, then this can more than compensate for an average case or movement like Miyota 9015, Seiko NH35, ETA 2824 to name a few, and makes a watch truly stand out.

A dial is exciting when it's crafted with a unique design and technique like guilloche and/or made with materials like porcelain, enamel, and stone. Some of the best-curated lists of the [best watch microbrands](#) with Haute Horlogerie dials include Anordain, Lundis Bleus, Atelier Wen, Ophon, and Antoine Tavan.

Anordain

Based in Glasgow, Anordain takes pride in its particular attention to all of their watches' elements from design to manufacturing, and assembly. They are unafraid of trying out different methods in their designs, which is a fusion of the contemporary and the traditional. They're best known for their enamel dials, with some watches selling just below \$1000.

Pros: They have mastered their enamel dials. They call it Vitreous or Grand Feu enamel – the art of fusing glass to metal. This complex and intricate process results in a watch dial that is less than a millimeter thick, with a perfectly flat and consistent finish.

Cons: While the enamel dials are near perfection, the cases could exude a bit more personality. It would be great to see more of their Scottish identity appear on their watches.

Lundis Bleus

Meaning Blue Mondays, Lundis Bleus was born out of two Swiss watchmakers' desire to "create watches with a soul." Their range of watches contains a number of different and interesting dials as one of their philosophies is that "the dial of a watch is what a face is to a human being." They do not produce more than 150 pieces in a year, which is a true testament to the brand's quality and exclusivity.

Pros: Their unique dials, usually adorned with kiln-red vitreous enamel, polished gemstones, hand engraving, or a sophisticated multilayer design, are just beautiful. It is their most easily recognizable characteristic.

Cons: The brand used to be more affordable, in all honesty. And given the relatively basic automatic movements encased in their watches, the steady price increase is hard to justify.

Atelier Wen

The brand's name Atelier Wen, literally translated as "the culture workshop", is a new luxury microbrand, spearheaded by two friends with a passion for horology and a deep understanding of China's pivotal role in today's global watchmaking industry ([read up about Chinese watchmaking on Atelier Wen's website](#)). Atelier Wen creates pieces that celebrate Chinese culture, crafts, and watchmaking.

Pros: They are really affordable considering the quality of their porcelain dials. Indeed, it's difficult to find any other affordable microbrand watches with as fine a build, as original a [watch strap selection](#) (salmon leather!) and as extensively-modified a movement as Atelier Wen. The story and designs behind their pieces are also really unique. It's most definitely one of the [best Chinese watch brands](#) around.

Cons: Their casework is a tad too basic and their collection is currently restricted only to the [Porcelain Odyssey series](#), which is a limited edition at that and quickly running out. The market is always looking forward to their new launches.

Ophion

The embodiment of "affordable luxury," Ophion is truly Haute Horlogerie for the masses. The team behind the brand always found that exquisite watches in classical styles with well-finished movements were out of reach and so they created Ophion.

Pros: Their dials are exquisitely CNC guilloché. They also have brilliant and extensively modified and hand-finished movements from Technotime/Soprod, and wonderful cases from Comblémine, Kari Voutilainen's own case factory.

Cons: While it is hard to object to their specifications, the actual watch designs do lack a little ambition and energy but then again, can also resonate with many people's tastes and personal styles.

Antoine Tavan

An exceptionally talented artisan by the name of Roger Zarzoso who has mastered the art of fine watchmaking and has worked with the most exclusive globally renowned brands decided to go solo and open his own atelier under the name Antoine Tavan.

Pros: This definitely goes beyond "affordable luxury" as you are buying directly from the atelier of one of the best enamel dial makers in the world! And the prices are certainly competitive for what you get.

Cons: While Mr. Zarzoso's out-of-this-world dials are really appreciable, the other parts of his watches are a little common and could use a little more creativity.

The Takeaway

Wearing a watch is more than being able to tell time. It is a statement and a lot of that is conveyed through the language of dials. If you would have to pick your style of microbrand watches, you can hand the trophy to Ophion and Atelier Wen for their dials, high-quality movements, affordable prices, and overall specifications.

So, what would be your pick?

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