

PASSION  HORLOGÈRE

**Meeting Peter SPEAK-MARIN,
a new Honorary Member of
Passion Horlogère**



On December 12th 2010, in Kuala Lumpur, Malasia, I was lucky to meet Peter Speake-Marin, an independent watchmaker who collaborated in the development of a countless number of « Dream Watches ». Many years ago, he created his own brand and his name is today well known by watch collectors over the world. This year, his very confidential production included a model in particular that was unanimously acclaimed by professionals and critics. This model is the Marin 2 « Thalassa ».



From the 2nd to the 11th of December, the Starhill Gallery Watch of the Year Awards were held in Kuala Lumpur, under the patronage of both the Malasian Tourism Ministry and the industrial group YTL. The latter owns the Starhill Gallery, and belongs to Tan Sri Dato' Dr Francis YEOH, a wealthy Malasian businessman. This department store is dedicated to luxury products and offers the most famous brands of watches, among more than a hundred others. Patek Philippe, Lange & Söhne, Rolex, Jaeger-LeCoultre, and Hublot are side by side with Richard Mille, Louis Moinet, Hautlence, Van Cleef & Arpels, Bedat, Romain Jérôme, and many others.

The brand Speake-Marin is fittingly represented at « Kronos », a shop that sells prestigious brands usually known only by a few well informed watch collectors. In this store, we can admire no less than four extraordinary Speake-Marin models. Dials, hands, in-house movements, winding rotors and cases are all components that are specific to this brand and therefore, contribute to its charm and reputation. Such a density of models in one place is a very rare thing. As a matter of fact, French collectors are deprived of this brand, because Speake-Marin has no authorized dealers in France.

However, since December 11th, things have changed for this young brand. For the first time, Speake-Marin was in competition for a horology award. For this occasion, its founder made it all the way from Switzerland to honor this first selection and the invitation of Tan Sri Dato' Dr Francis YEOH. The Speake-Marin « Thalassa » was nominated in two categories : « Men's watch » and « Classic Art Spirit ».

I had the great honor of taking part in the discussions as the chairman of the jury of this international contest, alongside Tan Sri Dato' Dr Francis Yeoh, Dr Bernard Cheong, Su Jia Xian (SJX), Massimiliano Landi, Massanori Kondo and Jean-François Meyer. I therefore had the first hand information that Speake-Marin would win, in Kuala Lumpur, the very first award of its young history, and probably not the only one.



And he did. Speake-Marin won the « Classic Art Spirit » watch of the year 2010 award, during an extraordinary evening at the « Shook » restaurant in the Starhill Gallery.

Today, it is December 12th. I am meeting the founder of Speake-Marin by the swimming pool of his hotel, for a casual interview. The previous night had been short, and despite his numerous other appointments of the day, he kindly accepted to share with the members and friends of Passion Horlogère, a few words about himself, about his personal and professional experiences. I now invite you to discover through these few lines, the man behind these timepieces, and one of the most talented watchmaker of his generation.



Thierry GASQUEZ
President

www.speake-marin.com

<http://passion-horlogere.forumactif.net/t933-peter-speake-marin-premier-horloger-independent-a-devenir-membre-d-honneur-de-passion-horlogere>

Thierry Gasquez : Hello Peter. You just won the « Classic Art Spirit » watch of the year 2010 award, here in Kuala Lumpur. On behalf of Passion Horlogère, please accept our warmest congratulations.



Peter Speake-Marin : Thank you.

TG : We are not going to do a normal interview. I will just let you tell us about yourself. Who are you Peter Speake-Marin?

PS-M : I was born in 1968 in London. I now live in Switzerland. I am married to Daniela and we have two children. We live in Rolle, between Lausanne and Geneva. We moved to Switzerland in 1996.



My career started in London in 1985 at the «Hackney Technical College», and was completed at WOSTEP in Neuchâtel, where I followed a training program for foreign watchmakers. I then moved back to London to have my first professional experience. My first job was in a company called « Watches of Switzerland » in Oxford. I then worked as a watchmaker for Piaget in London.



Each time, I did not stay for very long. As soon as I learned all that I could learn, I moved to someplace else. I did this until 1990, when I met an antique watch salesman : Mr. Georges Somelo for whom I worked for 7 years in Picadilly. There, I restored all types of vintage watches, from old pocket watches to wristwatches of the 1950s. I was into a lot of things, and this was therefore an extraordinary experience that still has an influence on me today.



I then moved to Le Locle, where I worked in the workshop of Renaud & Papi, on the development of complications, their assembling and formation. In the year 2000, I started my career as an independent. Between 2000 and 2008, I only worked on three pieces. In the same period however, I collaborated on other projects.



I also worked with Harry Winston, MB&F, and I developed a company called « Maîtres du Temps », for an American entrepreneur. Since 2008, I only work for myself. I only make timepieces in very small quantities. These are therefore very special. I have never made mass-produced models. The largest number of pieces I have made for a given model is maybe 30 or 35. Otherwise, we have made complicated timepieces or works of art actually, such as simple calendar watches, perpetual calendar watches and tourbillons. I was into many different things. However, after all I've done, I have the feeling that it is only today that everything really begins, as I now make my own in-house movement.



My main thread is today better defined, thanks to all the experiences I've been through : thanks to all that I've done, the places I've been to and the people I've met. Today I know better what I'm going to do next and life as an independent offers me the space and the freedom I need to be truly creative. When considering what has just been put in motion though this movement, I have the feeling that my future starts today.



TG : You were already famous among watch collectors, and the award you won yesterday will make you famous worldwide, and people will talk about you more and more. So is there a project in particular in the near future that you care about? Will Peter Speake-Marin issue something new?



PS-M : You will see..., you will see... !!! Actually I only have ideas. Now that I have a broader network that can adapt more rapidly, and that I can devote myself to my own production and projects, I can really start to breathe.



This year, we started to turn a page with the Thalassa. This timepiece really shows the quality and originality of what I can do. In a sense, it's a beginning because for all the timepieces I sell today, one needs to have a certain knowledge about horology in order to understand why this piece is special and what explains its price.



What I'm going to do in the future on the other hand, will also be understood by people who are not well acquainted with horology, but who will still appreciate the artistic side and its quality. They will understand the purpose of what I'm about to do, without having in depth knowledge of horology, and without being collectors. I have the feeling that I'm about to start a new adventure this year.



TG : Peter, we wish you the best. Please continue to make us dream and love the watches that you make with an unequalled talent. Congratulations and thank you.

PS-M : Thank you, goodbye.



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Translated from the original French text by Rasika F. for Passion Horlogère