

# GMT



Great Magazine of Timepieces

INDIA

## Dossier

### Interviews

Benjamin Arabov  
(Jacob & Co.)

Watch Designer  
Eric Giroud

### Feature

The hottest independent  
watch brands right now

## Art & Aesthetics

### The Shape of Time

Decoding watch shapes  
over the years

## Technical Finesse

### In the Workshop Of

MB&F

## Lifestyle

### People & Watches

Kairav Engineer  
Mohit Chuganee  
Shalini Passi



# Bell & Ross

## BR O5 GMT Sky Blue

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# Eric Giroud

Watch Designer

*In a freewheeling conversation with GMT India, the specialised designer talks about his long-standing association with Speake-Marin, and more.*



Photograph by Johann Sauty

## How were you introduced to the world of watches?

I dabbled in music, architecture, graphics, photography and fiction in my early days. My journey in the watch industry began when I joined a design studio in Switzerland, where a project involving watches caught my attention. There was a competition within the studio and to my delight, my project was declared the winner. Inspired by this achievement and motivated by personal circumstances—I met my wife during this period—I decided to explore independent watch designing. My wife is connected to the Heuer family. Her uncle, Jack Heuer, cautioned me about potential financial hurdles. Following his advice, I chanced upon a small opportunity with Mido, involving a watch dial. Thus, my 25-year career in the watch industry began.

## How has your journey with Speake-Marin been? Which was the first Speake-Marin watch you worked on?

At Baselworld, I met the brand founder, Peter Speake-Marin, and we became friends. Peter introduced me to Maximilian Büsser, CEO of MB&F, who recognised my potential, and we started working together.

Although Peter is no longer with the brand, his influence and support remain an indelible memory. I am grateful for the foundation he laid and I continue to find fulfilment in my work with Speake-Marin. About seven years ago, I started working on Academic, my first project with Speake-Marin. It revolved around the Piccadilly case. The task was to create a new face for the dial, paying homage to tradition with Roman numerals while also offering a contemporary interpretation. That marked the start of my journey as a designer.



Speake-Marin's Academic Black Tie and Academic White watches

## What sets Speake-Marin watches apart from other brands?

The two Watches and Wonders 2023 novelties, Academic Black Tie and Academic White, represent continuation of the work initiated seven years ago. When Christelle Rosnoble (current owner and CEO of Speake-Marin) discussed working on the novelties with me, I didn't grasp the concept immediately. She enquired if we could create another Academic, but one that was fresh and innovative—a new generation that would retain the same magical essence.

The Academic features two levels and Roman numerals while the black-and-white iterations incorporate additional elements atop the dial. This aspect is particularly intriguing because it necessitates building upon the Academic. Today, black-and-white novelties owe their existence to the Academic. We worship its legacy and the numerous intricate processes as seen in its Piccadilly case.

## Which is your favourite Speake-Marin watch and why?

My initial tryst with Peter Speake-Marin's watches had a lasting impact—I acquired one for myself and gifted my wife an exquisitely-designed 38mm Academic. What truly brings me joy now is the Ripples watch. Even though it's not my own creation, it symbolises a noteworthy shift in the brand's perspective.

## What does your design process look like?

It's almost like the design process of an architect. Just like how an architect builds upon the structure of a house, I pay attention to the movement, dial thickness and other technical details. Also, collaborative exchanges inspire me. For instance, during a discussion with Christelle, we explored the concept of 'Maximum Green', inspired by a cosmetic brand's packaging. However, I am against imposing personal preferences. 🇧🇪