



"The watchmaking industry is increasingly taking inspiration from trends outside its own sphere," says TAG Heuer's Head of Product Development, Stéphane Linder. "After the crisis in 2002 and 2003, I think people understood we had to be more dynamic and ready for change."

At TAG Heuer, all members of the creative, design and marketing teams subscribe to the services of WGSN.com. Founded in 1988, the Worth Global Style Network offers tip-offs by showcasing international catwalk collections and shop windows, offering insights into new materials, technologies and social and consumer trends.

"We sometimes buy a specific study about colours, materials or design trends from an outside agency," says Linder, "but WGSN is our source for an ongoing flow of information that influences and informs our products, catalogues and advertisement concepts daily."

Market-savvy

While details such as seasonal colours or particular diamond settings and straps can be informed by trend information, TAG Heuer's status as an innovative watchmaker and its higher price points mean the brand cannot be seen as too fashion driven, says Linder. He expects a TAG Heuer watch to last between three, five and ten years. Therefore, influences from architecture and cars come into play at TAG far more than fashion, he adds. As well as swearing by his subscription to WGSN, Linder can also be spotted every spring pacing the halls of Milan's furniture show, and routinely scanning the pages of *Wallpaper** and *GQ*.

Even Patek Philippe, while insisting its museum is its main source of inspiration, confesses the Creative Director is a regular subscriber to trend news services. Other regular subscribers to trend information services include Ebel and Maurice Lacroix, whose Product Director Sandro Reginelli's regular reading list includes McKinsey's quarterly business reports.

(Above left) TAG Heuer's Stéphane Linder is an unabashed subscriber to Worth Global Style Network, which enables him to keep TAG's product development fresh and in tune with fashion's next trends. The Monaco Vintage Gulf Edition pictured here (limited to 4,000 pieces, £2,500) updates last year's Steve McQueen racing-suit scheme with an edgy new combination of colours - in tribute to the livery adorning the Porsche-Gulf 917K driven by McQueen in *Le Mans* (1970), but also in keeping with the current retro Seventies look.

(Above centre) The wealthy are stealthy this year, as luxury brands increasingly venture away from bling bling. Maurice Lacroix is one of many getting sinister at Basel 2007, with a dark version of last year's Pontos Décentrique GMT in titanium. Product Director, Sandro Reginelli's architectural tendencies are apparent in the multi-layered, multi-textured, three-dimensional dial.

(Above right) "We cannot make watches ... without linking them with the trends," says Zenith mastermind Thierry Nataf. Whatever the trends are, last year's headturning Defy range proved they're far removed from anything else on the current watch landscape. If anything, this year sees the Xtreme models make an even bigger impact, bringing pink gold into the formula.

(Below) Italian stationary and pen designer Giuliano Mazzuoli devoured books and magazines seeking inspiration for his own watch, until he realised this would only lead to a derivative design. Eventually, it was a pressure gauge ('manometro' in Italian) that provided the necessary 'lightbulb moment'. The recent chronograph model from the Manometro brand (£3,300) is powered by a Dubois Dépraz calibre.

