



CRISTINA WENDT-THÉVENAZ

Wendt-Thévenaz, above; the Delaneau Dôme Rectangle 1608 Soleil with pavé-set sunray motif on an ebony dial with digital time display; and the Delaneau Amazone 1608 Fleur de Lys with jeweled lily and digital time display.

One of the most interesting and colorful people in the watch industry has to be Cristina Wendt-Thévenaz, artistic director and CEO, Delaneau Watch Company. Strong-willed and beautiful, she is a corporate leader who is outspoken about her love for watches and the poor job the industry has done serving women to date.

As a result, Delaneau makes timepieces specifically for women and offers a range of mechanical watches that are incredibly creative, while at the same time being uniquely feminine. When she began working for Delaneau as artistic director in 2002, the product range was 99 percent quartz. Today, it's 99 percent mechanical, with complications like the Angel Heart that are designed to speak directly to women.

"It's important for me and for the Delaneau brand to transmit very feminine ideas," Wendt-Thévenaz says. "Horology is too often about technical details, but women want the technical side of things, but we also want to connect on an emotional level."

Wendt-Thévenaz has a fine arts background and is a graphic designer by training. Before joining Delaneau, she spent her days in the studio, painting. What brought her to the watch business in the first place? "I fell in love," she says, simply. "When I fall in love with something, I want to learn, grow and develop some-

thing. I want to create something."

"I believe that the secret to success is the passion and love you have for what you do," she adds. "Success is also luck, being in a place at the right time with the right people and the right ideas."

The movements used in Delaneau watches are selected or created to suit the needs of each watch. In some watches, Wendt-Thévenaz uses a simple automatic movement, but in other cases, as in the Moon watch, the movement is brand new and unique to Delaneau—designed by her and realized by Frédéric Piguet and other specialist watchmakers. "Here at Delaneau, we combine highly technical mechanical processes with something very romantic, something that is aimed for women only, bringing together all these different areas of know-how," she explains. "There is a thought process behind everything we do. I'm really not inventing anything; I'm just combining and reinterpreting the ingredients. I am taking the woman of today more seriously and offering her a real choice."

In addition to using mechanical movements, Wendt-Thévenaz is committed to supporting the historic crafts of Geneva—engraving, enameling, miniature painting and more. "I believe it is the responsibility of niche brands to maintain and keep traditional arts

and crafts alive,” she says. “This is an industry that is based on history and tradition. As a small brand, we don’t have to verticalize production, and we don’t base our designs on having to produce thousands of pieces, so we can take the time to do things right. I fell in love with the people who keep on working with these old techniques because of love, passion and respect for the history of watchmaking. This is the advantage of being a niche brand, to have the contact with these people and to give them the chance to do the work they love.”

Asked what her favorite Delaneau watch is, Wendt-Thévenaz says she cannot choose. “The next watch is my favorite, and in reality I love them all,” she says. “I love the first one as much as I love the next one. I love the one I am working on right now. I love

the 1608 for its modern, cool design, reinterpreted classical complication, but I love the Angel Heart too.”

Although crazy busy most of the time, Wendt-Thévenaz is having a great time working on the collection and traveling the world to spread its message. “I love what I do, I love the challenge, I thrive on stress,” she says. “I also enjoy the contact with people. I love coming to the office in the morning, giving a kiss to everyone here. I am fortunate to be in touch with these wonderful people and to be able to work with all the crazy watchmakers in the Jura. We create, we exchange ideas, then we put it all together—we keep the tradition but do it in a contemporary way.” ❖

Interview by Keith W. Strandberg. For information on Delaneau, telephone 203.227.9082 or visit www.delaneauwatch.com.

