

# MEN'S FOLIO

SINGAPORE

September 2010 \$6.80 incl. GST

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[www.azimuthwatch.com](http://www.azimuthwatch.com)

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# ALVIN LYU & CHRISTOPHER LONG

## Azimuth Watch Company

TEXT: WONG KEE SOON  
 PORTRAIT: MUNSTER & LONG FEI / T2 PICTURES

**Azimuth Watch** Company is like the Manny Pacquiao of the watch world – Asian-born, diminutive and packed with potent punches that can floor larger opponents. A young horological enterprise founded by Singaporeans Alvin Lye and Christopher Long in 2004, Azimuth has been sucker punched with copyright lawsuits and name-calling by insular Swiss watch brands. Each time though, fuelled by its founders' bring-it-on war cry, the company has dusted off the attacks to emerge triumphant.

"We've also been called 's\*\*\*'," says Christopher, the more reticent of the duo, who adds that such comments only served to spur them on. In fact, Alvin takes pleasure in the fact that the bigger brands have taken notice of their "small operation". "It shows that we are doing something right and they feel threatened by us," he chuckles while Christopher nods in agreement.

Christopher met Alvin when he was a 17-year-old purchasing vintage watches at Alvin's pre-owned watch retail store. Bonding over their love for Swiss horology, both men decided to make their own watches after deciding that their ideas were just as good, if not better, than some of those hawked by the Swiss.

"Creativity is borderless," says Alvin. But he also recalls getting plenty of flak for their nationality when the company started. "People would go, 'Who do these guys think they are?' We even had difficulty buying components for our watches and we were often stood up by suppliers."

Alvin admits the watch industry is tough but he adds pointedly that he and Christopher are no pushovers. "We have balls and we believe in what we do," he says.

Today, the tables have turned. Alvin reveals the same suppliers who once turned them down are calling them up, eager to do business. Meanwhile, Azimuth watches, produced in its own Swiss factory in Biel, are distributed to 18 countries and have an annual production of 2,000 pieces. The company is also close to inking a deal to develop exclusive movements for a Russian brand.

When asked if they feel any animosity towards the brands that tried to discredit them, Alvin and Christopher say they are actually all about the love. "We got into this business because we love watches and wish to share our passion," explains Alvin. "In future, we are even looking at working with schools for educational programmes to inculcate a love for horology among the youth." Clearly, the boys at Azimuth have bigger fish to fry. **M**

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"We have balls and we believe in what we do"

