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HIGH Roller

Singapore's own watchmaking whiz, *AZIMUTH*, makes a killing at the CASINOS.

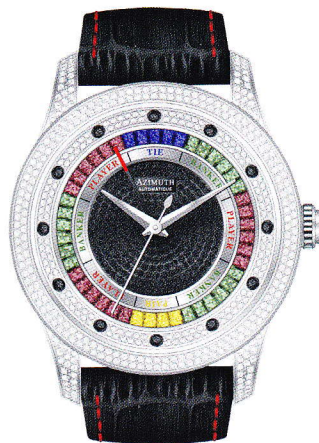
When Azimuth launched the SP-1 Roulette two years ago, it took a gamble, literally. The concept of the watch was whimsical (something frowned upon by serious watchmakers): Time is read normally but by depressing the dice-shaped crown, the wearer activates a ball that spins round the roulette dial, just like the actual game.

Initial concerns were unfounded as the SP-1 Roulette was a roaring success, possibly because it made its debut at the height of the casino craze here in Singapore. Word has it that the watch was so popular that one of the local

integrated resorts engaged Azimuth to produce a series of exclusive SP-1 Roulettes for high rollers. Riding on that success, the Singapore-born watch *marque* introduces yet another gaming-inspired piece at *BaselWorld* this year.

Like its predecessor, the Round-1 Baccarat (it comes in either 38mm or 42mm, and also in bejewelled versions) tells time conventionally. But in a similar playful twist, the game of baccarat is worked into the timepiece. A depression of the pusher starts the pointer spinning, and it stops randomly at any of the four possible results — player, banker, pair and tie.

Purists may argue that



From left: Sketches of the SP-1 Roulette; the men's version of the Round-1 Baccarat comes with diamonds, too.

Azimuth's timepieces defy classic watchmaking sensibilities, but there is no doubt that it has been punching way above its weight. For the past seven years, Azimuth has constantly wowed the international watch *cognoscenti* with its unique brand of *horlogerie*. Today, it even owns an atelier in Bienne, Switzerland. The workshop researches, models and assembles all its watches. Even the modifications on its movements, like those of the SP-1 Roulette and Round-1 Baccarat, are done in-house.

Executive director Christopher Long once told the *International Herald Tribune*: "Avant-garde designs, unconventional ways of telling time, are definitely not for every man, but customers looking for interesting timepieces, or I should say weird-looking watches, come to us, and certainly we believe we have built a reputation around that." ■

