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MARCH 2011

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# WHY THE MACHINES

FAST-FORWARD TO A FUTURE WHERE WATCHES ARE  
MORE THAN JUST TICKERS THAT TELL TIME.  
THAT FUTURE IS NOW.

TEXT CHARMIAN LEONG

Conventional is safe but oh so everyday. That truism applies to the watch world, too, flooded as it is with cookie-cutter timepieces. But every so often, a speciality brand or big name looking to bolster its watch cred comes up with a piece so bizarre it bewilders as much as it delights.

Thanks to modern technology, such as 3-D computer design and miniaturisation, adventurous watchmakers can challenge traditional concepts of the watch's form and way of telling time, at the same time pushing horological innovation and knowledge to new and exciting heights.

Traditionalists like Laurent Ferrier may scoff at the radical designs by niche brands like MB&F and Urwerk – cutting-edge is in their DNA – but even detractors acknowledge the breathtaking tech inside such avant-garde pieces, usually very limited editions and instant collectibles.

While such “weird” watches invariably spark debate – forward-thinkers will hail the breakthroughs; conservatives will grumble about subverting watchmaking's roots – they are undoubtedly signs of a brave new watch world ahead. Starting on this page, here's our Top 10 to date.





**01**  
**PLAY TIME**

Fine watches are considered playthings of the refined gent and Azimuth's Mr Roboto is just that – an homage to vintage wind-up toys. Every component in its comical face has a function: the "eyes" show hours and GMT; the spinning red "nose" acts as the seconds indicator; the large rectangular "mouth" holds a retrograde minute dial. The homegrown brand has yet to make its own movements, so this watch uses a modified ETA 2836 base.