

activity. Serious collectors, investors and the merely curious would get a full view of the most expensive watch on display, a \$4 million Richard Mille piece of work. They can also gawk at the array of exclusive all-black timepieces being crafted in limited numbers.

This time, Tempus will have nearly twice as many brands participating in an effort that is expected to cost \$2.5 million to stage. The 55 brands will bring in nearly \$150 million worth of timekeepers, including one-of-a-kind exhibits from Antiquorum's Only Watch 2007 auction, the world's first Museum of Contemporary Horological Art, forums, seminars, watch-making demonstrations and classes.

Much of Tempus will also focus on brands from the last three decades, particularly those that survived the quartz movement. With many Swiss watch manufacturers all but wiped out by the quartz revolution (ironically invented by the Swiss), it took a huge reworking of the industry to haul it back from the brink of extinction.

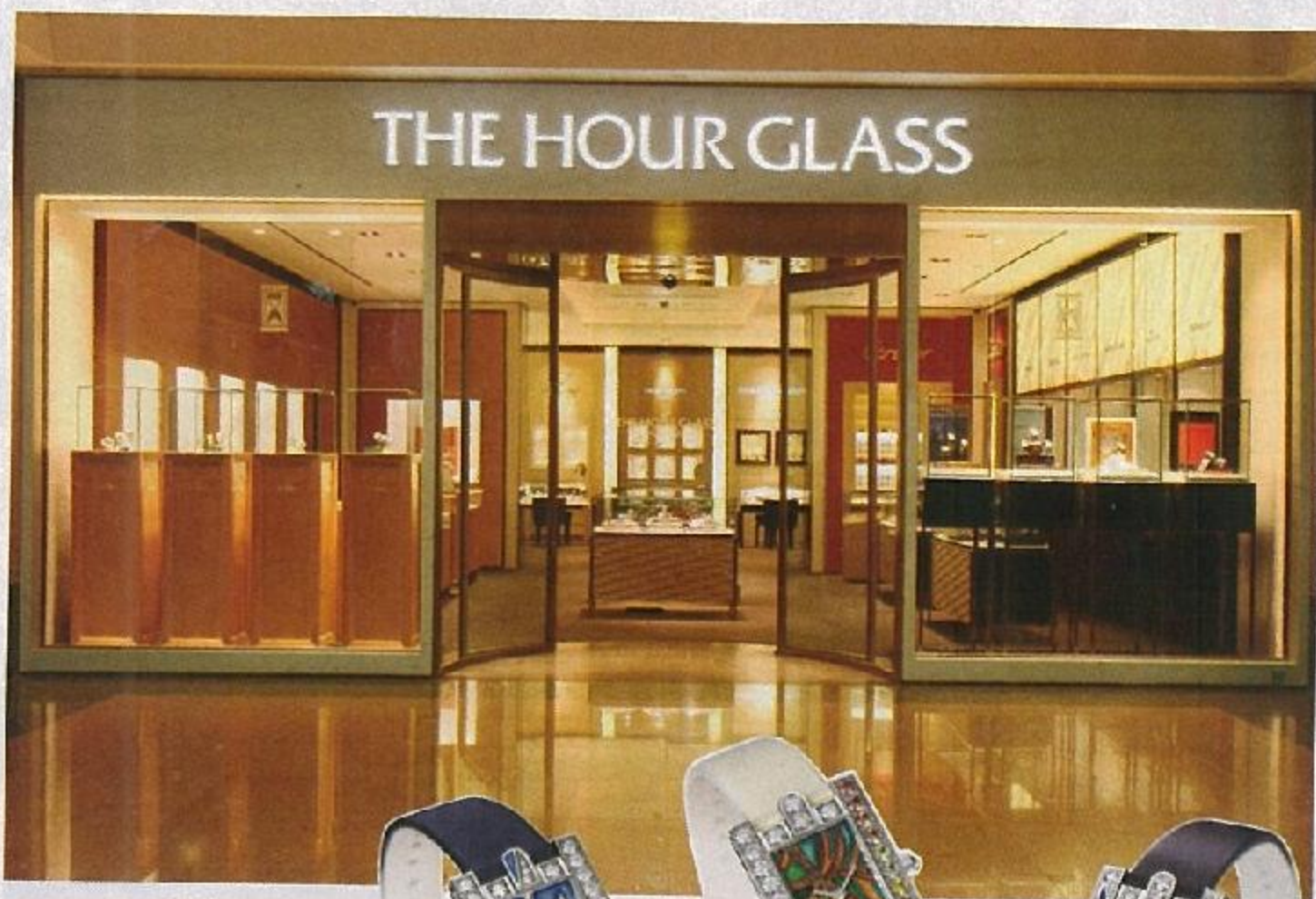
There were 1,600 watch companies in 1970, and more than 1,000 of these disappeared during the quartz blitz. During that time, only a third of the 90,000 employees were still working in the industry.

While the fashionable and inexpensive Swatch watches helped revive the fortunes of the Swiss watch industry, the higher standards set by existing watch manufacturers helped to elevate the mechanical watch to an art form.

Prized in many Asia-Pacific countries, these watches are icons for adoring collectors to fawn over, while companies like The Hour Glass glorify them and set up temples to shower their appreciation. And why not, since they have brought in sales in excess of \$6.5 billion in a span of 28 years for The Hour Glass.

Cortina Watch also gathers its watches for Jewellery Time, which was held over 11 days last October, and Sincere Watch has its own activities to strut its stuff.

In all likelihood, Michael Tay and his team are going to vehemently voice objections at the thought of doing Tempus again. Though, at the back of his mind, as the wheels turn and timepieces fly off the shelves, he'll be counting down to the time, yet again, when it's time to pay homage to the fortunes of time. ■



Michael Tay: Praying for greater profits at the temple of time

