

PRESS RELEASE

“CLAUDE BERNARD HAND ARTISANS” PROGRAMME

APPRECIATING TRADITIONAL HAND CRAFTSMANSHIP

SINGAPORE, MARCH 2016 – The rise of global consumerism and global factory production over the last decade have resulted in the modern culture of “fast fashion”, where the latest fashion trends seen on international catwalks are designed and mass manufactured quickly in large quantities at affordable prices for the regular consumer.

However, a quiet revolution is now taking root with young consumers now looking for a more personalized connection with what they wear. Savvy shoppers are now looking towards long-lasting quality pieces that are unique, hand-crafted and suited to their needs in terms of fit, lifestyle and individuality, thereby minimizing unnecessary wastage.



Independent Swiss watch-maker Claude Bernard, takes pride in its ability to offer affordably-priced Swiss made watches that are individually hand-assembled by skilled watch-makers in Les Genevez, Switzerland, and stands out for their long lasting quality.

Each Claude Bernard watch is made to be meaningful and artful to consumers who value craft and quality, made to last and be a constant staple in their wardrobes.

“Claude Bernard Artisans” programme

Consequently, Claude Bernard partners and supports local artisans in its markets who reach out and appeal to this same group of consumers who truly value the passion of hand craftsmanship, under the “Claude Bernard Artisans” programme.

Ms Pamela Tan, Senior Brand Manager of Claude Bernard, said: “There is something quaint and enduring about traditional hand craftsmanship, as it creates a personal connection with what we wear, a quality and finishing that consumers value and keep for life.”

“Claude Bernard is a watch-maker that strives to provide customers with hand-assembled watches that are meaningful and long-lasting, with traditional watch-making techniques from a centuries-old heritage. We started the ‘Claude Bernard Artisans’ programme to encourage our customers to value their purchases, to invest in quality hand-crafted products that they will keep and treasure, and to give support to our local artisans who share these same values as us.”

Claude Bernard’s first artisan partner under the programme in 2015 was renowned local chocolatier, Janice Wong, Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef owner of 2AM:dessertbar, who pioneered hand-made culinary techniques in chocolate dessert-making that preserve the purity of cocoa and offer a gastronomical experience for her customers that is healthier and far higher in experiential value than off-the-rack packaged chocolate snacks.

Now in 2016, Claude Bernard is proud to announce its second Singaporean artisan partner under the programme – Michelle Yu, one of Singapore’s few letterpress designers and owner of boutique letterpress studio, The Gentlemen’s Press. The letterpress is a highly personalised centuries-old hand-printing technique, similar to traditional watch-making.

Local artisan partners of the ‘Claude Bernard Artisans’ programme



Janice Wong, local chocolatier and chef owner of 2AM:dessertbar



Michelle Yu, local letterpress designer and owner of The Gentlemen’s Press

“Reviving the Lost Art of the Letterpress” Workshop



*Michelle Yu, local letterpress designer and owner of boutique letterpress studio,
The Gentlemen's Press*

Initially trained in commercial design at Temasek Polytechnic, Michelle Yu developed a passion for vintage prints and letterpress printing during a student exchange programme in the USA and consequently started her own letterpress studio in Singapore in 2013 by investing in two vintage letterpress hand-driven machines – a 130-year-old Chandler & Price cast-iron letterpress machine and a 70-year-old Vandercook cylinder press – and an assortment of vintage types and plates salvaged from local thrift shops.

Claude Bernard has partnered with Michelle Yu, for a letterpress hand-printing workshop, “Reviving the Lost Art of the Letterpress” workshop for 15 members of the media in Singapore to bring to attention the art of letterpress printing that has largely fallen by the wayside in Singapore’s design scene, dominated by commercial digital printing. Through this workshop, Claude Bernard also hopes to highlight the enduring quality of other traditional hand-made arts, like hand-made watch-making which the brand is known for.

Watch-making and letterpress printing – kindred hand-crafted techniques

Observing the kindred hand-crafted techniques between Claude Bernard’s style of watch-making and letterpressing, Michelle Yu says: “Letterpress printing is an art that engages more than just one sense beyond the visual element – it is a technique that engages the sense of touch with the feel of the paper, the sense of smell as you mix in the inks. It therefore tends to bring out the quality of the paper and inks used. Likewise, Claude Bernard watch-makers need to use high quality parts and materials due to the fact that they hand-assemble the watches individually. You cannot compromise on quality of the materials with such hand-crafted techniques.”

“Letterpressing is also a very precise and deliberate art – the timing of the prints has to be exact, not a second faster or slower, or else the ink smudges and the paper tears. You have to conceive the design, set the type, mix the ink by hand, adjust the pressure for evenness, undertake multiple trial sample runs before commencing on printing. This is similar to Claude Bernard’s style of watchmaking – it is very deliberate and requires a lot of dedication. One has to make a scrupulous decision to pursue watchmaking as a life-long career before undergoing intensive training and practice to acquire the ability to start make watches by hand. It is a career decision that no watchmaker can afford to be flippant about.”



Michelle wears the Claude Bernard Open Heart Automatic watch 85018-3-NIN, which resonates with her career choice as a letterpress artisan. She comments: “I chose this career path as I enjoy the deliberate process of hand-crafting products, how hand-driven machines and techniques bring parts together. I loved this particular Claude Bernard Open Heart Automatic watch as the open heart design and sapphire caseback expose the moving mechanical parts of the watch. It is fascinating to observe and therapeutic to listen to. This watch is also a good balance between dressy and casual, very versatile for my lifestyle.”

**Claude Bernard Open Heart Automatic
 85018 3 NIN
 Retail Price: S\$1,166.30 (inclusive of GST)**

Invented by Johannes Gutenberg, a German blacksmith in the 15th century, the letterpress is a mechanical movable type printing technique, widely regarded as one of the most important inventions in modern history and singularly introduced the era of mass communication which permanently altered the structure of society. With the letterpress, every printed letter and illustration in a newspaper or advertisement was made from an iron-cast carved out by artisans. Letterpress machines were hand-driven, and as the inks were also mixed by hands, no print is exactly the same. The letterpress dominated the print world for 500 years before being supplanted by modern lithographic offset printing. However, in recent years, there has been a revival of interest in letterpress prints as they are typically characterized by an inked relieved surface pressed into paper, which creates a crisp, deep impression that a bit imperfect, but infused with character and exude the warmth of the human touch.

Similarly, Claude Bernard Swiss Made watches are individually hand-assembled for that bespoke quality of the “human touch”, which is often missing in modern fast fashion where most products are factory-produced.

From the dial, rotor, balance wheel, to the tiny hour, minute and second hands, every Claude Bernard watch is designed and assembled together by the human hand with meticulous attention to detail to ensure absolute timekeeping precision, and a look and feel that is personalized and artisanal.



With this partnership with Michelle Yu under the “Claude Bernard Artisans” programme, Claude Bernard aims to encourage consumers to appreciate the artisanal care that goes into the traditional hand-crafted techniques employed in its style of watch-making, to hark back to a time when people took a lot more thought, deliberation and pride in what they wore, just owning a few watches, clothes and shoes that they will value and keep, rather than amass a “collection” – a time when lifestyles were simpler and what we wore were imbued with the human touch.

ABOUT CLAUDE BERNARD

Claude Bernard, the innovative watch manufacturer in the Jura Mountains of Switzerland, produces exquisite Swiss Made classic timepieces with an eminent watchmaking heritage of over 40 years. With the rising trend towards bespoke fashion, discerning consumers are now looking much more closely at quality of craftsmanship over brandname at face value – and Claude Bernard offers that exacting bespoke quality in its timepieces, each individually hand-assembled with genuine Swiss Made precision movements by qualified Swiss watch-makers in its independent facility in Les Genevez, Switzerland. Claude Bernard therefore proves that sophistication need not come with a hefty price tag – its watches are accessible to every customer with an eye for refinement and who truly appreciate the quality, reliability and undisputed elegance that only hand-assembled Swiss Made timepieces can offer.

ABOUT THE GENTLEMEN'S PRESS

The Gentlemen's Press began with a passion for vintage prints by graphic designer, Michelle Yu, a graduate of Temasek Polytechnic's School of Design, during an exchange programme in the USA where she learned how to use a Heidelberg Windmill hand-driven letterpress machine. After graduation, Michelle was intent on finding a job as a letterpress artist, but unfortunately, options were limited in Singapore where the advertising/printing scene is driven by commercial-scale digital printing. She then decided to start her own letterpress studio, The Gentlemen's Press, by investing in two vintage letterpress machines from the USA – a 130-year-old Chandler & Price cast-iron letterpress machine and a Vandercook Cylinder Press – supplemented by old types and plates which she salvaged from local thrift shops. As running these letterpress machines requires substantial manual labour, simple projects like namecards takes a few days to complete, whilst more complicated prints can take her up to a week. To-date, Michelle has secured a steady clientele who value and appreciate the artisanal craftsmanship of letterpress prints.



PRICING AND AVAILABILITY

Claude Bernard watches in Singapore are currently available at **TANGS** at Tang Plaza, **TANGS** VivoCity, **Robinsons** The Heeren, **Metro** The Centrepoint, **OG** Orchard Point and authorised watch retailers.

Customers can also purchase Claude Bernard watches online at authorised online retailer, www.timepieceatelier.com.

For further information on Claude Bernard watches and authorised retailers, please call Crystal Time (S) Pte Ltd at +65 6747 8888, visit the website at www.crystaltime.com.sg.

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