



2 FASHION: Watches

## Face value *Germany*

Connoisseurs of horology and design aficionados alike are turning to Nomos Glashütte for understated precision.

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"Champagne has its wine, Parma has its ham and Glashütte has its watches," says Judith Borowski, chief business officer of Nomos Glashütte. She's discussing the protected status that the German watch-making town was awarded in February by the national government. It means that any timepiece bearing the Glashütte name must now be made there. "It's good for the Nomos Glashütte name and it's good for the place," she adds, outlining Nomos's history within this small town of some 1,700 people, considered by many to be luxury watch-making's most important hub beyond Switzerland.

Nomos is young in the world of watch firms: a sprightly 32 years old. The brand was born in 1990, shortly after the reunification of Germany, with founder Roland Schwertner looking deep into the East German town's 175-year watch-making history for inspiration. His first commercial success was the Tangente watch, which launched in 1992. Loosely based on a 1920s Bauhaus-style watch, the design oozes function-led sophistication. It remains popular to this day. Most recently, Nomos has launched the Tangente Platinum Grey,



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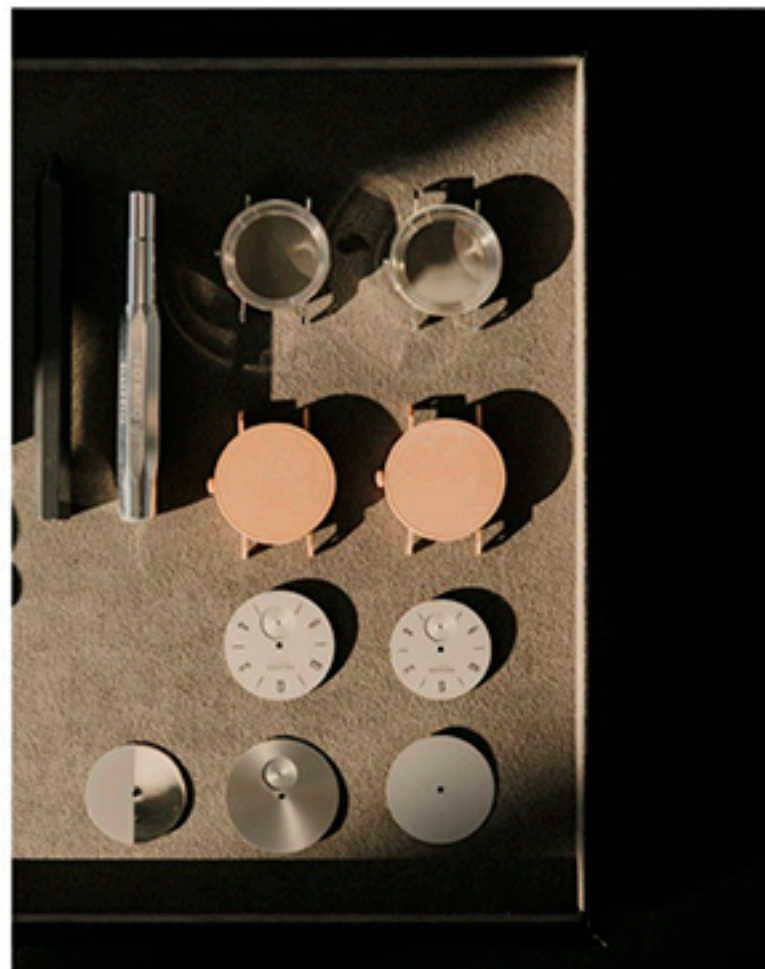


a quiet triumph that the brand's senior watch designer Thomas Höhnel says subscribes to Nomos's watch-making philosophy.

"Nothing ages as quickly as technology, so for us it is important that you always see and feel the craftsmanship behind a product," he says, flipping the timepiece over to reveal the ultra-thin caliber, which is seen through the glass back panel. The handsomely crafted inner mechanism and its individual parts were developed, manufactured, hand-assembled and rigorously tested here in Glashütte. "It's easy to make a watch look minimalistic," says Höhnel. "But often you lose quality and detail in the process. This is what we work very hard here to prevent."

Without going too much into the complexities of watch-making, what Nomos creates in Glashütte is unique well beyond Germany's borders. Its products are rarely sold for more than €4,500, meaning that they sit at the more affordable end of the luxury price ladder. However, their inner workings pack enough engineering punch to please most watch connoisseurs. Nomos's design team shy away from ostentatiousness in form meaning that the pure aesthetics of the pieces they create have to work hard to excite customers. It's a unique proposition in an industry that often gets caught up in developing gadgetry for gadgetry's sake and one which Borowski calls a "subdued approach".

Clearly it's working; there's a waiting list of some 8,000 customers hoping to buy Nomos products as the company springs forward from the pandemic. "We simply try to concentrate on the essentials of watches; the dial is pure and tidy and easy to read," says Borowski. "These are watches that are made to last a lifetime, both in the quality of their movements and also in terms of design." —



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