

NOMOS



Nomos is a relative youngster amongst watch manufacturers, yet already an established name amongst collectors. We asked Uwe Ahrendt, CEO of Nomos, what is Nomos' secret to success?

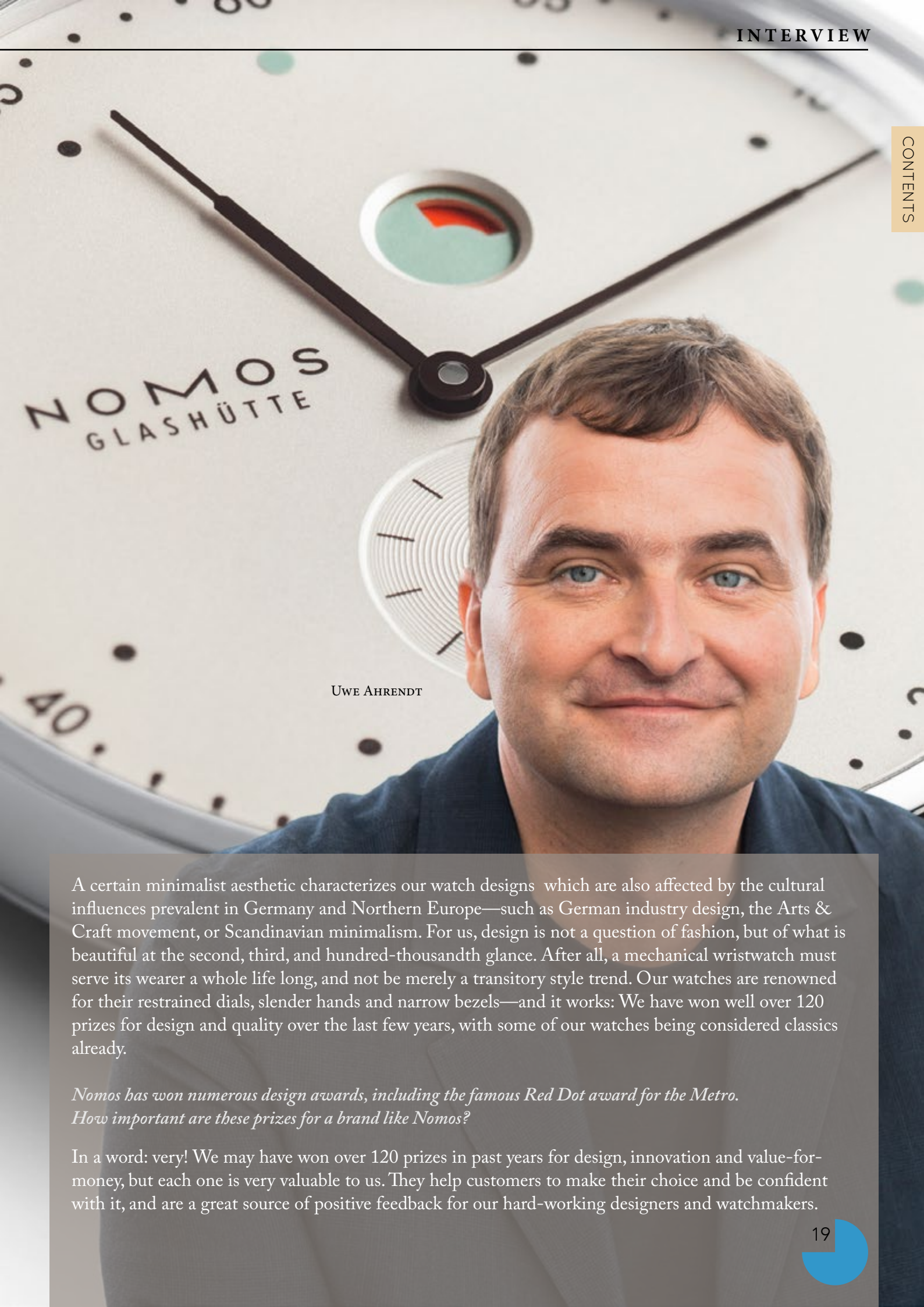
NOMOS timepieces are crafted in the world-famous town of Glashütte, the birthplace of fine mechanical watchmaking in Germany. All of them exclusively feature in-house movements, and are characterized by a unique combination of German engineering and German product design. The overall impression of our timepieces is one of slender elegance and mechanical excellence. Offering high-quality watches from Glashütte with iconic, timeless design from Berlin is our secret to success with customers.

You make your watches in Glashütte, but design them in Berlin. Why is this?

The unique combination of fine watchmaking from Glashütte and prize-winning design from Berlin is central to our brand. NOMOS produces mechanical timepieces in Glashütte; the complete watchmaking company works there. Berlin, however—the European capital for art and design a two hour and ten minute drive north of Glashütte—is where the NOMOS in-house creative agency Berlinerblau is based. This is where short films are shot, catalogs drafted, websites developed, stands and packaging created, and—most importantly—watches are designed. The reason for this is simple: We want to find the best talent, wherever it is. And when it comes to designers and other creative professionals, Berlin offers a spirit that is quite exceptional.

Nomos designs follow the principles of Deutscher Werkbund. What are the challenges your design team faces with this approach that in essence is all about 'less is more'?

Being a member of the Deutscher Werkbund, a predecessor of the Bauhaus movement, we aim to make beautiful and functional products with the most suitable production techniques.



UWE AHRENDT

A certain minimalist aesthetic characterizes our watch designs which are also affected by the cultural influences prevalent in Germany and Northern Europe—such as German industry design, the Arts & Craft movement, or Scandinavian minimalism. For us, design is not a question of fashion, but of what is beautiful at the second, third, and hundred-thousandth glance. After all, a mechanical wristwatch must serve its wearer a whole life long, and not be merely a transitory style trend. Our watches are renowned for their restrained dials, slender hands and narrow bezels—and it works: We have won well over 120 prizes for design and quality over the last few years, with some of our watches being considered classics already.

Nomos has won numerous design awards, including the famous Red Dot award for the Metro. How important are these prizes for a brand like Nomos?

In a word: very! We may have won over 120 prizes in past years for design, innovation and value-for-money, but each one is very valuable to us. They help customers to make their choice and be confident with it, and are a great source of positive feedback for our hard-working designers and watchmakers.

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Apart from design, you also focus a lot on advancing your movements in a technical sense. What for Nomos is the perfect movement?

When it comes to timepieces from NOMOS Glashütte, the movements (or calibers) that are at work within are just as crucial as their design. Our calibers are developed, designed, and produced in-house by us in Glashütte. We have an in-house research and development department dedicated to advancing our capabilities in this area, and we collaborate with the Technical University of Dresden and the Fraunhofer Institut für Werkstoff- und Strahltechnik (Fraunhofer Institute for material and beam technology) from time to time. Thanks to our R&D department, we have three patents so far. When it comes to technology, we are blazing trails. Our latest caliber, DUW 3001, which we revealed at Baselworld this year, is a good example of this: an incredibly slender automatic caliber that is both chronometer-standard and ready for series production. This set of attributes is unique in the watchmaking world—not forgetting that DUW 3001 also features our proprietary

escapement, the NOMOS swing system. It is the part of the movement that sets the pace—without it, there is no time. Only a handful of watchmaking companies worldwide can adjust, classify, and calibrate accurately enough to create such an assembly, a perfect interaction of all the parts.

Watches from Glashütte are known for their exquisite craftsmanship, but usually this comes at a price. How can Nomos deliver the famous Glashütte craftsmanship at such affordable prices?

NOMOS timepieces are full of Glashütte craftsmanship and the latest in research and development. However, our watches are fairly priced: Material and labor costs are always the basis of our calculation. NOMOS watches cost as much as necessary. Furthermore, we do not spend huge sums on flashy marketing campaigns or celebrity endorsements—rather, we let our watches and our many satisfied customers do the talking. And—most importantly—we’re based in Germany not Switzerland, which has implications on pricing as well.

NOMOS REVIEW

The secret to the success of Nomos might very well be that their watches are designed in Berlin, the capital of Germany: a vibrant, modern city, a true melting pot of cultures and people from all walks of life, the perfect birthplace for timeless, functional designs like Nomos watches. Don't call this design Bauhaus by the way, as it is in fact German Werkbund, the predecessor of Bauhaus, which is all about practicing restraint in design and having a keen eye for detail.



The watches are not built in Berlin but in Glashütte, a small city in the German Ore Mountains, and for over 150 years the home of fine German watchmaking. Although Nomos is a relatively new brand, founded as recently as 1990, it has not only adopted its standards but has also set the pace. Up to 95% of Nomos movements are made at the place of their manufacture in Glashütte, and often crafted by hand.

Concerned about the world around them, Nomos supports Doctors without Borders, the organization that provides healthcare at the front lines of human misery, whether it is the Ebola outbreak in Africa or the war in Syria. Doing what they do best, Nomos has created a selection of limited editions of their most iconic watches. The watches differ in subtle ways from their regular counterparts: the case-back is of course especially engraved, and at the bottom of each dial a small inscription reminds you of this unique limited edition.



NOMOS TANGENTE 38

More essential to the design of the watch is that the hands are actually oxidized in black, instead of tempered blue as on the regular Nomos-models. But visually the most important difference is the numeral at 12, which is now in red, the universal color of international, humanitarian aid. Deliberately or not, the red 12 was also quite common with the first wristwatches ever made. Many models from the 1910's featured this numeral in red, making these modern Nomos look more vintage.

In 1992 Nomos conceived the Tangente, which is in many ways a very deceptive watch. As simple as it looks from a distance, it is so full of details when you get up close and personal with it. The angles of the case, the shape of the numerals - they are all created to look as simple as possible, and with that become timeless in appearance, an achievement that shows the skill of Nomos designers, because making something look simple is often the most difficult to accomplish.

Nomos offers the Tangente in the Doctors without Borders limited edition in different sizes. The Tangente with a diameter of 38mm and 33mm are dedicated to Doctors Without Borders USA, the 35mm and 33mm Tangente to the Doctors Without Borders UK, and a 38mm model to Ärzte ohne Grenzen, the German organization of Doctors without Borders. All them can most certainly qualify for being called uni-sex. Because of the relatively small bezel, the Tangente is almost all dial and wears larger than its diameter might indicate.

The same can be said of the Tetra that Nomos also made for Doctors without Borders Germany. This square model really brings you back to the early decades of the 20th century, with its stepped lugs. Once again, the size might seem small at 27.5mm wide by 27.5mm high; it is a square watch and will wear considerably larger,

also indicated by the fact that it comes on an 18mm wide Horween Genuine Shell Cordovan black strap.

The approach that Nomos takes in the design of their watches is also what they apply to their movements: a mix of traditional Glashütte-elements, yet modernized where it would increase performance or reliability. All watches are powered by Nomos Alpha-caliber. This is a hand-wound caliber that is made in-house by Nomos in Glashütte. Just as the Tangente was their first watch design, the Alpha-caliber was the first movement Nomos developed. It is an elementary manual wind movement, sturdy, reliable and beautiful. It features the typical Glashütte three-quarter plate, decorated with Glashütte ribbing and NOMOS perlage, which offers a nice contrast to the tempered blue screws. Also stunning is the play of light of the Glashütte sunburst that is applied to the ratchet and crown wheel. Less visible is the Incabloc shock protection and the balance spring from Nivarox, and the fact that Nomos have adjusted the movement in six positions, all to ensure that the watch keeps excellent time, even under rougher and tougher conditions, which makes it indeed a fitting tribute for the people of Doctors without Borders.



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