

March 18, 2010

The Power Design Project leads the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the SEIKO Quartz Astron.

Each member of SEIKO's design team looks forward every year to the Power Design Project as it presents them with an opportunity to express their creativity in ways that are not constrained by any commercial considerations. Since its inception in 2002, the project has developed a growing reputation in the design industry, which was recognized in 2008 when it received the prestigious 'Good Design Award' in Japan. Furthermore, several designs have been so well appreciated that they have been added to the international SEIKO collection.

The challenge: To honor the Quartz Astron.

The 2009 project presented the SEIKO design team with a particularly attractive challenge as the designers were invited to submit ideas that celebrated one of SEIKO's most important ever watches, the 1969 SEIKO Quartz Astron, the world's first quartz watch, which was launched in December, 1969.

It is fitting that a design competition celebrates the Quartz Astron, as it, too, was the result of a competition among SEIKO's designers 40 years ago, at which time such procedures were very rare in the company.

The brief to the designers for the Power Design Project was very open. They could look back to the original for their inspiration, or they could reflect on the 40 years of the quartz revolution that the Quartz Astron ushered in.

In the end, 40 designs were chosen, made as prototypes and presented to the world at an exhibition held in early December, 2009 in Tokyo's smart Omote-sando district.



The exhibitions catalogue said it all; "When you look at these new Astron's with their different shapes, tones and colors, small, mid-sized and large; red, white and blue; understated mainstream and flamboyant, we hope you will enjoy their variety, charm and wit."

At Baselworld, 2010, twelve of the 40 designs are presented as part of the 40th anniversary of Quartz exhibition. The highlights include:

Badge

This designer sought to pay his respects to the team that made the first Quartz Astron by creating a watch that bestowed on the team a badge of honor of his own creation.



40-year Cut

This design takes its inspiration from the production process of the tuning-fork shape quartz oscillator. Each crystal was formed from a block of synthetic quartz and encased in a vacuum capsule whose shape adorns the dial. The case, too, has the same flattened hexagonal pattern on every facet.

Ruby Wedding

Just as 40 years of marriage is celebrated with a ruby, this creation honors 40 years of quartz with 40 rubies embedded in the dial. The design is a precise and recognizable echo of the original case, but there is an internal echo which appealed to the designer; the original Quartz Astron had eight rubies in the movement. They were used in the gear wheel bearings to alleviate the wear on the shaft caused by its rotational friction.

