

## Diamond luxury watches for Valais

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The manufacturer says Neuchâtel Ulysse Nardin manufacture of parts made of silicon or diamond Sigatec SA

mechanical watch has had almost disappeared during the Great Depression pm

orlogère the seventies and eighties. We swore more than quartz. So much so that the number of mechanical movements produced dropped from 74 to 4 million. The return of better days in the area coincided with that of the automatic mechanical watch. The manufacturer Neuchâtel Ulysse Nardin moved into position as one of the main actors in this revival. "Not with the processes of Grandpa, but by constantly seeking to innovate, to use the techniques of the third millennium," says Pierre Gyax, COO of Ulysse Nardin. Silicon

Engineers and designers of Neuchâtel mountains draw new moves, coming up with new complications. "We are not proficient in certain manufacturing constraints internally. For example, our dual exhaust seemed revolutionary direct us not working because of too much weight. Researchers at the high school in Le Locle, specialists in silicon, we have proposed to achieve in this field. Immediate success. Sewing up, we decided to make other elements in silicon, including spiral, hence the search for a manufacturer able to provide the precision we needed. In September 2006, Hubert Lorenz, director of Mimotec AG, and Rolf W. Schnyder, President of Ulysse Nardin, based equally Sigatec SA in Zion that will deliver the first piece silicon in May 2007 already," recalls Pierre Gyax. This alliance strengthens the position of the Valais economy in the world of watchmaking and demonstrates its ability to compete with any region in the field of microtechnology since even the manufacturers of the Jura have found their happiness in our township . Diamond

The diamond and luxury watch in the same household for centuries. But so far, the gem was used as decoration on the case. There she participated in the conquest of the movement. His extraordinary energy storage properties, resistance to corrosion, chemical inertness, its magnetic neutrality, its psychological impact on the buyer makes the ideal material for the movement's most prestigious that we reserve because of its price . For example, the diamond weighs 25% less than titanium, a metal known for its lightness, but it is ten times harder than he or steel. The friction between two diamond surfaces creates an energy loss of only 20% and requires no lubrication. Virtually indestructible, the diamond represents a kind of ideal material for micromechanics.

Decorative stone is expensive in itself. The diamond industry, however from extraction of the carbon in methane, a gas stream and cheap, generates it, high production costs. The process dates from the eighties and requires an enormous amount of energy to get the heat needed for processing, about 2300 degrees obtained through a furnace with a capacity of 100 kilowatts. Both diamonds are from the same molecule of carbon and are 100% chemically similar. Everyone knows the stone. As for the diamond industry, it comes in the form of films or plates called "wafers" that can be machined with extreme precision. It works well with silicon, also a cheap product at the base but that takes all its value following the work of man.

Sigatec uses clean rooms and other facilities for working Mimotec silicon and diamond. "We do not produce parts only diamond, we always combine with silicon. We claw back such plates of 50 microns with a diamond layer of 5 microns," said Marc-Andre Glassey, Director Sigatec. This method gives the component all the characteristics of the diamond with a small amount of material. Its more reasonable cost allows the brand to use Neuchâtel in several of its products and only in its high-end to 100,000 francs or more. And this technique of silicon, Ulysse Nardin and Sigatec do not want to appropriate it and make it available to everyone. Just the watch manufacturer requires there to go first.

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