

>watch

Bedat's
birthday
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NATIONAL JEWELER Q & A

Milus sets sights on expansion

By Beth Braverman

LOS ANGELES—Nine months after taking the helm of Milus North America and launching the Swiss watch brand state-side, Doron Basha, chief executive officer of the brand's new U.S. subsidiary, is still in full-speed-ahead mode.

In recent months, the brand hosted major launch events at the Tourneau stores in Las Vegas and New York; made its U.S. exhibiting debut during Las Vegas Market Week; and opened a showroom on Rodeo Drive in Los Angeles.

The Swiss-made men's and women's watches start at \$1,800 retail, but the brand's core range is \$5,000-\$15,000.

NATIONAL JEWELER caught up with Basha to learn more.

NATIONAL JEWELER: How has the brand been received overall?

DORON BASHA: BaselWorld gave us a great indication of what is going on, and Basel was a huge success. We sold out in most of



"Apiana Chronograph" by Milus in steel; suggested retail price is \$5,700. www.milus.com

the new categories. Internationally, there is a feeling out there that the brand is here to stay, and people are starting to invest because they know we have a future. Confidence is the first big hurdle you need to get past in this industry. [In the United States], we are still in launch mode, but we have penetrated the most important retailer in the United States: Tourneau. They feel the brand is here to stay, and we are doing some very interesting things together.

NJ: Do you have plans to expand the distribution much beyond Tourneau?

DB: Yes. I have had great



"Herios Triretrograde" in 18-karat white gold; suggested retail price is \$19,600. www.milus.com

inquiries from Los Angeles, New York and the Caribbean.

We began spending money in those markets immediately. We have a five-year plan to advertise nationally. Since the launch, I have gotten calls from Westime in Los Angeles, Govberg [Jewelers] in Philadelphia and many others.

NJ: So you are advertising in markets before distributing?

DB: Yes. We are still building the brand. We are creating an image and [exerting] pressure on the consumer side to go out and look for our brand. Now that we have a few points of sale, we will do promotions

within those markets. Every time I open an account, I do an event in that market.

NJ: How many doors would you like to be in?

DB: We are not launching the brand based on how many doors we can push into but on what the market can bear. We are promoting first with the advertising and then letting the

market come back to us before we decide which doors we want to be in. If it is 10 doors or 25 doors, than that's what it will be. If it's more than that, it depends on our distribution. But we can shift production from other markets to meet demand.



Doron Basha

NJ: What sets you apart from other luxury watch brands?

DB: The first thing is that we are a pure Swiss brand. Nothing in our watches is made outside of Switzerland. It's also a highly personal brand. We put a lot of emphasis on the sublime detail of the product. ♦



Watch repair experts at the new Tourneau watch service center facility in Queens, N.Y.

Tourneau facility makes repairs high priority

LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y.—More than a dozen men toil in the spacious, sun-filled workshop, painstakingly employing tweezers and loupes to repair high-end watches.

But despite its resemblance to the famous watchmaking factories of Switzerland, this hub of horological expertise is in Long Island City, Queens, and was built by U.S.-based retailer Tourneau to handle distribution and repair of watches coming into its stores.

The facility currently employs 95 people, including 17 watchmakers, but Andy

Arluck, Tourneau's vice president of customer service, says he'd love to hire at least a dozen more watchmakers.

The 27,250-square-foot site nearly doubles the combined square footage of Tourneau's three back-of-office locations that previously housed the watch repair, quality control, distribution and merchandising divisions of the company.

The facility handles 500 to 600 watch repairs per week and has a special department for the repair and evaluation of trade-ins. Watches average four to six weeks on site, and

watchmakers use only original manufacturer parts for repairs.

Eventually, Arluck says, he would like to take in repairs from other retailers as well.

In an effort to maintain current levels of service for Tourneau's customers, regional watchmakers will continue to manage individual service shops. These watchmakers will attend training and development programs at the new Long Island City facility, which will handle overflow and special repairs from the shops.

—Beth Braverman

Shhh ... Bedat & Co.'s getting up there

GENEVA—Bedat & Co., which celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2007, has a fresh look and a new ad campaign to fete a decade of Swiss watchmaking.

The sleek new print ads, shot by Peter Lindbergh, who specializes in black and white photography, feature models Carmen Kass and Andoni Anastasse, who appear with watches from the No. 3 and No. 7 collections, respectively.

The models each hold a finger up to their lips as if to silence onlookers, and the tag line reads "Very famous amongst very few people: Bedat & Co." But the company isn't keeping its name too quiet. Ten years post-launch, the brand is in some 300 doors throughout Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East.

—Teresa Novellino



Bedat & Co.'s No. 3, Ref. 386, in 18-karat rose gold (top of page) features an elongated, tonneau-shaped case and silvery-colored dial stamped with a wavy sunburst guilloché pattern; suggested retail is \$9,950 for watch with alligator strap, \$10,990 for watch with gold band (also comes in stainless steel). Estonian fashion model Carmen Kass (above) appears in a new ad campaign from Bedat & Co.