

hole & corner

celebrating craft, beauty, passion and skill



The Movement Issue

Blink and you'll miss it

Warning: contains moving parts...

INTERVIEWS JOSH SIMS
PHOTOGRAPHS LAURENCE ELLIS

TIME IS ON THEIR HANDS

*Working with incredible accuracy, cocooned from the outside world,
knowing that they have all the time they need to get things exactly right:
the best watchmakers share many qualities that make their job
a unique and specialised one. Hole & Corner takes to the road,
from London to Switzerland,
on a quest to see the most precise hands in the world at work...*

Hands up for
expertise: Luc Hiegel
of Hermès Watches,
photographed at
12pm, Wednesday
April 20, in Brugg

‘You can go a bit crazy
if you spend too much
time out of other
people’s company...’

—
*Ludovic Ballouard is an
independent watchmaker,
best known for his
award-winning
Upside Down watch*

*What do you like about being an
independent maker?*

‘I’d always wanted to be an
independent maker – it leaves you the
space to push ideas that bit further
than you can at a big-production
company. Certain things happening
in my life confirmed that you should
just do what you love doing. Life is
for living. It does mean that a good
part of my day is spent alone, at
the workbench; you need the quiet
and introspection to create. You can
go a bit crazy if you spend too much

time out of other people’s
company, though, as many
craftspeople do. You have to
get out and see someone.’

—
*What constitutes a successful
watch design for you?*

‘I think a watch should be about
more than telling the time. It should
have a story. With my Upside Down
watch, for example, the only numeral
ever facing the right way up is the
one that the hour hand is on. It’s
much like life; you can be the right
way up but it feels like everything
around you – your relationships, the
economy, whatever – is not. It’s a
more poetic approach.’

—
*Are you mechanically minded
in all your interests?*

‘Jobs were scarce after I’d trained as
a watchmaker, so my first job was
actually making cockpit displays. It
required a similar kind of precision,
of course. Since I was a kid I’d always
loved model aircraft. More recently
I’ve really got into flying drones. I
build some myself but, even if it’s a
kit, I can’t help adding something
to it. I love the real sense of freedom
drones give – add a camera and it’s
like being part of nature.’

ballouard.com; williamandson.com

Left: Ludovic
Ballouard for William
& Son, photographed
at 5pm, Wednesday
April 20, in Geneva,
Far left: Ballouard’s
tool set in its stand,
under the watchful
eye of his loupe



