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BOATS THAT ROCK

Splashing out on a luxury floating palace could be a smarter investment than bricks and mortar **P16**



SWIPE IT LUCKY

Why consumers are cashing in their loyalty programme points like never before **P2**



ONLY THE BRAVE

Fashion ditches the suit and tie in favour of comfort clothing **P10**



HOPES AND FEARS

Everything you need to know about Brit band Keane ahead of their debut gig in the UAE **P21**



FEEL THE HEAT

A definitive look at the looming battle of the 65th Ashes Series **P26**

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The Talk

“ You've got to play in a Lions test to understand the commitment

Ian McGeechan Lions manager **P29**



24|7

The devil is
in the detail
for the god
of small
things

■ Roland Iten to retail his designs exclusively at the Rivoli Prestige boutique in Burj Al Arab from tomorrow

DUBAI David Tusing

Ask Roland Iten why he does what he does and he answers with a dialogue from 1992 Hollywood courtroom comedy *My Cousin Vinny*.

In one of the film's many courtroom scenes, District Attorney Jim Trotter III asks out-of-work hairdresser Mona Lisa Vito (Marisa Tomei) why she was qualified to be an expert witness in a case involving tyre marks.

Vito replies: "Well my father was a mechanic. His father was a mechanic. My mother's father was a mechanic. My three brothers are mechanics. Four uncles on my father's side are mechanics..."

And that, explains Iten, is exactly why he is not an engineer. "My father was an engineer, his father was an engineer... we are a family of engineers."

Still, Iten's obsession with mechanical objects and their applications in everyday articles led him to start his company, Roland Iten Mechanical Luxury for Gentlemen, two years ago.

MECHANICAL LUXURY

THE CALIBRE R8. Made with more than 108 parts, every bit of this belt buckle is individually designed, manufactured and finished. Made for those situations where you need to manoeuvre in and out of your low-seated sports car and effortlessly tuck in your shirt, the Calibre R8 belt buckle offers a highly technical yet ornamental solution.

With the one-handed lever system, you can discretely adjust the girth of your belt, which will offer you exactly 35mm expansion – the two thumb measurement a tailor will traditionally cut into a custom-made suit for added comfort.

Constructed with solid gold components and a titanium body, this functional belt buckle includes hundreds of moveable roller bearings, plates and levers. Hand-finished by expert artisans in Geneva, each buckle contains eight diamonds set into the solid gold lever. The material and leather of the belt is customisable.



The Forecast

SATURDAY 4

SUNNY
HUMIDITY: 42%
SUNRISE: 5:33
SUNSET: 7:13



SUNDAY 5

SUNNY
HUMIDITY: 43%
SUNRISE: 5:33
SUNSET: 7:13



MONDAY 6

SUNNY
HUMIDITY: 43%
SUNRISE: 5:34
SUNSET: 7:13



TUESDAY 7

SUNNY
HUMIDITY: 49%
SUNRISE: 5:34
SUNSET: 7:13



WEDNESDAY 8

SUNNY
HUMIDITY: 46%
SUNRISE: 5:35
SUNSET: 7:13



THE BUSINESS OF Life

"I am Swiss, I grew up in the heart of the watchmaking industry and all around me were all these amazing design possibilities," says the 47-year-old inventor, designer and businessman.

"I realised that the philosophy and precision of watches could be translated into other items we see daily, and turned into a game," he says.

Starting with the premise that men, at least real men that is, are inherently obsessed with games and sports, Iten began to pick regular items of daily use, and look at them through the eyes of a watchmaker.

The result is what he now calls 'mechanical luxury', a new category of luxury men's accessories that are of high value, are individualistic, and painstakingly created for the "little boy in all men".

"When a product is made to fulfil a certain function, like a fighter plane, or a tank or a rifle, they have an alluring physical power combined with elegance. They are not designed to be beautiful but through their truthfulness, they are automatically beautiful. It's the fascination of total functionality," he says.



Wearing a belt, or putting on a cufflink, should be like a game, he adds, and there should be joy in going every step, discovering something new.

"It's like flying a plane or driving your own boat," he says.

In 2003, Iten designed his first mechanical belt buckle, made of gold and titanium, a multi-axle mechanism of more than 110 custom-made, mechanical pieces which allows the wearer about 35mm of extra girth at the flip of a lever.

That set him up to design his other masterpieces - a cufflink that changes looks and holds itself in place with the twist of a lever, a "fou lace" or shoe tip, that prevents laces from slipping through the holes, a credit card holder that dispenses the cards with one flip and a number of variations of his first belt design, custom-made with a variety of precious stones and metals.

"I didn't fit into any brand portfolio so we decided to start our own brand, our own company," he says.

The use of precious stones and gold, while adding the luxury element, is essential for their versatility

"It's the noise of it when it is used mechanically. It has a very distinctive sound, like it has substance," he says of gold.

"I like to use diamonds as reflectors in the same way that chrome is used in car interior design. But diamonds are also emotional... diamonds are a celebration and I like to use them as a celebration for a certain function."

Retailing between CHF15,000 (Dh51,000) and CHF35,000, each Roland Iten item takes about 18 months to design and produce.

"Time and patience are required to ensure the distinct high standards of craftsmanship are achieved," says the designer, who will retail his designs exclusively at the Rivoli Prestige boutique in Burj Al Arab from tomorrow.

His target is a man who "has amazing taste, knows what he wants, is passionate and is a perfectionist".

"A perfectly dressed gentlemen is like a knight in armour, he is untouchable. It is more about his attitude and his style than his clothes.

"You can create this untouchable image even wearing blue jeans. It goes back to honesty," he says.



RC81 CUFFLINKS. Move from a discreet and sober all-business look to festive elegance with 40 exposed diamonds, simply by flipping a lever.

The RC81 cufflink features a dual function rotation level, which rotates the cufflink "legs" to 90 degrees. When clicked into place in one direction, the lever locks the legs and exposes the 20 diamonds, and when rotated to the other direction, the lever covers the diamonds to reveal a more sober look. It can also be turned to get the legs to securely grip the shirt cuffs.

With a slight movement of your finger, there are 16 twisting, turning, flipping and pirouetting parts in the internal gear box to turn and lock the link into your cuff. And that feeling, says designer Roald Iten, is powerful.

Available in a number of colours, which are all customisable, all diamonds used in all Rolan Iten designs are conflict free.

"I didn't fit into any brand portfolio so we decided to start our own brand, our own company"
Roland Iten, designer



RCD 81 CREDIT CARD DISPENSER. Featuring a trigger dispensing mechanism which cascades up to four credit cards and then collapses them back inside the case with the same action, the credit card dispenser is light and ergonomically designed. The extruded aluminium case is ultra light and is ideal for engraving. Up to four credit cards can be stored in a staggered arrangement for quick identification and easy removal.

FOU LACE. Inspired by a traditional Italian shoe practice, which adds extra leather to the tips of laces to protect them and keep them from slipping through the holes, the Fou Lace glides the shoe string through the pieces so that it grips into place and stays put without the need for screws, clips or any additional fastening mechanism.

For those expensive shoes that speak your status, the mechanical shoe tip can be easily removed and applied to other shoes.

"It's like loading a gun," says designer Iten, explaining how a quick twist and turn of a tiny knob locks the tip of your shoe lace in.

