

Sinn, and other originals...

A new wave of superbly engineered watches is about to be launched in Western Australia, but they aren't, as many would think, made in Switzerland.

Sinn, MeisterSinger, Rainer Brand, Armin Strom, Benzinger, Sothis and the rather-hard-to-say-in-one-go Nautische Instrumente Muhle-Glashutte brands all come from Germany, a country with a watchmaking tradition rivalling that of the Swiss.

Frankfurt-based **Sinn** (a memorable brand-name if there ever was one) was started by pilot Helmut Sinn in 1961 but really began to make an impact when engineer Lothar Schmidt, who hailed from Swiss manufacturer IWC (profiled in *Scoop* last issue), bought the company in 1994.

Lothar introduced a whole lot of technical innovations – including models made from super-hard steel (the stuff used in modern U-boats) and pieces with special anti-humidity measures, using a “drying capsule” cleverly integrated into the case. The capsule changes colour according to the amount of

moisture absorbed. Sinn also has rugged magnetically shielded models (magnetic fields generated by electric motors, loudspeakers or other sources can interfere with the delicate workings of a mechanical watch), which could be perfect for workers at mine sites and the like.

Sinn uses top-end Swiss mechanical movements in its models, except for a special quartz diver's watch, the HYDRO, where the dial, movement and hands are immersed in a layer of oil. With no air inside the case, the HYDRO will never fog – a huge plus when you need ultra-accurate readings while submerged.

Sinn's models range from \$1490 to \$7670 and cover myriad designs, but the company sticks to the very German mantra of “function over form” (of which the pared-down “Model 556 Automatik” is a great example).

MeisterSinger, a company dating back to just 2001, is on the other hand (literally!), a completely different kettle of fish. The brainchild of designer Manfred Brassler, many of its models are inspired by timepieces from the 14th Century and have just one hand to display the time (the 12-hour dial is divided into 144 markers, each marker representing five minutes). MeisterSinger models range from \$1200 to \$13,895 (the beautiful Archao rose gold piece) and



SINNFUL: The sturdy Traveller (rrp \$3090, above) and sleek Frankfurt Finance Alarm models (right, rrp \$6650) from Sinn.

many of Manfred's creations are released in limited runs (less than 300 pieces).

Muhle-Glashutte's history dates back 135 years (the Muhle family began making measuring instruments for clock-makers in the East German town of Glashutte) but the rise of the Iron Curtain stopped them in their tracks. It wasn't until five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the reunification of Germany, that the company returned to the family's ownership.

They turned to making high-precision marine clocks and instruments (the Nautische Instrumente part of the name) and in 1994 branched out into wristwatches. Their beautiful, precise designs range from the SAR Rescue Timer (now standard issue to the German Sea Rescue Service, rrp \$2825) to the more classic looking Business Line range (which includes a groovy square-shaped Quadrant model).

TickTalk will look at Rainer Brand, Armin Strom and Benzinger models in a future column. *Stockists: WA retail outlets will be announced soon. In the meantime, check out definewatches.com.au.*

ONE HAND TICKING: Bottom opposite, the elegant MeisterSinger No. 3, beige dial on leather (rrp \$1935). Top: Muhle-Glashutte's striking SAR Rescue Timer on steel, rrp \$2825.

