

Founded in 1789, the world's oldest diamond company was originally called Backes & Co. The company began trading under the name of Backes & Strauss in 1873, when Max Strauss – who had initially been employed by the company as a lowly office boy – took over managing the company. Referred to by the brand as its “co-founding father”, Strauss was instrumental in turning Backes & Strauss into a global brand and also in forging its place within the world of *haute joaillerie*.

In celebration of Strauss, the *maison* has announced the Earl of Strauss wristwatch, which will be limited to 25 pieces. Featuring a 45mm white-gold case and black alligator-leather strap, the manual-winding movement is partially skeletonised and the watch is entirely set with 667 ideal-cut, round brilliant diamonds, weighing a total of 8.47cts. The case, buckle, dial, winding crown and movement are all adorned with flawless/VVS+ stones with a colour correction of F+. Less than 3 per cent of the world's diamonds fit these specifications.

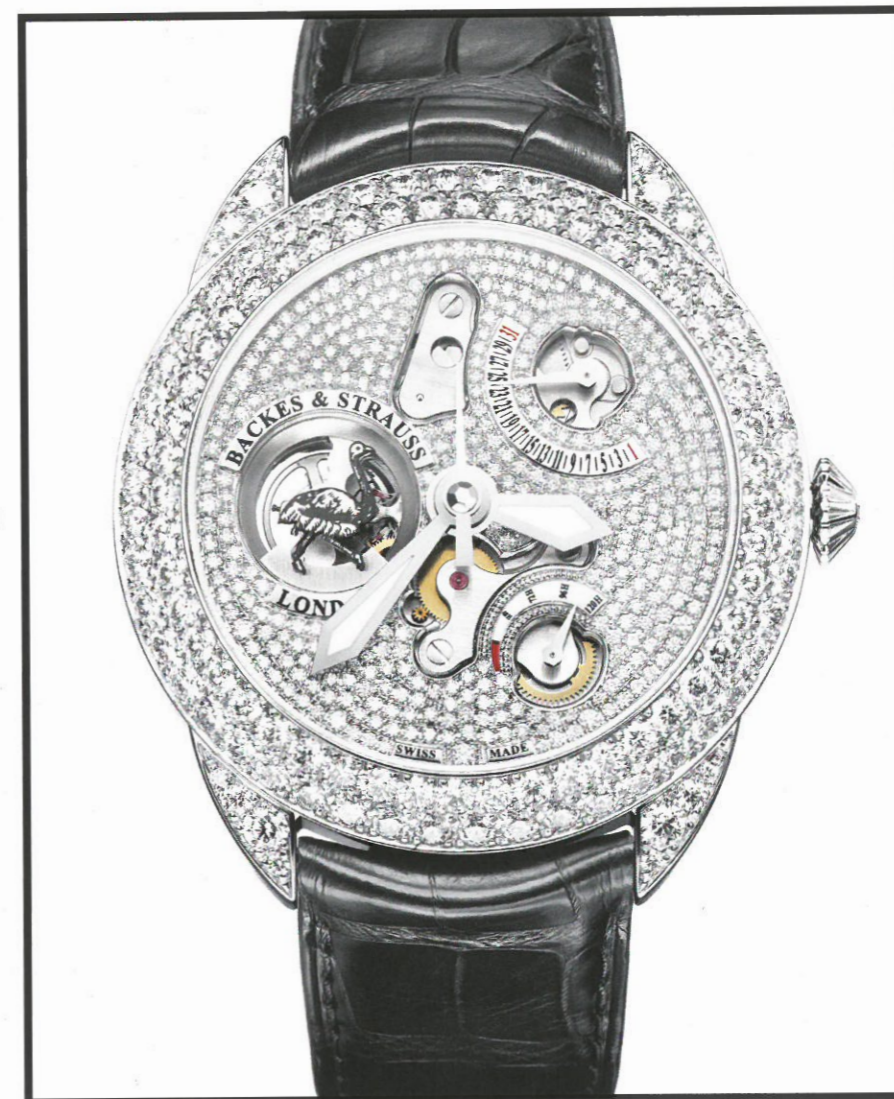
by Alan Seymour

As well as the superb stone setting, on a more functional level the Earl of Strauss's dial features a power reserve indicator at 5 o'clock and a date window at 2 o'clock. Unusually, the watch has “sword hands” (which, incidentally, can be found on several other Backes & Strauss timepieces) more commonly associated with more utilitarian tool watches like the British military-issued W10 Omega Seamaster 300 and 5517 Rolex “MilSub”. The oversized hands provided far greater readability in the arduous low-light conditions their uniformed wearers would be expected to operate in. In this context, however, the hands provide greater readability against the remarkably dazzling dial.

Also visible on the dial is the brand's signature ostrich logo, which has been incorporated into the calibre's balance wheel in further honour of Mr Strauss – *strauss* meaning ostrich in German. The flightless bird was adopted as the *maison's* emblem when Strauss assumed control in 1873. ★

With a movement created by master of complications Franck Muller, the latest limited edition from Backes & Strauss is set to be a glittering success.

CAST IN STONES



BACKES & STRAUSS EARL OF STRAUSS

MOVEMENT

Partially skeletonised manually-wound movement; partially diamond-set

CASE

45mm white gold

STRAP

Black alligator leather