

## Curiosity from The Forum: An exclusive interview to McGonigle by [Michele](#) - [Orologi di Classe](#)

Our “**interactive interviews**” adventure goes on. This is how I like to call them as they get involved [Orologi & Passioni](#) forum’s guys that are very enthusiasts and demonstrate us gratitude, and the craving to continue. Many world-famous watchmakers are kindly accepting to answer at their questions, although if they’re very busy at work. This time, together with “*Ilcommesso and Flyrobyfly*”, we confess our curiosities to **McGonigle**. The two Irish brothers - that since not a long time ago became independents - are spreading their name in the world of high-end horology thanks to their astonishing timepieces. I just want to remember their last creation [Tuscar](#).



[John e Stephen McGonigle](#)

**Q1 from “Ilcommesso” : Why did you start your own business? Why did you choose to create your own watch?**

**John McGonigle:** We were lucky enough to have had the opportunity of making beautiful watches for other watch brands. (ndr. John: [Audemars Piguet](#), Christophe Claret – Stephen: [Christophe Claret](#), [Frank Muller](#), [Breguet](#))

However these watches were made to our client’s designs and specification. They weren’t necessarily the type of watches that we’d like to own ourselves.

When we met the opportunity we founded our brand to make exactly the type of watches we always wanted to make.

**Stephen McGonigle:** I think a lot of people aspire to running their own business. Both of us had our own businesses before we teamed up but when we got the chance we jumped at it.



McGonigle Tourbillon

**Q2 from "Miche.." :** (Ironically) Irish men in the middle of a Swiss monopoly, are you crazy? But certainly you deeply thought before starting your own brand. Do you think this it's a hurdle to clear, or a good starting point for a new vision?

**John:** We did consider the wisdom of starting an Irish brand and how it would be accepted. In the few years prior to us starting McGonigle Watches we noticed that watch collectors were changing their buying habits.

Previously collectors of high end watches sought out the prestige brands that had been established for a hundred years or more.

With the help of watch magazines and the internet, collectors became more technically aware and started to focus their attention on newer brands and independent watchmakers. In short, the watches were becoming more important than the brands.

It was a natural progression to introduce a non-Swiss brand with watches made to the highest standards. We were sure that collectors would be interested enough in our work to see past any perceived disadvantage of a non-Swiss watch.

It appears to have worked.

**Stephen:** We certainly considered this issue but I personally saw it as a possible advantage.

I think most genuine watch collectors are not big-brand biased and as long as we can reach them, we can make just as big an impression. Indeed, there are other 'non Swiss' watchmakers doing very well.

The influences we've taken from Irish culture have made quite an impression with certain buyers and this is something we couldn't have certain of.



John and Stephen Working in Athlone



**Q3 from “Flyrobyfly” : What’s your target in the marketplace? If there’s anyone, by whom were you inspired?**

**John:** Our watches are designed along the principle of ‘*less is more*’. It is often more difficult to produce a design that is both simple and dramatic with all unnecessary details removed. We hope to appeal to collectors who understand this principle as well as our uncompromising high quality of function and finish.

The late Derek Pratt was a watchmaker who understood and practiced these qualities in the magnificent watches he made. He had an enormous influence on us.

[Philippe Dufour](#) has been like a prophet for so many independent watchmakers. His watches are a constant reminder of what quality is, least we ever forget. His Grande Sonnerie is one of the most accomplished watches ever made by an individual watchmaker.

**Stephen:** Certainly, at the beginning, it was collectors and this is still a very strong market for us. Geographically speaking, our market is worldwide. The One of Ten series of the Tuscar went to collectors in Australia, the U.S., Europe and Asia.

There are quite a few watchmakers that always impress me and I keep a keen eye on their progress. As far as inspiration, I’d agree with John, Derek Pratt was one of the best. Before I even qualified as a watchmaker I met Philippe Dufour and as much as his work was truly humbling, the man himself was very humble. At the time I wondered whether I could ever reach his level of quality.....I’m still trying.



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