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Bird on the Wing: X-Pen



The iTouch and the Renaissance are X-Pen's most recent additions.

It can be daunting, if not downright disheartening, to search for a good-looking, high-quality writing instrument if you're on a budget. To find a pen that is stylish, durable, writes well and won't break the bank is the quest of many of us neophytes to the fraternity of pen enthusiasts.

Guy BenAmi, founder and CEO of X-Penpal, plans to make the quest easier. The goal of BenAmi's company, started in 2010, was to introduce the writing instrument brand X-Pen to the market in the United States.

X-Pen, an Israeli brand, was established in 2003 and has grown exponentially over the last decade. Though design and most of the manufacturing take place in Tel Aviv, X-Pen is a genuinely international product. Most of the models are made of metal, with ballpoint mechanisms imported from Switzerland (produced by Premec SA) and American-made ink (produced by National Ink). Rollerball models are equipped with ceramic-tipped gel refills produced in Japan by Ohto. Fountain pen nibs and

feeds are also produced in house, with the iridium-tipped steel nibs undergoing a twenty-five-step production process. The fountain pens utilize a cartridge filling system and a medium nib size. Assembly takes place in plants in Taiwan, China, Japan and Korea and the pen is currently sold in at least forty-five countries—and more than 100 retail outlets.

While the majority of X-Pen models are made of metal, some resin-bodied models are offered in an array of colors. Trim ranges from

From left—Glory and Symphony models



matte chrome to rose gold plate. X-Pen offers twenty-four different models, many of them available in multiple trims and finishes to provide a plethora of possibilities.

The Atlantic is at the beginning of the catalog alphabetically and is made of lacquered metal. The Crown features a rubberized metal barrel and a trim in rose gold plate. The Lyric has a matte black finish with concentric silver rings up the barrel, while the Noble is a chrome model in an engraved hatchwork pattern. The Opera is a marbled resin-bodied beauty in several shades. The Paradise features metal or leather-wrapped barrels. The Phantom is a resin and

metal model available only in ballpoint, although most styles also come in fountain pen and rollerball. Other models include Classic, Fame, Legend, Lyric, Matrix, Novo, Podium, Silhouette and Tulip. X-Pen introduces two new models annually, and this year's additions are the Renaissance, made of ivory resin infused with lacquer, and the iTouch, a ballpoint with a stylus.

In addition, X-Pen offers a special edition collection, Religious Expressions, featuring thematic designs by artist Rachel Farhi in several styles finished in antique pewter. The two-pen Jerusalem Set commemorates the city sacred to all three of the

monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—with symbols representative of all three. A Peace pen, an Arabic Road Prayer pen, Christian-themed pens, a Russian Good Luck pen and a Judaica eight-pen series round out the collection.

Each X-Pen is backed by a lifetime guarantee against mechanical failure, exhibiting the company's confidence in its product. BenAmi says, "It's such an excellent product that I thought it was a unique opportunity. It's very difficult to find a great product that hasn't already been introduced to the U.S. market. I knew it could do very well in America." BenAmi's zeal for the product, however, isn't strictly



From left—Atlantic Stripes and Sorrento

entrepreneurial. He says, “From the moment that I had these pens in my possession, I had a newfound understanding of the pen world. I realized that it wasn’t just about a love for the product that mattered in this industry. It was about finding a real pleasure in writing and loving both the product and the experience—that’s what X-Penpal is all about.”

Noting that the X-Pen logo contains the silhouette of a bird in flight that represents a creative, free-minded approach to their designs, BenAmi says he wanted to meld a partnership between his company and the X-pen brand itself, hence, “X-Penpal.”

Representing the brand in the United States with a relatively small staff allows BenAmi to “keep the company, the product and the customer relationship very personal. The structure and size of X-Penpal allows us to concentrate on our line of products and provide a close and rare customer service experience.”

That doesn’t mean, however, that BenAmi is complacent in the status quo. “We are still expanding rapidly and plan to distribute and sell other lines of products as well as writing instrument lines,” he says. “I want to keep the opportunities for X-Penpal expansion as open as possible. I really

love what I do and I am always excited about new prospects and discovering new ways to share with customers the joy of writing. Who knows, maybe in the future you will see me coming out with my own pen line.”

While the sky is the limit for the young brand, as represented by the bird in the logo, the pricing is much more earth-bound. A stylish, durable writing instrument from X-Pen can be had for \$20 to \$130. Because, after all, X-Pens are not ex-pens-ive. (Ouch. Yes, I did go for the pun.)

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