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ORIS ARTELIER CALIBRE 112
is an in-house developed movement by Oris: a hand-wound calibre that features a 10-day power reserve, a patented non-linear power reserve indicator, a date function, and a second time zone with day/night indication.

www.oris.ch



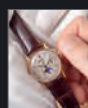
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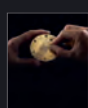
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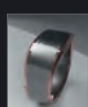
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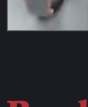


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EDITORIAL

WATCHMAKING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE WATCHMAKING

by Pierre Maillard, Editor-in-chief

Month after month, the negative figures continue to pour in. In April, Swiss watch exports fell once again, by 11.1% to be precise, compared with April 2015. Since the beginning of the year, the overall decline is edging towards -9.5%. With the notable exception of the USA, which has "climbed" a rather modest 1.2%, all key markets are in decline: China -36%, Hong Kong -17%, Italy -12.3%, Germany -11.1%, Japan -5.8%.... need we go on? And these are just the top six markets. What is even more worrying: this time it's the top-drawer companies that are taking the hit. "Watches in precious metals were the most strongly affected in April and clearly exerted a downward pull on the overall result," announced the Fédération Horlogère in a press release, noting that the decline in sales of steel watches, "while considerable, was half as significant."

Swiss watchmakers, who have withdrawn in droves to their gilded towers, assuming they are sufficiently insulated from the carnage being dealt out down below, are seeing their model of absolute exclusivity, reserved for the infamous 1% of the world's richest, dangerously undermined.

Whose fault is it? Please, don't try to pin it on smartwatches. That would be far too convenient. The rise to prominence of these "watches", which are not really watches at all (or only very marginally), has simply coincided with a situation that would in all likelihood have happened anyway. No, what we are witnessing is a turning point for society, a pivotal moment that the majority of Swiss watchmakers, with very few exceptions, were unable, or unwilling, to even countenance. We've said it a thousand times: you neglect accessible watches, and retreat to the inaccessible, at your peril. The mad rush to exclusionary heights of extravagance has almost played out, and the consequences are painful to contemplate. At the risk of repeating ourselves, we'll say once again that the watchmaking industry is a mirror of the society that imagined, designed and built it. And the signs are all there for anyone who cares to read them: the dominant model, based as it is upon increasingly blatant inequality, is close to becoming intolerable. This growing inequality is reflected perfectly by the Swiss watch industry, which produces a little over 2% of all watches sold worldwide (in 2015, 28 million out of 1.2 billion), but pockets 50% of the revenues. And that is quite obviously unbalanced, however you choose to look at it. As excess has been piled upon excess, the image of the Swiss watch has also been seriously tarnished. As its most extravagant creations were spotted on the wrists of Mexican drug lords, corrupt Chinese functionaries, louche Russian oligarchs, narcissistic rappers and vapid celebrities, the Swiss watch industry has seen its global image become tainted, suspect. In parallel, we have seen a gradual rise to prominence of the more punctilious German watch industry, which resisted the siren song of bling and is now doing very well, thank you. The same could be said of Japan, whose watchmaking skills are increasingly well-regarded and recognised.*

Because despite everything, watchmaking is not dead. Far from it. You only have to look at the astonishing number of watchmaking startups – in both the smartwatch and traditional watch segments – who have launched successful crowdfunding campaigns. Or look at the runaway success of the new entry-level giants offering a classic, conservative aesthetic. Or even the huge vintage watch revival, which demonstrates the appeal, even to younger generations, of conservative, discreet, classically elegant mechanical watchmaking with a rich history.

No, watchmaking is not dead. Far from it. But its economic model is changing. And we've heard the death knell of a certain brand of arrogance, of which the public has had its fill. We'll be revisiting all these topics online on www.europastar.com or www.watch-aficionado.com. We hope you enjoy them. Oh, and... long live watchmaking. ■

* At the time of going to press we learned that Frédérique Constant had been bought by Citizen. When we interviewed the company's founder and CEO Peter Stas for this issue, we asked him about his price offensive, illustrated by the launch of a Perpetual Calendar for less than 8,000 euros. He didn't say anything about the buyout, which was clearly already in the works, but the sale does lend support to our hypothesis that Japanese watchmakers have got it right where it comes to the importance of moderation in both pricing and aesthetics.



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WITH THE CALIBRE 112, **ORIS** IS CONVINCINGLY RECLAIMING ITS ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY



This autumn Oris will be introducing a new original calibre, developed and produced in-house: the Calibre 112. The movement, designed specifically with different time zones in mind, offers incontrovertible proof that Oris has truly reconnected with its fundamental values. In case you didn't know, Oris has produced around 285 in-house calibres over its 112-year history, and was once one of the ten biggest watch producers in the world. Today, Oris is reconnecting with its illustrious past as a powerhouse of mechanical movement production, offering real watches for real people – in other words: quality, functionality and beauty at 'democratic' prices.

by Pierre Maillard, Europa Star

Oris was founded in 1904 by Paul Cattin and Georges Christian, two watchmakers from La Chaux-de-Fonds, whose pioneering spirit led them to set up shop in Hölstein, in the Waldenburg valley. Their vision, their objective, was to produce high-quality mechanical watches for mass distribution, using the most advanced production technologies available at the time. They could not have predicted how successful they would become. Barely six years on, in 1910, Oris was already the region's biggest employer, with more than 300 staff. In 1925 the business was spread across no fewer than six different production sites, including one cutting-edge electroplating plant. At that point in its history, Oris was considered one of the most avant-garde watchmakers of the day. The Second World War brought a temporary reduction in activity, but the 1950s saw Oris rebound, and the business began to grow exponentially. At the head of the company was an industrialist by the name of Oscar Herzog, the brother-in-law of

Georges Christian, one of the two founders. Oscar Herzog took the strategy of industrialisation that lay at the root of the company's success even further, by rationalising manufacturing processes and enhancing Oris's capacity to develop and build its own machines and tools. At its zenith the firm's R&D department employed as many as 80 people.

This highly innovative approach enabled Oris to design and produce calibre after calibre, making the company the region's biggest employer and one of Switzerland's major watchmakers. In 1970, at the height of its success, Oris was among the top ten watch businesses in the world; it had 900 employees producing 1.2 million mechanical watches and clocks per year, and 279 calibres to its name, designed and made entirely in-house.

QUARTZ CHANGED EVERYTHING

But the advent of what became known as the 'quartz crisis' turned everything on its head. Swiss mechanical watches quickly began to lose ground against more accurate and cheap quartz watches. (Further contributing factors were the excessive strength of the Swiss franc – yes, even back then – and the watch industry's reluctance to even acknowledge the problem.) In less than ten years almost 900 Swiss watchmakers disappeared off the face of the earth. Oris survived, but barely.

In 1982 came an even more devastating blow. The crisis had ripped through the industry like a tornado and, following the reorganisation of Switzerland's production capacity, Oris was placed under a legal obligation to stop producing its own mechanical movements in favour of the nascent ETA. It was at this point, the lowest point of its history, that two Oris executives, Rolf Portmann (now honorary chairman) and Ulrich W. Herzog (CEO and majority shareholder), decided to buy the company. Shortly after the buyout the two men took a decision that at the time was considered at best deluded and, at worst, insane. The entire mechanical watchmaking sector was in tatters; Oris itself was no longer permitted to produce its own mechanical movements; clients, retailers and distributors

didn't want to know; and yet they turned their backs on quartz and decided to produce only mechanical watches. In an ironic twist, the turning point began with the 'enemy' – Japan, where the quartz tsunami had originated. Ulrich Herzog was on a trip to Japan when he noticed that the most style-conscious young Japanese had already tired of quartz, and were slowly coming back to mechanical watches. The concept of remaining 100% mechanical would, in the fullness of time, prove to be a stroke of genius. Thirty years on, Oris began to reap the rewards of its

bold wager. In the meantime, however, Oris had to keep its head down, while gradually winning back the territory it had lost.

SUBSTANCE REWARDED

Today the tide has turned, and Oris has succeeded without ever deviating from its mechanical trajectory. With a presence in 80 markets, CEO Rolf Studer says that Oris "is currently gaining significant market share. The zeitgeist is on our side, and that's a great help. You can sense a need to return to more solid values. Bling is out. People need more substance, but they don't necessarily want to bankrupt themselves to buy a watch. There is also a greater understanding of mechanical watchmaking. Consumers are better informed. All these factors work in our favour, because we have never strayed from our mechanical path. We've taken a longer, harder road, but honesty pays off in the end, because it creates more substance. What's more, our independence gives us an important margin of freedom, and allows us to focus on what's important: our products."

Forced to halt movement production in 1982, Oris turned first to ETA and then to Sellita, which would become a very important partner. The company never lost its mechanical savoir-faire, however. In 1982 Oris began to develop in-house a whole range of modules and mechanical innovations, such as the recent Depth Gauge, which uses water to measure depth, or the mechanical altimeter and barometer patented in 2014. Countless innovative products, such as the Pointer-Date, the Worldtimer, the Artix chronograph with its countdown timer, the Pro-Diver Pointer Moon and numerous other creations have appeared over the decades.

Given that the company was all but destroyed by the crisis and the subsequent consolidation of movement production with the ETA 'conglomerate' (which Rolf Studer likes to describe as "anti-democratic"), there is no doubt that Oris has more than got its own back.



CALIBRE ORIS 110

A PLAN FOR INDUSTRIAL RECONQUEST

Oris had been thinking seriously about recovering its industrial autonomy since the early 2000s. But the plan really came together in 2011, when the decision was taken to relaunch production of a proprietary mechanical movement. The spec sheet drawn up was taken straight from the company's history books: a manually-wound movement designed specifically for mass-production, a modest 190 components, a power reserve of 10 days achieved with a single large barrel, a non-linear power reserve indicator (patented: the hand acceler ►



CALIBRE ORIS 111

Dimensions Ø 34 mm, 15". Functions: Central hour and minute hand, small seconds at 9 o'clock, non-linear power reserve indication at 3 o'clock, date aperture, date corrector, fine timing device and stop-second. Winding: Hand wound. Power reserve: 240 hours.



THE ARTELIER CALIBRE 111

Having been put to the test with the Calibre 110, the technology used in the first special series was ready to be incorporated into the brand's current collections. The Calibre 111 that followed in 2015 had the same strongly structured architecture and the same technical characteristics, including the exceptional 10-day power reserve and non-linear power reserve indicator, the same combination of handcrafted finishes – the bridges are hand-polished and hand-chamfered – and industrial techniques that underline the eminently functional nature of the watch. Where the Calibre 111 differs is in the addition of a third complication in the form of a large date – a combination that is still unique in watchmaking.

Oris, which designed and developed this new movement entirely in-house, is certainly not yet equipped to produce every component internally. But it's only a matter of time. The parts are manufactured with the help of a number of highly skilled partners along the Jurassic Arc. All of the checking, mounting and assembly, however, is done by Oris.

For this important, perhaps crucial, launch, Oris presented the Calibre 111 in a 43 mm round case with sleek, classical lines, in steel (CHF 5,300) and rose gold (CHF 14,500). Eminently legible, graphically balanced and harmonious, with a domed sapphire crystal front and back and a screwed case back, the Calibre 111 collection comes with a choice of opaline silver-gold, maroon, sunray black-gold or silver-grey dial on a crocodile leather strap.

ates as the barrel empties), a clean architecture and design paying tribute to its 100% Swiss industrial origins, all at a 'democratic' price. The result was the Calibre 110, presented in 2014, the year of the company's 110th anniversary.

"There were several reasons for this decision," explains Rolf Studer. "As well as allowing us to reconnect with our industrial heritage as a movement manufacturer, we wanted to offer our clients a movement of our own construction. A movement which, while demonstrating our abilities, remains in our typically affordable price range. It is nevertheless at the top end, coming in at around CHF 5,000. [The average price of an Oris watch is CHF 2,500.] This base movement was designed from the outset to be a springboard for the development of new collections, expanding our range and offering a number of price points. Initial reactions from our retailers and customers were surprising and reassuring. The first anniversary series, limited to 110 units in gold, flew off the shelves, even though its price was exceptionally high for us at CHF 14,500. But what quickly became clear was that people were starting to look at us differently. Retailers are more open to our proposals, and our patient democratic strategy, *'Real watches for real people'*, seems to be coming into its own."

● WORLD TRAVELLER

The watch's second time zone appears in a subdial at 12 o'clock and shows the time in full, with dedicated hour and minute hands, while the day/night indication is shown by two apertures in the dial.

● ONE BARREL, 10 DAYS

The Calibre 112 uses a single-barrel concept. Power is stored in a mainspring that measures 1.8 metres when stretched out. The calibre has been engineered so that the power is released evenly over the 10-day period.

● CASE STUDY

The new Oris Calibre 112 collection comes in a choice of two case materials: solid 18-karat rose gold and stainless steel. The 43 mm multi-piece construction case is water-resistant to 3 bar/30 m

● NON-LINEAR POWER RESERVE INDICATOR

The display at 3 o'clock on the dial indicates the amount of power remaining in the barrel from 10 days down to zero. At the top of the scale, the notches representing the days are close together, moving further apart at the bottom. As the power is released the hand moves clockwise around the scale, slowly at first, and then more quickly as the notches become more spread out. This gives the wearer a far clearer indication of how much power is left in the watch as the moment to wind it approaches. Oris has patented this development.

● DATE CHANGE

Calibre 112 differs from Calibre 110 in that it has a date window, a useful addition to the watch's roster of functions.

● IN DETAIL

The Oris Calibre 112 watch is equipped with a sapphire crystal glass covering the dial, a choice of three dials with applied indices and numerals, a sapphire crystal case back and a Louisiana crocodile leather strap. It is delivered in a luxurious wooden box.



NEW HEIGHTS: THE ARTELIER CALIBRE 112

With the new in-house family thoroughly put through its paces and fully incorporated into its collections, this year Oris was able to move to the third phase of its programme: the Artelier Calibre 112. Oris's motto is *'Real watches for real people'*. Given the company's democratic ambition to offer watches of outstanding quality, with genuinely useful functions, classically elegant looks and superb legibility, it was inevitable that it should, sooner or later, come out with one of the most convenient and practical functions for our internationally nomadic lifestyles: a second time zone located at 12 o'clock, along with a day/night indicator. The highly regimented architecture of the Calibre 112 perfectly encapsulates Oris's philosophy, at the crossroads of art and industry. Shaped and machined with superlative precision

thanks to the most sophisticated tools, assembled in the Oris workshops, relentlessly checked, finished and decorated both by machine and by hand to achieve the most refined polish, designed to offer incomparable value for money, the Calibre 112 is the engine driving three stylish globe-trotters: in steel with blue-grey dial and a brown crocodile leather strap or steel bracelet; in steel with opaline silver dial and black crocodile strap or steel bracelet; and a bi-colour version with 18K rose gold bezel on a chocolate brown crocodile strap.

With its perfectly legible and elegant face, its scrupulously balanced dial, its functionality, user-friendliness, ergonomic perfection and minimalist aesthetic, the Oris Artelier Calibre 112 Collection marks another step in Oris's triumphant return to the exacting world of mechanical movement manufacture. ■

GIRARD-PERREGAUX

CELEBRATES A FRESH START

On its 225th birthday, Girard-Perregaux is seeking both to reassure and to surprise the global watch community, by reminding it of the company's historic place in the Swiss watchmaking landscape and its longstanding quest for precision, and by raiding its rich heritage to revive the iconic models of the past.

by Serge Maillard, Europa Star

As we explained in our last issue, under the initiative of its dynamic CEO, Antonio Calce, Girard-Perregaux is undertaking a fresh start (see interview in *Europa Star* 2/16). The venerable company based in La Chaux-de-Fonds celebrates its 225th birthday this year, and is taking advantage of the anniversary to showcase its rich heritage while laying the foundations for its future. In an industry in flux, Girard-Perregaux aims to reaffirm its status as the choice of connoisseurs, while at the same time claiming a new audience through more transparent, more accessible and more focused positioning. The company has access to a virtually limitless catalogue of innovations going back hundreds of years (it holds more than 80 patents), the perfect foundation for a triumphant comeback.

Several highlights await in this jubilee year; we have chosen to focus on four of the iconic creations. The reworking of the leg-

ESMERALDA (1889)



endary three-bridge tourbillon *Esmeralda*, which was presented for the first time in 1889 at the Universal Exhibition in Paris, is a potent symbol of the quest for precision that has made Girard-Perregaux one of the most respected manufacturers in the watchmaking world. The *Place Girardet* collection provides a key

to the company's 225-year history with as many breathtaking pieces. The *Laureato* with its vintage and sporty looks – bang on-trend, according to our observations at Baselworld – borrows the DNA of a model launched in 1975. Equally vintage, and also limited to 225 pieces, the *Heritage 1957* is inspired by a model unveiled at the end of the 1950s. Girard-Perregaux is also hoping to please its female clients with the new *Cat's Eye Majestic*. This iconic model is presented in a vertical case, with new dimensions, giving the watch a thoroughly modern makeover.

225 YEARS OF WATCHMAKING CHALLENGES

Girard-Perregaux is one of the rare watchmakers that can legitimately lay claim to the perhaps over-used title of “manufacturer”. Today, the company has earned a reputation for its high-quality finishes, and has all the in-house skills required to make a watch, from initial design to the final finish.

It was towards the end of the 18th century that Jean-François Bautte, a Geneva watchmaker-jeweller, laid the foundations for the future company. He and his artisans produced watches, automata, jewellery and music boxes. Jean-François Bautte excelled in what are called “form watches” – models representing musical instruments, insects, even a perfume diffuser! He was also one of the first watchmakers to design ultra-thin watches. While the origins of the company can be traced back to 1791, it didn't acquire its current name until 1856, when Constant Girard married Marie Perregaux.

The brand's signature three bridges emerged in the mid-19th century. In 1867, at the Universal Exhibition in Paris, Constant Girard Perregaux introduced his first pocket watch featuring a tourbillon suspended under three bridges. Twenty-two years later, back in the French capital, the concept had reached its ultimate expression in the form of a tourbillon with three gold bridges, which became known as the *Esmeralda*. At the end of the 1950s Girard-Perregaux pioneered the establishment of a dedicated research and development department, which led to the 1965 introduction of the Gyromatic HF, the first high-frequency movement, beating at 36,000 vph. One year later the company's high-frequency chronometers were rewarded

ESMERALDA



THE ESMERALDA: A MASTERPIECE

with the Neuchâtel Observatory's Prix du Centenaire. The following decade was marked by the advent of quartz. Nevertheless, Girard-Perregaux quickly understood this new technology's potential to further its quest for precision, and launched into mass producing quartz watches, whose 32,768 Hertz frequency remains a universal standard today.

In 2008 Girard-Perregaux unveiled a revolutionary innovation: a constant escapement movement whose design was based around a silicon blade thinner than a hair. The Constant Escapement L.M. won the Aiguille d'Or at the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève.

To share this rich heritage with the public, Girard-Perregaux is currently constructing a new museum in La Chaux-de-Fonds, in the historic building known as the "Château" at Rue du Progrès 129. It was built in 1908 by architect Léon Boillot, according to "feudal" and "Swiss renaissance" principles. As Antonio Calce, explains, "It won't be your traditional rows of display cases; it will be an immersive experience."

This iconic tourbillon watch, which is more than a century old, represents better than any other timepiece Girard-Perregaux's obsessive pursuit of precision. It was only natural that the company should contemplate producing a re-issue, which will be released this summer to mark the company's 225th anniversary. "The Esmeralda is a combination of technique and architecture. It is part of our strategy to reposition the brand as a historic Swiss manufacture," explains the CEO. Architecturally, the original watch was very much of its time, its structural similarities to many bridges, even the Eiffel Tower, a visual reminder of the late 19th century burgeoning of industry across Europe.

What Constant Girard wanted was to bring together all the finest watchmaking techniques of the time to produce a masterpiece. The watch case is decorated with engravings by Fritz Kundert, the most eminent engraver of his time. And the three bridge system enhances the architectural presence of the movement. ►

As far back as 1860, Constant Girard had begun “theatricalising” the mechanical workings of his watches, and his first three bridge tourbillon watch was genuinely revolutionary in the way its components were staged and choreographed, giving an artistic dimension to the tourbillon, which had previously been considered a purely technical mechanism. But that did not detract from its enhanced precision – far from it. Seven years later, the model was awarded its first chronometry prize by the Neuchâtel Observatory. The tourbillon with three gold bridges was patented in the United States in 1884, because at that time the Swiss cantons had not been able to agree to a joint federal patent! Girard-Perregaux submitted around 27 three-bridge tourbillons to the Neuchâtel Observatory between 1865 and 1911.

The culmination came in 1889, when a new model by Constant Girard – a tourbillon pocket watch with pivoted detent and three gold bridges – won the gold medal in its category at the Universal Exhibition in Paris. Its name, “La Esmeralda”, came from the Mexico City shop of jeweller and watch merchant Hauser, Zivy & Cie. For several decades the watch belonged to Porfirio Diaz, the Mexican President, and his heirs. In 1970, circumstances conspired to return the icon to the Manufacture Girard-Perregaux Museum, when the company’s general manager at the time, Jean-Edouard Friedrich, was contacted by a descendant of General Diaz, and was able to buy back the watch. The timepiece certainly deserves its place in the museum, since it contains the oldest movement still in production, and its overall structure has remained unchanged since 1860.

The new model is faithful to the virtues of its illustrious predecessor, successfully combining aesthetic, technical and symbolic principles. In the middle of the three parallel bridges are the diamond-polished settings, held in place with two screws, which mean that the barrel, centre wheel and tourbillon carriage must be in line with each other. The three-part layout of the mainplate, the gold bridges and the organs visible on the front, even the number of arms on the tourbillon carriage, are a reminder that the number three and its multiples underlie the measurement of past, present and future time.

The 44 mm 18K rose gold case houses the automatic tourbillon mechanical calibre with its three bridges, which occupies the entire width of the case. The refined lines of the tourbillon carriage form the distinctive lyre shape developed by Constant Girard-Perregaux. “The tourbillon, the craftsmanship and the

meticulous regulation are features that the original watch and its reincarnation share, in addition to the movement and the bridges, obviously,” notes Antonio Calce. It’s a purist’s dream.

ONE YEAR, ONE WATCH

The anniversary number 225 features in the same number of unique watches, each of whose dials is individually designed (index style, minutes track, barleycorn or basketweave guilloché decoration, satin and sandblasted finishes). The models of the Place Girardet collection all feature a gold plaque at 9 o’clock, engraved with a year between 1791 and 2016, and a quotation in the centre of the dial referring to an important event from that date.

The series covers the major milestones in Girard-Perregaux’s history since 1791, as well as pivotal cultural, scientific and political events. The “face” of the collection’s models incorporates the manufacture’s iconic gold bridge at 6 o’clock, which for the first time arcs over the oscillations of the Microvar variable inertia balance wheel. The dials alternate a variety of colours, finishes and decorations, and the type and style of indices varies according to the historic period.

PLACE GIRARDET (2016)





LAUREATO

THE GRADUATE

Now let's turn to another landmark year for Girard-Perregaux: 1975. That was the year the company launched the disruptive Laureato, which broke all the conventions of the time in terms of its shape, materials and movement. Movie buffs may already have guessed that its name was inspired by Mike Nichols' famous film, *The Graduate* ('Il Laureato' in Italian), which captures the uncertainty of an era when traditional values were being questioned by a younger generation. It was also a time when steel became a dominant presence in watches, giving them a sportier and more active profile. The design of this watch was an inspired move at a time when marketing departments hadn't yet taken their first steps into the world of watchmaking. That says it all.

The design was bold in a number of ways. The Laureato featured a pioneering integrated bracelet, polished octagonal bezel set into a satin-brushed case and harmoniously alternating shiny and matt finishes (the Laureato was a perfect exponent

of the nascent trend for two-tone watches). The audacity extended to the inside: at a time of overwhelming technical upheavals in the 1970s, Girard-Perregaux put its energy into developing an in-house quartz calibre with an oscillation frequency of 32,768 Hz, setting the standard that continues to be applied today.

2016 marks a return to its original values. Two series limited to – wait for it... – 225 units pay tribute to the vintage steel watch, one with a blue dial and the other in grey. The octagonal bezel is back, as is the subtle play of polished and satin finishes on the gracefully integrated flexible bracelet. Its 41 mm diameter marks a return to "reasonable standards after allowing itself a momentary foray into the XXL era," as the company literature points out. The baton-shaped hands come from the original model and have been embellished with a hint of luminescent material, while the dial is stamped with a Clou de Paris mini checkerboard pattern, like its 1975 forebear. The date appears at 3 o'clock. It's a 'post-vintage, new-wave' watch (see our *Vintagemania* feature on www.watch-aficionado.com). ►

A LANDMARK FOR PRECISION

Reissues are definitely one of the major trends of this year. The Girard-Perregaux Heritage 1957 model draws inspiration from the aesthetic codes of the Gyromatic (from the Greek *gyros* for rotation, and English *automatic*) of the 1950s, whose revolutionary movement simplified the winding mechanism of automatic watches. It was the answer to a conundrum that had exercised the ingenuity of watchmakers since the 1930s: how can you make an automatic watch both accurate and reliable, while making it more energy-efficient?

Girard-Perregaux's initial response, which dates back to 1957, was to design an extremely compact 'free-wheel' clutch system to transmit energy from the rotor more simply, efficiently and reliably, opening the doors to a reduction in the size of automatic watches. The second innovation was the high-frequency movement known as the Gyromatic HF. From the mid-1960s the company began to sell watches running at 36,000 vibrations per hour, rather than the 18,000 to 21,600 of their predecessors, thus considerably improving the precision and reliability of the timepieces – a genuine obsession for the company. The design is also elegant, sophisticated and timeless. The 225 reissued Heritage 1957 watches in steel, with their vintage good looks, are a faithful reflection of the spirit of their ancestors.



HERITAGE 1957

CAT'S EYE MAJESTIC



CAT'S EYE MAJESTIC, VERTICALLY UNCHALLENGED

What about the ladies? Girard-Perregaux, one of the first watchmakers to fit its women's timepieces with a mechanical movement, is introducing a new Cat's Eye, in the Majestic model, with its oval case vertically oriented. Since its creation in 2004, the Cat's Eye collection has earned its place among the most iconic ladies' watches, with its distinctive oval dial. In conclusion, Girard-Perregaux is certainly not resting on its laurels, or on its 225-year history. For its jubilee year, it is deploying a dual strategy: re-establishing its position as one of the pillars of Swiss watchmaking history and a pioneer in the pursuit of the precision, and laying the foundations for the company's future by reinterpreting its peerless vintage heritage, an approach currently riding a wave of popularity. Its expert watchmakers need only immerse themselves in the company's rich archives to unearth forgotten legends and breathe new life into them. The new museum, which is preparing to reopen its doors next year, will send a strong message to the public. Not to mention the comeback of Girard-Perregaux at the SIHH as of 2017! ■



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