

#helvet

GENEVA

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where the water is the mirror of the world.



WINTER 2025-2026



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A collection without limits, the Planet Ocean embodies OMEGA's passion to explore. For the latest evolution, this Co-Axial Master Chronometer model follows the ocean's call with a design that is entirely transformed. Featuring a sharper and more angular case in stainless steel, it echoes the styles of Seamaster heritage, while offering an overall look that feels contemporary and invigorated.





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#helvet



living the high life

*Winter in Switzerland naturally slows the pace.
Snow softens the landscape, the light shifts with quiet
precision, and every place seems to breathe in its own way.*

Our new editions invite you to experience the season anew
and explore the atmosphere that defines each destination.

helvet.swiss

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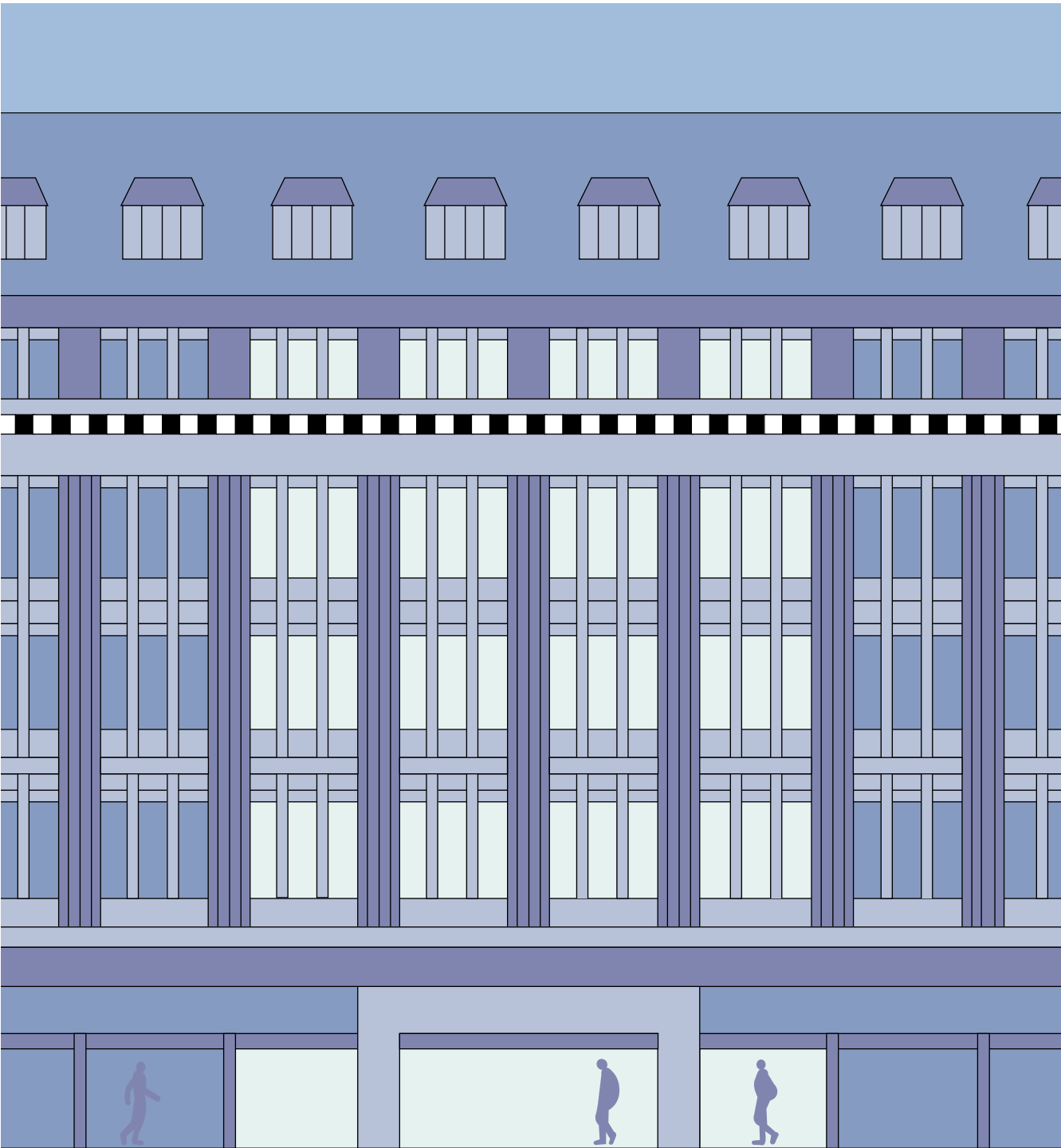
Editorial

Tick tock, tick tock. For nearly five centuries, Geneva's heart has beat to the rhythm of watch movements. From wearable watches to tabletop clocks, spring-wound pocket watches, grandfather clocks, enamelled or repeated watches, watches with calendars that play music or feature miniature automations, the technique behind these wonders never ceased to improve and Genevans never stopped inventing. Until the advent of the wristwatch in the roaring twenties – driven notably by Patek Philippe, who designed one of the first models for the Countess Koscowicz of Hungary as early as 1868.

Know-how is one thing, talent is another. That was ideal for Genevans, who have a flair for commerce. By the 18th century, Swiss watches were doing well abroad. Two or three generations later, the watchmakers themselves were doing well abroad, travelling across the globe to satisfy a clientele with an insatiable appetite for innovation, rare technologies and prestige. They travelled by steamboat, train, mule, donkey or even camel. Such a journey was destiny for Hugo Buchser, the founder of watchmaking magazine Europa Star, which is preparing now to celebrate its centenary – an incredible family adventure.

Making life easier for pilots, divers, astronauts... the watch followed the course of history, reinforcing the legendary status of fine Swiss watchmaking and its brightest stars – like that of iconoclast Max Büsser, of MB&F, who is celebrating 20 years of history. In time, Switzerland's national identity became infused with core watchmaking values: rigour, meticulousness, refinement. The ability to measure time is no longer a luxury: designing and fabricating a watch, today, is a defining personality trait. By always striving for the next innovation and watch complication, watchmakers are shaping the future. Watches and Wonders, the largest specialised trade show in the country (taking place in Geneva 14-20 April 2026), unites the entirety of the profession, acting as a show window for both the industry and the nation. Gastronomy, architecture and even floristry have followed suite, echoing similar aesthetics and precision, going so far as to build direct links between luxury watchmaking and high-end gastronomy. This "Swissness", this passion for timekeeping and the values it embodies, are also at the heart of this magazine's philosophy.

Christian Bugnon
Publisher & Editor-in-chief



GLOBUS

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#news



GASTRONOMY

**GAULT&MILLAU:
A HOST OF NEW
ADDITIONS FOR 2026**

This celebrated gastronomy guide announces its rankings each fall, and this time ten Genevan locales made the cut, nine of which improved their previous scores! It's undeniable proof of Geneva's reputation for high-quality fine dining, putting the city on par with many of Europe's largest capitals. Two establishments scored 14 points in the latest edition: the 21 Club in Eaux-Vives, with its "inventive and refined cuisine that's buoyed by a festive ambiance", and Ottolenghi, inside the Mandarin Oriental Geneva, for its "creative Mediterranean cuisine, distinguished by a remarkable wine list" – the first restaurant by Chef Yotam Ottolenghi outside of the United Kingdom.

gaultmillau.ch

WATCHMAKING

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY,
BVLGARI!**

It all began with high jewellery, followed by leatherworking, perfumes and watchmaking. Diving headfirst into this universe in the early 2000s, the Italian brand has since never ceased to position itself as a rare manufacturer, beautifully marrying the Roman elegance of its origins with radical innovation (think: Octo Finissimo). Discover all this and more at the brand's Geneva boutique, at 30 Rue du Rhône, as the company celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. It was here, in 1975, that Gianni Bulgari perfected the legendary Bvlgari Bvlgari watch. Originally designed as a special gift for VIP clients, it marked the brand's entry into the selective world of exceptional timepieces.

bulgari.com

HOSPITALITY

**THE WOODWARD JOINS
THE AUBERGE RESORTS
COLLECTION**

If there's only one iconic address in Geneva, this is it. Behind its belle époque façade on Quai Wilson, facing Lake Geneva, The Woodward Hotel exclusively offers suites – 26 of them to be exact; most have a view of the lake, but each one is uniquely designed and features a marble fireplace. It also boasts the 1,200 m² Guerlain Spa that's home to Geneva's largest indoor pool, the only two Michelin Star restaurant in the city (L'Atelier Robuchon) and an intimately unique cigar lounge that's built inside a former bank vault! To further showcase the venue, The Woodward has joined the 2025 Auberge Resorts Collection, which spans an impressive portfolio of exceptional (mostly American) properties.

auberge.com/the-woodward



GASTRONOMY

**EXCEPTIONAL
BOTTLES, ARAKEL-STYLE**

Arakel is one of Geneva's leading restaurants, awarded in 2024 with a Michelin Star and chef Quentin Philippe being named "Discovery of the Year", and is also famous for its exceptional wine cellar, which boasts more than 1,500 crus. The restaurant's parent group has heavily invested in this domain, banking on the know-how of their very own wine merchant and researcher Winedigger, which recently opened just three streets away (7 Rue du Nant). Its mission: "to discover rare and interesting wines from around the world".

winedigger.ch

CHRISTMAS

**EMBRACE THE
CHRISTMAS SPIRIT**

In Geneva, the grey days of autumn begin to fade away on 20th November, when Noël au Quai – the city's most welcoming Christmas market – opens at Quai du Mont-Blanc. The delightful smell of mulled wine and cinnamon envelops the artist and exhibitor chalets (which are refreshed every week), while not far off, the children's village comes to life with carousels and activities in the Kids' Yurt. To quench your thirst and satisfy your hunger, explore the street food stands, the Christmas Pub (with DJ nights) and the Chalet à Fondue – it's a perfect way to take a warm break while admiring a view of the Jet d'Eau.

noel-au-quai.ch

CULTURE

**CRANS-MONTANA
MEETS GENEVA**

The Opale Foundation is a landmark cultural institution in Valais and the only European museum dedicated to contemporary Australian Aboriginal art. This winter (11th December 2025 to 12th April 2026), the foundation is teaming up with Geneva's Rath Museum to exhibit a selection of works by great female figures – like Mirdidingkithi Juwarnda Sally Gabori and Emily Kame Kngwarreye – that represent millennia of tradition. The exhibition is open from Wednesday to Friday from 14:00-19:00 and on weekends from 11:00-18:00.

mahmah.ch

HOSPITALITY

LA RÉSERVE #1

It's a true refuge; 10 acres of green oasis along some of Lake Geneva's most desirable shorelines that's set apart from the bustle of the city – yet quickly reached aboard the hotel's elegant, wooden speedboat that flies over the water. Here, comfort reigns, every room is unique, inspired by African lodges, and there's nothing short of 5-star Swiss service. Already named the #1 Hotel in Switzerland in 2019 and 2020 in the CondéNast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards, La Réserve has once again claimed the top spot on the podium for 2025.

lareserve-geneve.com





WINTER 2025-2026



GASTRONOMY
AFTERNOON TEA
AT SALON DUFOUR

As Geneva's oldest hotel (1834), the Hotel des Bergues has welcomed more royals than any other establishment in the city. It offers a temporary and opulent interlude, which anyone can enjoy during afternoon tea service in the Salon Dufour. Green apple lobster rolls, duck and black truffle croque-monsieurs, mini clafouti casseroles, madeleines and financiers, rhubarb-Verbena meringues, coconut-grapefruit Savoy cake... the list of sweet and savoury delights you can enjoy is long, highlighting the exceptional savoir-faire of Chefs Michele Fortunato (15/20 Gault&Millau) and Lyece Major. It's magical. Afternoon Tea is served on weekdays from 15:00-18:00 and weekends starting at 13:30.

fourseasons.com/geneva

CHRISTMAS
GLACIAL!

The Coupe de Noël is a longstanding tradition, with the first edition taking place in 1934. The concept is simple: jump in the (icy) water and swim across the harbour. Many revellers wear costumes: Barbie, Superman, swans, ducks and prisoners unite, perhaps to distract from the freezing cold? UNESCO must have been impressed, as the event is classified as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Doctors recommend regular practice before taking the plunge (the water is usually between 5-7° C). In 2024, there were around 4,400 swimmers who participated. How many will be there for the 2025 edition? Scheduled for 20th and 21th December, just in time for the Winter Solstice.

cdn1934.ch

CULTURE
40 YEARS OF READING
General and youth literature, tall tales, crime novels, essays, philosophy, science fiction, fantasy, cookbooks, travel journals and comics from both great authors and rising stars... all of French-speaking literature is gathering for Geneva's upcoming Salon du Livre. The programme spans 7 main stages and 4 partner stages, including both small and large publishers from Switzerland, France, Quebec, Belgium and Africa. Expect to enjoy an array of presentations, public debates, meet-and-greets with famous authors and autograph sessions... along with the Ahmadou Kourouma Prizegiving, which is annually awarded for a work of fiction by an author from sub-Saharan Africa. The 40th edition will take place at Palexpo from 18th to 22th March. There is no entry fee, but online registration is required for a ticket.

salondulivre.ch

CULTURE
SPOTLIGHT ON GENEVA
When night falls, the lights poetically come up on the harbour, quais, streets and squares of the city. For two weeks each year, Geneva Lux magically transforms the winter cityscape with playful (and often interactive) large-scale, light-up installations. Last year's strange chimaeras give way on 16th January 1st February 2026 to works inspired by PLAY, making public space a playground and a place of wonder.

evenements.geneve.ch

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ELITEBEDS.CH



WATCHMAKING
**WATCHES
AND WONDERS**

For one week each year, Geneva becomes the beating heart of global watchmaking. Taking place 14th to 20th April 2026, the next edition of Watches and Wonders will welcome some 66 watchmakers, a dozen of whom are participating for the first time – including the legendary Audemars Piguet. As in previous years, the first four days of the trade show are reserved for industry professionals, while the last three days are open to the public. Two spaces are reserved for independent creators, including the Lab, which facilitates connections between industry innovators and startups. Like last year, there will also be related activities throughout the city.

watchesandwonders.com

EVENTS

VROOM VROOM

In March 2025, the now defunct Geneva International Motor Show found a successor in autoXpérience. The new auto show was both practical and immersive, exceeding all expectations by bringing together 40 companies and 13,600 visitors over three days. Designed to unite everything about automobiles under one roof and showcase innovation in the auto industry, the event notably allowed hundreds of people to take cars on test drives and gave families a chance to try various car simulators and other games. There was even a workshop on how to change a tire! The 2026 edition will take place 5th to 8th March 2025 at Palexpo.

autoxperience.ch

CULTURE

**HEAT UP WINTER
WITH ANTIGEL**

It's been 15 years since the first edition of Antigél was held in Geneva. Each year in February (5th to 28th Feb. in 2026), this festival sees culture explode out into the streets, parks, sports centres, heritage sites, swimming pools and local wilderness. Unusual venues across greater Geneva will once again welcome around 120 different spectacles, including concerts, contemporary dance, performances, installations, circus acts, performing arts and visual arts. There's absolutely nothing boring to see here, that much is certain!

antigel.ch

GASTRONOMY

**STREET FOOD BY
PHILIPPE CHEVRIER**

Philippe Chevrier is a famous figure in Genevan gastronomy, who leads six establishments exploring different domains, and who recently opened Le Cosmopolite on Place du Molard at the foot of Geneva's Old Town. After Denise's Art of Burger and his American-style steakhouse Chez Philippe, the chef has once again crossed the Atlantic to recreate a menu inspired by New York City's street food with a high-class spin. Hot dogs, bagels, fish n' chips, lobster rolls, key lime pie... it's all there. The urban-style décor is infused with pop art and vibrant street art, and the Cosmo proudly serves brunch on Sundays.

lecosmopolite.ch



swatch[®]
NEON



At the watchmakers' table

In praise of precision

Text Daniel Bauchervéz

Photos Auberge du Lion d'Or – Guillaume Cottancin | Lenaka | Breitling Kitchen

From fine watchmaking to fine dining... Recently, several prestigious watchmakers have taken the leap, moving into the kitchen through several highly calculated partnerships. The team at helvet explores this new trend...

Plate or dial? Cutlery or hands? One element is invariably the same in both gastronomy and watchmaking: the time required to make something exceptional.



In 2022, a mutual friend introduced celebrity watchmaker François-Paul Journe to the starred chef at Chat-Botté (in Beau-Rivage), Dominique Gauthier. The first man won the *Aiguille d'Or*, the top prize awarded at Geneva's Grand Prix d'Horlogerie. The second was named Chef of the Year and awarded 18/20 points by Gault&Millau. The two men immediately hit it off, setting an indisputably precise mechanism in motion. Despite their two very different careers, Journe and Gauthier quickly realised their shared a common love for art and well-crafted works. Could this shared passion and new friendship be the starting point for a new kind of dining experience?

AN ODE TO THE PASSING OF TIME

A few months later, the *F.P. Journe Le Restaurant* was born in a special place steeped in history: the ex-Bavaria brasserie (49 Rue du Rhône), once a gathering place for all members of the League of Nations, before it fell under Michelin-starred celebrity chef Philippe Chevrier. Its timeless interior design, which dates from 1942, seems frozen in time, with its dark oak panelling, large mirrors and sculpted rosettes, which are so iconic of an era that the Geneva authorities classified the bistro's décor in 2012.

Here, more so than anywhere else, one can sit at the table with some of history's greatest watchmaking artisans. Will you be seated at St. Gallen native Jost Bürgi's table, master clockmaker for the courts in Kassel and Prague, or the table named after Christiaan Huyguens, the Dutch inventor of the

pendulum (the first revolution in precision)? The dining room is also home to a Venetian astronomical clock from the 17th century, and the cutlery features handles housing watchmaking wheels, screws and hands, making time itself a central part of the dining experience here.

When it comes to the cuisine, everything is beautiful and meticulous – the same essence in horology as in cooking. Using the best Swiss ingredients, the chef elaborates his dishes with discreet hints of Mediterranean and Thai. In the spotlight: Kadaïf wrapped scampi and the tempura frog with spinach and a milky garlic mousse. It's beyond traditional, punctuated with exoticisms. There's also exclusive wines from Château Seguin (Pessac Leognan), Domaine Bizot (Vosne Romanee) and Château Le Rosey (old, organic Chasselas vines)! The final touch? The floating clock with pistachios and caramelised hazelnuts.

AIR, EARTH AND SEA INSPIRING BOTH WRISTS & PLATES

At 31 Quai des Bergues, lies another watchmaker-restaurant: Breitling Kitchen. After a first version in Seoul, the brand has now brought its lifestyle to this highly industrialized urban loft. Large half-moon windows overlook the Rhône on the second floor while the ground floor features a beautiful large terrace. The décor spans light wood and metal to vintage-style, rounded lounge chairs and benches, echoing the technical DNA of Breitling watches, and is located right next to the brand's boutique.



One is from Marseilles, the other from Isère: watchmaker François-Paul Journe (left) and Chef Dominique Gauthier (right). Both share the love of a job well done.



Both Juan Arbeláez at Breitling Kitchen (above) and Léo Besnard at Lion d'Or (below) share the same quest for harmony through Genevan gourmet cuisine. Perhaps inspired by horological aesthetics...

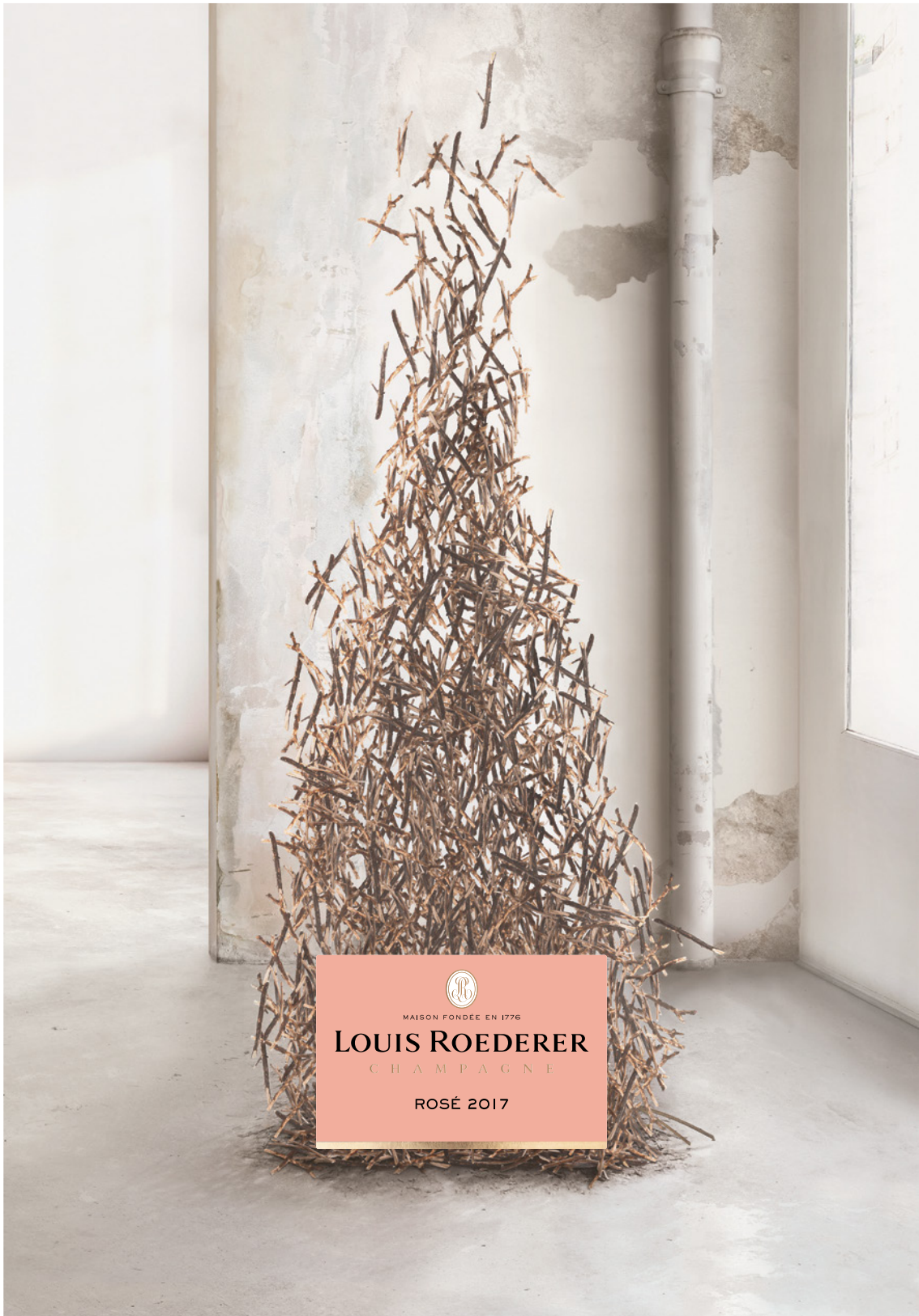
Why this space? To celebrate “the artisanal, the passion, the quality, the meticulous know-how, the special detailing and the search for excellence” that transcends both the world of watchmaking and fine dining, explains the Head of Marketing Lauranne Gfeller. “Whether one is building a plate or a watch, it all begins with a story and the promise of a memorable experience. In the same way that a chef designs his menu, a watchmaker assembles his pieces: each gesture matters, every ingredient or component has an undeniable part to play in the final result. Cooking comes down to the seconds, minutes and hours; time plays an essential role in both”.

In the perpetually moving kitchen, French Colombian Chef Juan Arbeláez sets the stage with a fresh take on American street food, very popular during after-work hours, with plates of tapas and signature cocktails inspired by the same categories as the watchmaker’s collection: air, earth and sea. Dishes like the Breitling Burger and the Superocean Salad are a nod to the brand’s iconic pieces.

EXCELLENCE, RIGOUR AND RESPECT FOR COMPONENTS

With a similarly special setting – terrace and view of the lake as a bonus – the legendary Lion d’Or in Cologny sets a new pace with a new owner: Thierry Stern, chairman of Patek Philippe. It’s a reflection of a personal fondness for the establishment, having organised several breakfasts and business lunches here for the brand’s best clients, partners and collaborators. It’s also a reflection of the brand’s excellence being reinforced by the kitchen’s excellence.

“We both require attention to detail and share the same quest for precision and desire to create emotions through our artisanal expertise”, emphasised the Lion d’Or’s Director, Ricardo Alves. “Every element must have its dedicated place. A seasoning, like a watch component, doesn’t tolerate being close enough. And time is at the heart of both of these worlds: the time cooking requires, the time it takes to understand the discipline and learn how it expresses itself. Chef Léo Besnard embodies this approach: he prioritises local and organic ingredients whenever possible, and often sources ingredients from our own gardens. His cooking comes to life in a subtle harmony of rigour, simplicity and respect for ingredients, values that we share with all great artisans, whether they are chefs or watchmakers”.



LOUIS ROEDERER
TUTOYER LA NATURE



At the Bayview restaurant at the Hotel President, young Chef Danny Khezzar is renowned for his mischievous creativity. Here: aged Simmental beef with carottes, prepared six ways.

AN ICONOCLASTIC CHEF AT WATCHES AND WONDERS

His motto? “To cook, I follow my emotions”. At the other end of the city, Danny Khezzar, of Top Chef fame, scratches his head. His dreadlocks are now a thing of the past, but he still has questions... what is he going to do for Watches and Wonders attendees in April? The young Parisian chef, who leads Bayview by Michel Roth at the Hotel President, already has two watch trade fairs under his belt. A first, “light” version in 2024 around a small stand. Then, after his roaring success, an XL gourmet table featuring a host of culinary activities, demonstrations and masterclasses that all took place around his 100 m2 kitchen that was specially built for the occasion! His “Lounge by Danny Khezzar” became a favourite meeting place for many brands. “It gave me a chance to push my creativity to the max”, said the young chef, “all while taking inspiration from watchmaking”.

His assessment? “I discovered how similar the watchmaking world is to my own world. Ten years ago, when I first

arrived in Switzerland, I didn’t know much about it. Then I was given the chance to become a Bvlgari Ambassador and visit the factory, where I began to understand all the work and human know-how that is hidden inside every one of those watches. What astonished me the most was how similar that work is to what I do. It’s artisanal, requiring the same precision and expertise, and it’s the same clientele too. At Bvlgari, I got to meet Fabrizio, who designs watches. I design my dishes. Despite being two different worlds, the parallels are undeniable!”

What to expect for the 2026 edition? “The masterclasses will go further and be in a new space. There will also be a pastry and tea component”, for when one needs a break. Maybe there will even be a new Danny Khezzar special... stay tuned.

fpjourne-le-restaurant.ch
breitling-kitchen.ch
leliondorch.ch
restaurantbayview.com

The wonder of floristry

Finesse and childhood dreams

Text Samia Tawil

Photos Hôtel Président



Every morning, a discreet hand replaces stems and adjusts petals, refreshing the bouquets that grace luxury hotels. These ephemeral artists are none other than florists, who bring their art to life in tune with the seasons. Meet Samia Guellil, who’s been with the prestigious Hotel President for 14 years.

As soon as you set foot inside the marbled entryway of Hotel President, the flamboyant colours of the central flower arrangements capture your eye, delicately assembled each Wednesday by Samia Guellil’s nimble fingers. Her love of flowers has been a longstanding passion. “I’ve been completely immersed in it since childhood”, she said. “My parents always had several flower shops in Paris and Yvelines. On Wednesdays and weekends, my brother, my sister, and I would play amongst the flowers all day, pretending to stock the shop and help tidy up. We were captivated by the magical colours”.

Being a florist sounds appealing, but the working hours are strict. Discouraged from pursuing it as a career by her parents, Samia turned her attention to studying biology... but flowers have their reasons which reason knows nothing of. “My passion consumed me. I stopped my studies to become a florist. I just love flowers, and this life, far too much”.

The young woman began her career working in several family-owned flower shops, before running them herself. Very quickly, her talent and attention to detail opened the door to the world of luxury. As the event planner for the star florist Éric Chauvin, she spent four years working on the sumptuous displays at the prestigious Four Seasons Hotel George V in Paris, under the guidance of Jeff Leatham. And the contracts just kept coming, from Dior on Avenue Montaigne and Taittinger Champagne, to opulent hotel displays and bursts of colour on Fashion Week podiums... Samia Guellil is certainly in hot demand. One of her most memorable experiences? Managing six semitrailers of flowers for the marriage of Prince Al Thani in the Qatari desert!

A BLOSSOMING WORLD, FROM AVENUE MONTAIGNE TO THE SHORES OF LAKE GENEVA

In 2012, Samia set course for Geneva after a phone call with the Hotel President. “I like new challenges, and I was drawn to the hotel’s exceptional reputation”. To this day, she knows she made the right choice and is charged with meeting the hotel’s clients’ sometimes exuberant requests. Like decorating the entirety of the famous 8th floor penthouse suite in red roses for a marriage proposal or spontaneously finding rare Cattleya orchids in utmost secrecy... these challenges inspire and motivate her. One experience that stands out was when YouTube star Mr. Beast stayed at the Hotel President. “There was a massive crowd outside the hotel. I was honoured to be part of his video shoot in the penthouse with his team, set around a gigantic feast prepared by our chefs that highlighted all of the hotel’s specialties”. It’s moments like these that put Samia above the common daily grind of being a florist, when she is given the chance to do what she does best: setting the scene for unforgettable, almost surreal moments, to bring childhood dreams to life, for her and everyone around her.

FOLLOWING THE FLOWERS, FROM ONE HOTEL TO ANOTHER

This floral fairy brings her charm to several of Geneva’s most beautiful hotels, including the lobby of the magnificent Beau Rivage Hotel, which is famous for its exceptional Christmas tree each year, to the Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, where the scent of lilies in the spring enraptures visitors as they enjoy a relaxing cocktail. Discover more of Samia’s most beautiful creations in the digital version of our magazine.



“What motivates me is entralling hotel clients from the moment they first arrive”. Samia Guellil

Forever Young

The 1,001 lives of Max Büsser

Text Olivier Müller

Photos MB&F

Genevan watchmaking company MB&F (*Max Büsser et ses Friends*) is celebrating its 20th anniversary, marking the occasion in its usual manner: with sharing, friendship and simplicity. Born in Milan and adopted by Lausanne, Max Büsser shares some key milestones of his story, which began on Rue Verdaine, before the opening of the workshop on Boulevard Helvétique and the M.A.D. House in Carouge.

#helvet

Octopod explores aquatic themes with an eight-leg, eight-day table clock inspired by cephalopods, marine chronometers and The Abyss.





The M.A.D. House in Carouge, acquired in 2022, regroups nearly all of MB&F's teams in a single location.



These days, while he may have a salt-and-pepper beard, Max Büsser hasn't changed much. He may say that he still hasn't slept enough or that the large watch shows are a heavy burden, but at 58 years old, this pseudo-extrovert still has all the charm of the 35-year-old. When we met with him in Geneva in early autumn, Max was a happy man, ready to celebrate his 20-year adventure with MB&F.

But getting to where he is today was a long and tortuous journey. In his thirties, when he was working at Harry Winston, he brilliantly revitalised watchmaking with a vintage watch concept: the Opus series. These ultra-limited-edition timepieces were launched each year by the luxury watch and clock maker, in collaboration with different independent watchmakers, and has since become a Genevan watch industry staple.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

The fact that it all came together was almost a miracle. Opus series watches sell at premium prices and Harry Winston knew it. He offered Max a golden opportunity and a fabulous contract to grow the concept. And for once, Max read the contract in its entirety... and it's a good thing he did, because the last few pages contained non-compete and exclusivity clauses that would have ended any future Max could have in the watch industry outside of Harry Winston. Max responded instinctively by tearing up Harry Winston's offer and launching the project on his own to protect his creative freedom and future.

"People were saying I went to EPFL (the Swiss Federal Technology Institute of Lausanne), that I was a rising watch star and that I had full ideas in my head that just needed to be produced. But that wasn't true. All I had was a drawing of a first watch, no movements and only 50% of the budget I needed to build my first prototype", explained Max. To

raise the remaining funds, he set up a series of meetings with retailers and embarked on what felt like a round-the-world adventure.

Armed with a plastic model of his first concept watch, the Horological Machine 1 (HM1), he traversed the continents meeting with commercial suppliers who potentially could fund his first creation and purchase his future creations – which he hadn't even designed yet.

Max Büsser met with 15 different retailers, ten of whom politely sent him on his way with his fanciful ideas. The other five trusted him and financed his project, without even knowing if the project would ever come to light. But the best part is, of the five who took this brave leap of faith some 20 years ago, only one has since closed its doors, with the other four (Chronopassion, Seddiqi, The Hour Glass and Westime) still in business today. Why?

THE RISK OF BANKRUPTCY

Max Büsser says it best: "Friendship, loyalty and solidarity" ... and lots of trust, too. Because MB&F's trajectory has been anything but linear. The brand, which reinvested the entirety of its modest profits into the next watch, finally found its footing after several years. "For a long time, we had to wait until December 15th to know whether we were in the red or not", said Max. On four occasions, MB&F flirted with near bankruptcy: "in 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2014", Max added, as if those four difficult years were etched into his memory. Did he ever think of throwing in the towel? "No, because being an entrepreneur is like being a father. You have a baby, and you can't let go. Not ever".

As an older father of two daughters, which he had at age 46 and 50 respectively, Max knows what he's talking about. He

WATCHES AND WONDERS GENEVA

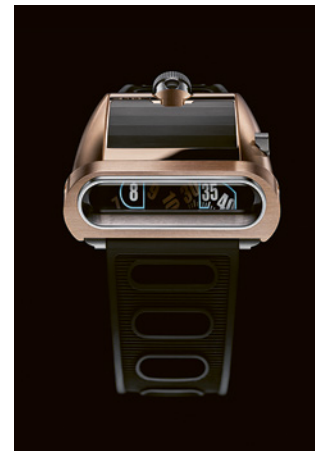
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EXPERIENCE
WATCHMAKING

watchesandwonders.com



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Horological Machines (1&2), Legacy Machines (4) and M.A.D. editions all revolve around design and superb, custom calibres. The design takes precedence; the movement is adapted accordingly. On the right, the LM Perpetual, with a perpetual calendar.

sees his own brand, MB&F, as a nearly indestructible collective. “Any client who wears an MB&F timepiece could come back to us today and meet the watchmaker who assembled their watch”, Max emphasized proudly... with the unspoken understanding that the inner circle of clients and “friends” is meant to be a small one. He personally knows several hundreds of his clients, one of whom owns 31 of his watches! But that is not what Max focuses on; in his eyes, the only thing that matters is the strength of the collective.

SUPPORTED GROWTH

The same philosophy applies to his team members. Of the five people who were at his side in 2005, four are still on the team, including the indispensable Designer Eric Giroud. But what was once a small business has now grown into a full enterprise. “I always said we’d never have more than 15 employees... but soon we’ll be 70”, added Max. “We don’t necessarily produce all the watches, but we are bringing a growing number of jobs in-house, and all our pieces are finished by hand. We released 396 watches last year. Over 20 years, we’ve developed 23 calibres, which is huge, and we have at least another dozen in the works. I have a very clear vision of what’s in store for us from now until 2034”.

The times of waiting until December 15th to know if the company would survive another year are long gone for Max Büsser. Yet his success has left a mark on him, just as his fears have. “We will never spend money we do not have. We have no debt and no line of credit, just tons of dreams waiting to come true. There are no mercenaries here. We’re more like missionaries”, he said with a smile.

CHANEL, DEUS EX MACHINA

But what about his succession plan? Max Büsser is approaching 60. “You never know what could happen. It would be unforgivable for me to not think about what happens when I’m no longer here. I can’t risk losing everything we’ve built over the past 20 years”. True to his clan mentality, Max first consulted his family. But his wife is not interested in taking the helm at MB&F, and his two daughters are still too young. Next, he went to his “Friends”. But, although many of them have been with him since the start, they are all around the same age, so he had to find a different solution...

“We decided to approach Chanel because we already have a relationship, and because it’s a fantastic family brand that has always had a very long-term vision, like us. They have no plans to interfere with the current trajectory of MB&F and they assured us full creative control. So, we gave them a capital share and, most importantly, the first option to buy. This way, when I’m no longer here, if my family doesn’t want to take over the business, they will assure its continuity. I could not have imagined a better solution”.

But Max’s time to take a bow is not yet upon us. He is still teeming with ideas, many of which have nothing to do with watchmaking – things like smart speakers, coffee machines or even pepper grinders, to name just a few! All he needs is time and a few reliable partners. And, like 20 years ago, maybe some financing. Sometimes history really does repeat itself.

mbandf.com

Tristan Carbonatto

A gourmet occupation

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin

Photos Guillaume Cottancin

Their mouthwatering window displays generate ‘ohs’ of delight. Who? Chocolate makers! Elbows deep in cocoa powder already at a school age, Tristan Carbonatto has created a truly exceptional career out of chocolate making.



More so than Easter or Valentine's Day, Christmas time is actually the most important time of year for chocolate makers. "For us, that represents around 40% of our annual sales", says Tristan Carbonatto.



Can you avoid chocolate if you are born in Geneva and grew up on the Vaud Riviera? Tristan Carbonatto couldn't. As an adolescent, the young man hesitated between the kitchen and the laboratory, but, in the end, sugar won. At Boccard de Rolle confectionery, he learned "the rigour and love for work that's done well". Then he joined the team at the legendary Hôtel de Ville in Crissier, where everything is beautiful, delicious, and constantly challenging at a relentless pace, leading to the gestures becoming second nature. There, Chef Frédy Girardet – the Swiss equivalent of Robuchon – racked up Michelin stars, Gault&Millau points, medals, and awards. An ambitious example, shaped by rigour and know-how.

Armed with "a global industry vision, spanning pure technique to product management", Tristan decided to stretch his own wings. In 1998, he opened his first boutique in Bougy-Villars, above Rolle (in Vaud). The chocolate maker began churning out creations under the approving eyes of his children, who were his elected taste testers. His boutique's speciality was rum and whiskey truffles, while his speciality at home was "spreadable chocolate, refined with lightly torrefied Piedmont hazelnuts, mixed with milk or dark chocolate" – a hit he was soon sharing with his clientele.

140 SHADES OF CHOCOLATE

These days we find him further south, in his extensive (700 m2!) atelier-laboratory-boutique in Perroy. Chocolate lovers flock his way, led by their noses, to stock up on his caramel truffles, rêves de noisette (hazelnut dreams), pralines, feuillantes, and caramelised pistachio and hazelnut rochers. The company now offers 140 different specialities, all without preservatives, made from pure cocoa butter. Tristan personally sources his raw ingredients from all four corners of the chocolate globe, with his favourites being from Ecuador and Ghana "for their strong personalities". But, while he is always on the hunt for the best cocoa, Tristan is just as careful with his dried fruit and seasonings: Piedmont hazelnuts and Sicilian pistachios are chosen in person on site; the same goes for the Japanese yuzu and matcha green tea, the Madagascar vanilla, and... the chillis from Perroy! Tristan only selects the best, seeing it as a chance to "understand the

different varieties, appreciate the richness of the terroirs, and form lasting, trusting friendships with the producers".

"Inspiration is everywhere: in travels, new connections, and reading". Ideas bubble up in the middle of the night and are quickly noted. It's important to keep track of evolving tastes, which now favour "intensity and less sugar", and to never lose sight of what's truly essential: harmony. "Originality for originality's sake doesn't make sense if there's no pleasure", says Tristan. "Sometimes an idea takes shape instantly. Other times it takes ten or twenty tries to reach that perfect equilibrium. The hardest part is actually knowing when to stop and say, 'that's enough, it's good, we got it!'"

NOBLE AND PROTEAN MATERIALS

For certain orders, it's more a question of challenge than know-how. A mounted chocolate creation for a wedding? Got it. A Taj Mahal made of chocolate? Why not? The chocolate maker design moulds as required, and the entire team works patiently together to assemble all the pieces – "a work of art, where every detail matters".

"Chocolate has a remarkable amount of malleability, it's magical. We can sculpt it, mould it, and marry it with infinite flavours. That said, it is incredibly fragile and sensitive to temperatures" when conserving, transporting, and even designing it. "The ideal climate for chocolate is stable temperatures between 18° and 20°C", Tristan specifies. "In the summer months, climate control is mandatory; every heat wave puts us to the test! We invested in very specific equipment and adapted our working hours, but it's a real struggle every time the temperatures rise!"

Over time, his client list has grown to include numerous celebrities, heads of state, and royal families, including the Imperial family of Japan. An honour... and also a lot of pressure. Luckily, to combat stress there's no better solution than chocolate. His favourite? "A simple square of grand cru dark chocolate, savoured slowly. It's my guilty pleasure", Tristan Carbonatto replies, with no hesitation.

chocolatier-tristan.ch

Herzog & de Meuron in Geneva, finally!

A flagship for Lombard-Odier

Text Daniel Bauchervéz

Photos Maris Mezulis





For once, it's actually in Geneva (Bellevue to be exact) that the famous Swiss Architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron unveiled their latest large-scale project, in September 2025: new headquarters for Lombard-Odier – the oldest private bank in Geneva (founded 1776), which – despite being independent – has become one of the most important players in the Swiss finance industry, managing fortunes and assets that total upwards of 300 billion Swiss Francs.

#helvet

Invested in projects all over the planet, Basel-based Herzog & de Meuron has built their reputation on their ability to seamlessly integrate interiors and exteriors.





Orchestre de la Suisse Romande...
A new season is in the making...
Revealed in March 2026

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Believe it or not, it's the first building by Herzog & de Meuron in French-speaking Switzerland! Designed to unite Lombard-Odier's 2,000 local collaborators, who are currently spread across six different locations, the iconically avant-garde structure "favours flexibility and transparency, while maximising the beautiful natural surroundings", just a stone's throw from the shores of Lake Geneva. The building's magic words? Innovation and sustainability. From the origin of the building supplies to its power sources (notably via solar panels), circular construction, green tech integration and the wellbeing of both employees and clients, every aspect of the building was taken into account so it could obtain the highest level ranking of all three Swiss sustainable construction certifications: SNBS, Minergie-P et BREEAM®. Among the building's most impressive features is the stunning Atrium, which is designed to diffuse natural light across every floor, and the auditorium that's shaped like a piece of paper folded over itself – a symbol of continuity.

lombardodier.com
herzogdemeuron.com

Cartier

Define a territory and stay within it

Text Serge Maillard

In collaboration with Europa Star

Photos Cartier



In the luxury sphere, differentiation is the key to success. One of the Parisian firm's greatest strengths has been to define a clear territory – for watches and jewellery – which has elevated its desirability. Releases for 2025 harness the power of metamorphosis. Arnaud Carrez, Cartier's Chief Marketing Officer, shares insights.

Brands best equipped to weather luxury's many moods are those which, to borrow a maxim attributed to Socrates, know themselves. Because a brand that knows itself intimately can express itself in greater depth, in the smallest of details, within a carefully mapped terrain. Not extend its foundations, at the risk of wandering off-course, but explore them further.

Over the past decade, Cartier has excelled in this strategic exercise of crafting a distinct identity to ensure “fluidity” between its jewellery and watches, which debuted in 1847 and 1853 respectively, and more importantly occupy an immediately recognisable territory, starting with form watches, as Arnaud Carrez explains.

This year's creations are centred around “the art of metamorphosis”. How exactly is this art expressed? This theme, which echoes a form of “magic”, has always been inherent to the Maison. After all, our métier largely rests upon our capacity to transform gems and materials into desirable objects.

We also express a determination to imagine new forms, to revisit designs which we reinvent in the most apposite way.

These objects of desire become vectors for emotions. The Maison's strength is this capacity to always surprise. The men and women at Cartier are alchemists!

In practical terms, this vision led us to profoundly clarify the Maison's identity over several years, during which we redefined the product portfolio. This has resulted in an amazing dynamic. One of the key factors of Cartier's contemporary success is to have defined a territory that is uniquely ours. We are the watchmaker of shapes, of elegance, with a distinct style, which creates desirability. We can observe this at auction, too, with the Crash selling for over a million dollars. The popularity of vintage watches is proof of the Maison's continued relevance and appeal. Cartier watches continue to gain in value, which adds to our desirability.

What are the main elements in the creative process for Cartier watchmaking and how do you select the legacy models you reinterpret, such as this year's Tank à Guichets? Cartier Privé launched in 2016 as a collection that revisits the Maison's historically significant shapes and designs. This year sees the creation of the ninth work in the series, following on from the Tank Chinoise, the Crash



or the Tank Cintrée. Introduced in 1928, the Tank à Guichets is the quintessence of Cartier style, with its two essential functions. It is a perfect illustration of the Maison's singularity, formed from a block of platinum or gold, with no brancards but two apertures. It is a minimalist gesture, a design of great purity. Everything about it says Tank!

Taking the example of the Tank à Guichets, for which you produced a new manual-winding movement, Calibre 9755, how did you combine artistic creation with technical development? The Tank à Guichets posed a complex task for the movement teams. Fortunately for us, we have built an extremely efficient and agile manufacturing tool across six separate sites, which has evolved as watchmaking has developed. At Cartier, the design always comes first. The movement must then serve this design. Considerable progress has been made with respect to movement quality, reliability and durability. Return rates are extremely low and we have seen a continual reduction in returns these past years.

Cartier opened its Maison des Métiers d'Art ten years ago and for more than 20 years has presented an award to watchmaking's future talents. A way of ensuring the Maison will always have access to rare skills? Yes, because this culture of legacy and the transmission of skills is fundamental, every single day. The Maison des Métiers d'Art reflects our idea of what knowledge continuity should be. The 70-some people who are employed there represent a wealth of specialisations and talent. It is also wide open to the ecosystem of artisanship and métiers d'art beyond its walls. The aim is to preserve but also develop expertise. The Maison des Métiers d'Art nurtures a form of fluidity between jewellery and watches that is fundamental to us. Cartier was established in 1847 as a jeweller but watchmaking appeared just six years later, in 1853. The Institut d'Horlogerie Cartier was founded in Couvet, in Val-de-Travers, in 1993. Each year it presents an award to new talents and 2025 was outstanding.

One of Cartier's strengths, as a universal brand, is to cover an entire spectrum with recognisable designs. Does your communication strategy focus more on certain exceptional models or on the more accessible ones? Cartier has always had a rich and vast offering, from collections in accessible segments all the way up to bespoke and exceptional pieces, where price has no limit. This versatility is an extremely important point. In all our markets we have aspirational collections, such as the Panthère and the Santos, as well as transgenerational collections which address customers at every stage in life. Age isn't a factor for Cartier. It would be antinomic for us to have "collections for young generations".

Which of Cartier's watch collections have seen the most important developments in recent years? We began this process of clarification and refocusing, as well as enrichment, in 2017 with the relaunching of the Panthère watch, followed by the re-release of the Santos Dumont, the Baignoire and the Tank, which are all iconic. At the same time, we have continued to create and innovate, with the Coussin de Cartier watch and the Tressage. We have a backbone of iconic collections and let our creativity run riot around them. We have done the same with jewellery, with the Love, Trinity, Juste un Clou and Clash de Cartier collections.

One of the major revolutions this past decade has been the popularity of vintage watches. How do you address this merging of the primary and secondary markets? We were among the first Maisons to buy back historic pieces and curate a collection which charts the evolution of Cartier style. This is part of an ongoing strategy to enrich our heritage. Our creations are shown at leading institutions, such as this year's exhibition at the V&A in London which features more than 350 objects, the majority of which are from our own collections.

*cartier.com
europastarch*



Saint-Martin-de-Belleville

The art of mountain living

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin

Photos Maison du Tourisme de Saint-Martin-de-Belleville

Tucked into its small sunny valley, on the side of one of the world’s biggest connected ski areas, the village of Saint-Martin-de-Belleville is such a gem that we hesitate to even share its secrets. If you seek authenticity and hushed luxury, look no further: this is the place.

In the heart of the Tarentaise Valley, in Vanoise National Park, the Saint-Martin (1,450 m) winters offer vast Alpine horizons. From there, a gondola ride leads to Les 3 Vallées, one of the world’s largest ski areas with over 600 km of slopes. The resorts of Les Ménuires and Méribel are closest, with Val Thorens above and Courchevel beyond. The highest peak is 3,230 m. Expect sunny skiing, with around half of the nearby slopes being family-friendly, along with a controlled freeride run (La Riondaz, a Liberty Ride zone) for those who love to dip their skis into ungroomed Alpine powder...

SAVOIE AMBASSADORS

Set away from the crowds, the Belleville valley only started attracting tourists in the 1970s when Chef René Meilleur opened La Bouitte, a raclette restaurant, in the hamlet of Saint-Marcel. A few years later, the French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and the King of Spain Juan Carlos, who are both avid skiers, enjoyed a meal there. Soon after, Chef René, who is completely self-taught, set his sights on the highest honours that can be bestowed upon a chef and slowly began to climb the ladder. Accompanied by his son



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Pour moi et pour toi.



Lots of wood, lots of stone. Free of large, modern structures, Saint-Martin-de-Belleville looks like a postcard village and boasts a tight-knit community.

Maxime, he forever changed the history of Saint-Martin-de-Belleville by obtaining a Michelin star... then a second and finally, a third. What's the secret to his success? Cuisine that embodies the heritage of the terroir, while striving to be more than what it seems, brought to life with that special father-son energy – which was only further reinforced in 2024 when the third generation took the helm.

A Relais & Châteaux hotel now goes hand-in-hand with the restaurant, complete with exposed wooden beams, antique furniture, thick wool furnishings, a friendly ambiance and attentive service that's inspired by the mountainside. It's destination hotel in of itself, which makes the trip (only two hours from Geneva) more than worth it.

ENHANCED AUTHENTICITY

Saint-Martin-de-Belleville's authenticity comes to life in the heart of the village, where, behind a stone façade, Le Montagnard lays claim to its own rise to fame. Recognized by Gault&Millau, the establishment was once a stable for Pépé Nicolas' farm animals, until his grandchildren transformed it into a restaurant. More than 20 years later, they honour their great-grandfather – who was a pioneer in developing the ski resort – by ensuring “every product has a story and every dish has meaning”.

From the terrace, enjoy views of the church's baroque belltower and undisturbed clusters of chalets and farms. There are no high-rise buildings here and everything is at peace with nature. But the setting's rustic charm hides many modern comforts, like at Chalet Éden, where the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi comes to life, complete

with a Nordic bath, indoor pools and spacious rooms with large windows, for total mountain immersion. Or at Chalet Escapade (630 m²!), nominated as the “World's Best New Ski Chalet 2025” by the World Ski Awards, which features a private spa and an in-house chef for the ultimate in cozy luxury. Just a few steps away, the luxurious wood and stone (5-star) M Lodge & Spa offers its own version of hushed opulence, with 90 m²-duplex suites.

AWAY FROM THE WORLD, BEYOND TIME

If Saint-Martin had a motto, it would be exclusive yet family-friendly, serene yet welcoming. Whether in the intimacy of the M Lodge's piano bar, on the Lodji's terrace for après-ski (a local staple with stunning views!) or at the many winter pop-up bars in the main village square.

As the holidays approach, magical lights illuminate the Christmas market and holiday festivities, with abundant mulled wine and hot chocolate, bimonthly concerts at the church, a torch-lit ski descent and weekly fireworks during school holidays. The village's roots become living poetry, embodied within the tight-knit community. It's a timeless safe haven, a refuge from the rush of the world. A place where tensions dissolve during a week of late-season Yogiski or throughout the year in the spas and warm waters of the La Belle Vie wellness centre, perched on high for breathtaking panoramic views. It's luxurious, virtuous (powered by 80% biomass) and steamy, with three saunas – one of which is panoramic. Saint-Martin-de-Belleville? It's the place you've been looking for.

Europa Star

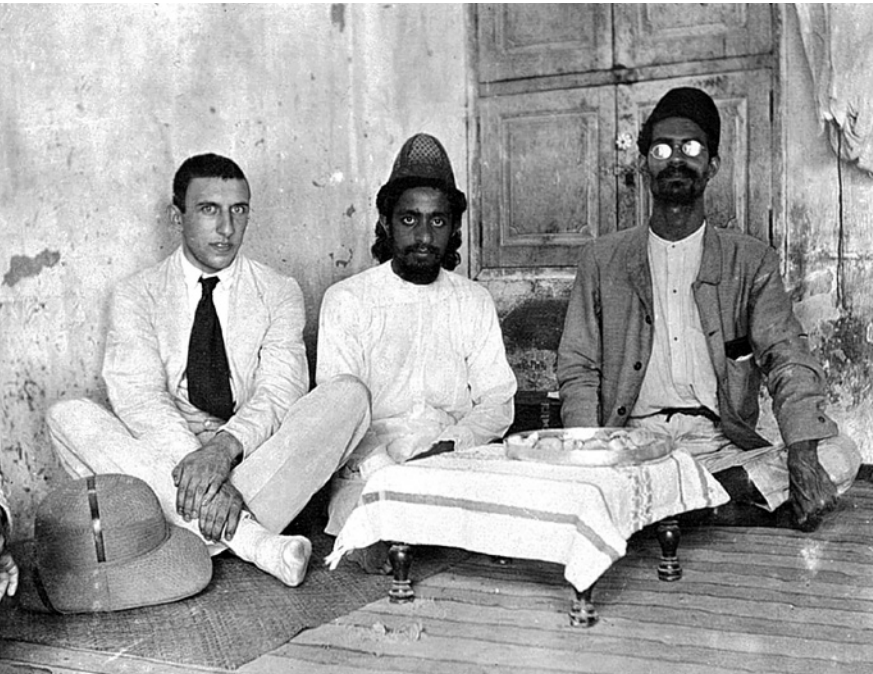
Watchmaking heritage

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin
Photos Europa Star

It was a century ago that 30-year-old Hugo Buchser, after spending a decade selling Swiss watches around the globe, founded his first watchmaking publication in Geneva. Many, many more would follow, distributed in the 1950s under the name *Europa Star*. The team at *helvet* had the pleasure of interviewing Serge Maillard, Buchser’s great-grandson and the company’s current director.

In 1920, Hugo Buchser spent an entire year travelling through India selling his Swiss watches. It was the first of many adventures to come.





It was the era of gentleman travellers, steamboats and the Suez Canal, never-ending days on the ship's rail and nights at the captain's table.

The First World War broke out just when young Hugo Buchser, barely 18 years old, founded his first watchmaking company: Transmarine Uhrenfabrik. The name referenced his love for the high seas, and his success soon saw him taking multiple trips to Brussels. The small company flourished as a family business, but the young man had much bigger dreams. So, in 1920, he headed to Egypt and Southeast Asia with a trunk full of watches with springs that had accidentally been reversed (purchased at a discount). While the watches didn't function, they were still very prestigious and soon found themselves adorning the wrists of the maharajahs. Back then, in India, time was not of the essence and men were still the masters of time.

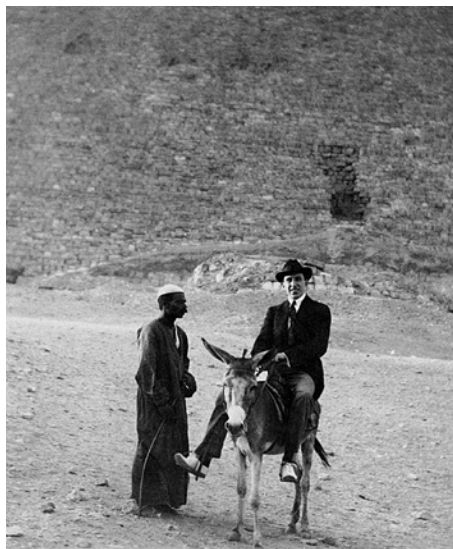
Cunning as a fox, Hugo amazed his customers with fluorescent "magic" watches (made with radium, which glowed when exposed to direct sunlight). The pitch worked like a charm and the sales poured in. After a year of traveling from the Ganges plains to the edge of Hindu Kush mountain range, Hugo returned home having completed

his sales mission. He even claimed to have spent the night in a tent with a certain Hindu activist who went by the name of Gandhi.

A DYNASTY OF WATCHMAKING EDITORS

In 1926, Hugo married the heiress of watch manufacturer Roamer. He then launched himself into publishing, "after identifying a need for an editorial bridge between the Swiss watchmaking industry and foreign markets", according to his great-grandson Serge Maillard, who leads the family business today.

"The first publications were multilingual guides with the addresses of all the various suppliers", explained Serge. This included publications like *Buyer's Guide*, *Machinery Guide* and *Bulletin*, which contained technical information. There was even Rapid, which, starting in 1932, accompanied tourists visiting Switzerland in direct competition with the then-new Michelin Guide! "These guides then evolved to having regular reporting and became periodicals, reviews and magazines. It was a little bit like the LinkedIn of the times, with lots of ads designed to connect watch industry professionals with the rest of the world. Some brands built their entire global network using *Europa Star*!"



Alexandria, the Pyramids of Giza, the Suez Canal, Aden, then Bombay; the trip to Southeast Asia on an ocean liner took nearly three weeks.





A born entrepreneur who accumulated projects, Hugo Buchser was an attentive and wise manager. He was strict with his children: they had to learn to do everything themselves, without indulging in luxury.

Serge Maillard, what does it mean to you to soon be celebrating the 100th anniversary of *Europa Star*? First and foremost, I feel a sense of responsibility. Any title that lasts a century belongs to the collective history – that of the watchmakers, suppliers, retailers and collectors. This centenary gives us an opportunity to tell our story, while also giving us a chance to look towards the next few decades. But our goal will always be the same: to chronicle the lives and stories behind watchmaking, jewellery making and related micro-technologies.

You're the director of the only Swiss watch magazine that has been published without interruption for a century... Since 1927, we have published under various titles in different languages that were adapted to local markets: English, French, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, and even in Hindi! *Europa Star* was the title of our European edition, launched after the Treaty of Rome in the 1950s, which opened a significant European market to Swiss watchmakers. Over time, the bulk of our productions were rebranded under that name. *Europa Star* has survived wars, the quartz crises, globalisation and the digitization of media. Our continuity, independence and family spirit are strong cornerstones of our identity.

We have since digitized all our editions and rereading them is a journey through watchmaking history of the 20th and 21st centuries. We covered the emergence of the wristwatch, the iconic watch models of the 1950s through the 1970s, the quartz revolution, the subsequent rebirth of beautiful mechanical watches, the emergence of the independent scene and the new golden era we've been seeing for the past few years... Whether in print or digital formats, which

have been available for 30 years now since 1995, we've been chronicling all of that history.

How do you define *Europa Star* today? By one constant filter: added editorial value. We do deep reporting, but we also cover the news, the value chain (suppliers, distribution, retail, second hand), technique (movements, materials) and culture (brand histories, iconography, design). Each subject has its place in our long chronology, with references pulled from our archives.

Today we publish in French, English, Spanish and Chinese. Our distribution is still very international, with large audiences in Europe, North America and Asia. Our overarching editorial guidelines are to work via specific themes and subjects that stand the test of time.

Do in-person meetings play an important role? They are the driving force behind journalism. In September, for example, we dedicated 20 of our 40 pages to the AHCI (Académie Horlogère des Créateurs Indépendants), which is made up of the best watchmakers in the world, like François-Paul Journe, Vianney Halter, Philippe Dufour, Felix Baumgartner, Svend Andersen, Vincent Calabrese, and more... They all got together for a meeting, a photo-shoot and a friendly meal. It was an exceptional moment, suspended in time, and it was only possible because we have known these watchmakers since their beginnings and have followed them throughout their careers!

Are you the voice of the Swiss watch industry? Our publications have always been characterised by a high degree of independence: we have never been Swiss watch indus-



TIME TO WATCHES

EXHIBITION | EXPERIENCE | EVENTS

LET'S THINK OUT OF THE BOX!

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Four generations of the Buchser-Maillard family have held the reigns at Europa Star, making it the longest standing Swiss watch publication.

try lobbyists, we have always worked towards developing watchmaking on a global scale, within its many facets. Being able to look back long-term has allowed us to contextualize and sometimes we may take a stand depending on what's at stake.

How do you think the magazine is perceived? As an independent reference that's appreciated for its memory and its long-term perspective. We offer cyclical insights not just the latest news. And while we are, of course, exploring podcasts, video and other digital formats, our focus is always on form. The most important thing to us is still our identity.

Print is still very prominent when it comes to reference. Our goal is for our readers to collect our publications, much like they collect watches. That's often the case with retailers who pass their careers down through several generations of family members. Many of them tell me that our publications played a fundamental role in their watchmaking training when they were young. It's always very moving to hear something like that.



Will there be a special centenary edition? Every centenary issue will be exceptional, both in terms of form and content! Many projects are in the works, editorially and beyond...

Can you tell us about your personal watchmaking experience? When I was four or five, I set a few goals for the year: I wanted to learn to tie my shoelaces myself... and learn to read time on my new analogue watch! When I was 12, I handed out our publications at our stand at the Basel trade show.

Inevitably, I found myself wanting to travel so I could discover, compare and contextualize our family story and the industry. And even though my career as a journalist initially led me away from watchmaking, the time came when I was ready to humbly carry on the family business and help it evolve. That inheritance gave me meaning and watchmaking is a limitless topic, which touches so many worlds – and one of life's greatest questions: the meaning of time.

europastarch

A Swiss education

The mountain as a classroom

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin

Photos Institut Le Rosey

Does increasing the altitude improve education? To learn better, should one study *and* ski? Since the late 19th century, elite private schools – inspired by British boarding schools – have proliferated in the Swiss mountains. Why are they such a success?



It likely all began with the creation of a boy's boarding school by writer and educator Rodolphe Töpffer in the 1820s. He designed Rousseau-inspired course curriculums that integrated experiences in the area's Alpine nature for his students, many of whom were foreigners. But it wasn't until almost a half century later, in 1880, that the Institut Le Rosey was founded in Rolle (Vaud), becoming a model of its kind. This elite Swiss boarding school, located within a prestigious, medieval castle, is highly selective, offers bilingual education, emphasizes sport as an incentive for learning and provides a sense of community. It's a well-defined model that will soon reach as far as the shores of Lake Geneva.

In 1915, spurred by the First World War, Le Rosey set course for Gstaad for the winter. A trial run that quickly became the norm, then a tradition, contributing to the resort's booming growth, where several wealthy families settled. Why? Primarily because of the mountains' powerful educational potential: sports like skiing, ice skating and mountaineering help forge character, instil discipline and encourage endurance, empowerment, maturity, resilience and team spirit... to name just a few of the benefits. And, of course, there's the added bonus of the students' parents being able to network.

BECOME THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF

At the time, the Collège Alpin International Beau Soleil, which had been in Gstaad since 1910, had already moved to Villars-sur-Ollon's sunny plateau at 1,300 m in altitude. After the Second World War, three more schools were founded within three years, all of which are still active today – La Garenne International School in 1947, Préfleuri International Alpine School in 1948, and Aiglon College in Chesières, in 1949.

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Institut Le Rosey, with its medieval château, its arts center and its new building devoted to learning, innovation and technology.

All of them are still primarily based on the British boarding school model, emphasising their high standing, quest for excellence, small class sizes and high level of personalisation – for studies that often begin in early childhood. The schools are also often influenced by the Montessori method or Austrian Rudolf Steiner’s holistic education approach, which relies heavily on the integration of the arts and manual labour. While run at first by their essentially English and French founders, these elite Swiss boarding schools began little by little to attract candidates from all four corners of the globe, reinforcing socialization, language practice and a potentially powerful future network for their students.

Over time, the goals evolved: as the world globalised, it became more about preparing for international exams and increasing both mobility and adaptability on a global level. In contrast to the demagogic influences of the past few years, the schools have strongly emphasised humanist values and the central role of multilateralism. Education is bilingual or entirely in English, with options to obtain a French Baccalauréat, British A-Level, Swiss Maturité or an IB (International Baccalaureate) upon completion of studies.

A (VERY) DYNAMIC EDUCATION

The security and quality of life that Switzerland in general (and Valais’ ski resorts in particular) offers have been attracting increasing numbers of wealthy foreign residents. This new boom led to the 2011 founding of the Verbier International School, whose mantra is to “educate beyond the

curriculum” and shape world citizens who are sharp, integrated, independent and creative. How exactly? Using a holistic approach that offers multiple sources of learning and experience, like debates, theatre, fine arts and even cooking classes, plus cultural visits, hikes and other sport activities that span dozens of other domains. Take for example the sport-study *Ski Race Academy* program or the *Freeride Academy* program, which include glacier outings in Zermatt and Saas Fee. It was a success, which inspired the creation of the Copperfield International School, also in Verbier – until the two schools unified in summer 2025, under the aegis of Duke’s Education, and inaugurated the new Trois Cimes campus premises (with an adjoining sports centre).

On the other side of the valley, in the heart of Crans Montana, the Le Régent International School (the youngest of the Swiss international boarding schools, founded in 2015) adopted a similar philosophy, expressed through their unique educational model: learning with the head, heart, and hand (h³). All classes are in English with obligatory French classes. It offers “experiential learning” with orientation courses in a plethora of options from music to yoga, debating, eloquence, robotics, mountain biking or hockey. The goal is to enhance development to help children reach their full potential, build practical skills and strong character that will last a lifetime and shape responsible citizens, entrepreneurs and leaders who are conscious of their social (and even environmental) role, ultimately having a positive impact on the future of the world. A core mission and enormous ambition to prepare students to excel in all their pursuits.

Giants of the Swiss Alps

Dams: heritage and the future of energy

Text Aurélie Michielin
Photos Valais-Wallis Promotion — Giovanni Castell — Alban Mathieu

Switzerland: the land of chocolate, watches, banks... and dams. Few people know it, but this country has the highest density of dams in the world, which includes run-of-river structures and, above all, storage dams. For decades, this infrastructure has shaped both the Swiss landscape and the country’s energy identity.

The history behind the country’s hydraulic power really began to accelerate in the mid-20th century, when Switzerland, in a visionary and bold move, began to pursue unprecedented modernization. After the end of the Second World War, rising consumption and electrification meant that new means of production were required. Taking advantage of its unique topography and rich glacial reserves, Switzerland commissioned around a hundred large dams within just 20 years, mainly in the canton of Valais — which is home to Europe’s largest concentration of glaciers.

THE “BLUE GOLD” RUSH

The long-isolated Alpine valleys suddenly found avenues for new prosperity. The work sites attracted vast numbers of labourers: thousands of Swiss and foreign workers came to contribute to building these monumental projects. For the



Émosson Dam, which was commissioned in 1975, nine out of ten workers were Italian. In parallel, infrastructure was expanding nationwide: roads, housing, cable cars, bridges — all of which contributed to the growth of Alpine tourism.

But there was a dark side to this growth. Entire villages were submerged, ecosystems were disrupted and many workers lost their lives. The worst accident occurred at the Mattmark Dam construction site in 1965, when a glacier tongue collapsed onto workers’ barracks, claiming the lives of 88 people.

SWISS-MADE INNOVATION

Today, there are 222 large dams in Switzerland, which have evolved to become symbols of engineering excellence, innovation and national pride. These dams, along with the smaller infrastructure involved in the complete hydropower

process, provide Switzerland with virtually emission-free electricity. Until the early 1970s, hydropower supplied nearly 90% of Switzerland’s electricity. Although activating nuclear power plants brought that percentage down to around 60% today, hydropower remains the backbone of the country’s energy system, and Switzerland ranks sixth in Europe in terms of installed hydropower capacity.

From design and engineering to operation and maintenance, Switzerland masters the entire chain of expertise in this domain and exports its technical innovations globally to places like Norway, China and South America.

Because hydropower requires significant investment, its funding is based on a public or semi-public model, with the primary contracting authorities and developers being



The Grande Dixence, the tallest gravity dam in the world (285 m), supplies electricity to more than half a million households.

cantonal or municipal administrations, along with electric utility companies (which are often publicly owned). The success of this model revolves around key hydropower concessions: companies are given the right – by a canton or municipality – to use a watercourse for electricity production for limited periods, generally 80 years. In exchange, the operator pays fees and transfers ownership of the dam to the public once the concession period comes to an end.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Switzerland committed to gradually phasing out nuclear power and increasing renewable production in its 2050 Energy Strategy, which was approved by voters in 2017. In order to meet rising energy demands while also compensating for the closure of nuclear plants, a historic round-table discussion with cantons, operators, and environmental organizations began in 2020. It selected 16 hydropower projects – deemed “energetically promising and ecologically acceptable” – to benefit from new facilities, raised dam walls, expanded reservoirs, and extended pump-storage systems for improved energy storage and grid balancing.

But the future of Swiss hydropower now faces new challenges. Suitable location sites have become scarce, approval procedures are lengthy, and profitability is uncertain in an electricity market where prices remain relatively low. Another serious concern is that the first concessions are approaching their end, which means the future governance of these concrete giants will need to be redefined. What company would invest hundreds of millions of Swiss Francs in a dam that has uncertain ownership rights and residual value?

Climate change has also become another increasingly important factor. Large dams are primarily fed by glacial meltwater and require hydrologic balance in order to regulate water flow, prevent floods and secure water reserves during (increasingly frequent) droughts. Scientists now predict that half of Switzerland’s glaciers will disappear by 2100, risking the future utility of the dams... while, paradoxically, making them even more essential. The Gornerli reservoir project in Valais, a flagship of the round-table discussion, illustrates the challenge of reconciling energy production, water management and protection of nature.

REINVENTING THE BALANCE

Even though voters overwhelmingly approved a 2024 law aimed at boosting domestic renewable electricity production, administrative delays, local opposition, and environmental or landscape concerns still hinder many projects. However, in late September 2025, Parliament adopted a “law to accelerate procedures”, designed to simplify planning and authorization for renewable energy projects of national interest. Whether these measures will be enough to convert political intent into tangible progress remains to be seen.

So, what does the future have in store? If the electricity agreement between Switzerland and the European Union enters into force, it could open new prospects – like integration into the European electricity market or greater value for pumped-storage power – but it could also lead to a potential loss of flexibility in managing and leveraging Switzerland’s hydropower resources. Only time will tell whether the country can harmoniously combine energy independence, respect for nature and the legacy of its “water cathedrals” – these monuments of the past that continue to power the future.

A parade of beautiful cars

Alpine picnics and concours d'élégances

Text Daniel Bauchervez

Photos Götz Göppert

In just a few years, the Eclectica car show in Crans-Montana has established itself as the region's unmissable Alpine festival of fine automobiles. And, on the horizon, a new gathering emerges for 2026: the Alps International Motor Show.

Ferrari *rosso corsa*, Corvette torch red, Lamborghini yellow, Maserati Noble Blue, Jaguar forest green... the gleaming bodywork at Eclectica sparkled beneath the high plateau's summer sun. Brainchild of the *Automobile Club de Crans-Montana (ACCM)*, the concours d'élégance has taken place every summer in the Valais ski resort for four years. At the helm: ex-racing driver Nelson Philippe, the youngest driver in history to have raced at the CART and Champ Car Championships – at just 17 years old – and the youngest winner in Champ Car World Series history (in 2006 at Surfers Paradise, Australia).





WHERE THOUGHTFUL SERVICE AND GENUINE HOSPITALITY
CREATE MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES



With an iconic concours d'élégance, an Alpine road trip, car-themed picnics and a new gathering for manufacturers in 2026, the Automobile Club de Crans-Montana has ambitious plans.

In addition to its legendary president, the association counts around 150 members, who are “collectors, entrepreneurs, designers or simply enthusiasts, united by their love for exceptional automobiles, good deeds and Alpine drives”, specified Nelson. The ACCM’s mission is to “celebrate automobile passion in all of its forms: heritage, design, innovation and the art of mountain living”. Old timers and supercars, simple 2CVs or rare prototypes, no matter their value, these vehicles embody iconic designs, exceptional engineering, legendary brand history and the passionate fervour of their owners.

RALLY SPIRIT AND AESTHETIC REUNIONS

“Each year, the Club organises several major events”, explains Nelson. Taking place over three days on the last weekend of July, Eclectica is without a doubt the Club’s leading light, having attracted around 10,000 participants for its last edition. The concours d’élégance, which unites some 100 vehicles on Rue de Prado, just steps from the golf course, includes exhibitions, artistic performances and “gourmet moments”. The very chic Collector’s Picnic, for example, which takes place before the event, boasted a partnership with Audemars Piguet for last summer’s edition. The goal? “To bring car lovers together in nature, in a friendly and refined environment to celebrate time, engineering and the art of Swiss living”.

An essential part of the overall event, the Crans Turismo scenic drive “revives the spirit of cruising the high plateau’s most legendary routes”. The idea? To gleefully rev car motors for a retro-inspired epicurean tour, set amongst an incredible Alpine background. There’s no timing scores here, only beautiful stops for gourmet food that’s meant to

be shared and enjoyed. For 2026, the concept is evolving: “while still in discussion with the authorities, we hope it will be an official drive on a closed road, a proper tribute to Switzerland’s great sporting heritage”, added Nelson.

NEW TRAJECTORIES

With several ACCM members being originally from Geneva, the club is currently in discussions with the Automobile Club de Genève “to explore being associated clubs, an extension of our already-established partnership with the Automobile Club de Lugano”, added the club president. “These kinds of partnerships reinforce the connection between our plains and our mountains, helping make French-speaking Switzerland a true intersection of automobile culture”.

To reinforce the spirit driving all of these projects, 2026 should see the introduction of a new ACCM event in parallel to Eclectica: the Alps International Motor Show (AIMS), set to take place 22-26 July at the Cry d’Er parking lot in Crans-Montana. Porsche, Ferrari, Bentley, Lamborghini, Rolls-Royce, McLaren... several iconic marques should be there, accompanied by key players in sustainable transportation, like the creators of luxury electric cars Lucid Motors from California, Polestar from Sweden, Rimac from Croatia and Alpine from France. “The goal is to become the automobile industry’s unmissable summer-time event, uniting car manufacturers, designers, media and collectors, all while being surrounded by stunning natural landscapes”. On the agenda: Alpine test drives, design and technology conferences and dedicated immersive experiences.

automobileclubbcm.com

#watches



Hermès
H08

This watch's 39 x 39 mm cushion-shaped case is only 10.6 mm thick and is instantly eye-catching. Its rhodium-plated Arabic numerals are coated with luminescent Super-LumiNova®, it has a date aperture at 4:30 and a medley of materials (titanium, nickel, sapphire), making the H08 sporty, urban, chic and waterproof up to 100 m. It's powered by the Manufacture H1837 self-winding movement with a 50-hour power reserve.

[hermes.com](https://www.hermes.com)



Patek Philippe
Calatrava Pilot Travel Time
5524G-010

Pilot's watches, and especially vintage ones, have soared in popularity the past few years, and this new timepiece by Patek Philippe is the best example to come out of 2025. Undoubtedly seductive, the watch boasts a white gold case that's graced with an elegant ivory lacquered dial and a khaki green composite-material strap with a fabric pattern. Among its prized complications: indications for two time zones and day/night (local and home).

[patek.com](https://www.patek.com)



Audemars Piguet
Royal Oak Extra-Thin
Selfwinding Flying Tourbillon Chronograph RD#5

A reflection of Audemars Piguet's 150 years of history, this unusual timepiece, which is powered by the new Calibre 8100, unites a flyback chronograph and a flying tourbillon for the first time ever. Another innovation: new generation push-pieces that were inspired by supple smartphone haptics! The 39 mm titanium case surrounds a seductive blue "Petite Tapisserie" dial for this highly limited-edition watch (only 150 available).

[audemarspiguet.com](https://www.audemarspiguet.com)



MB&F
SP One

The first watch in the "Special Projects" collection, the SP One embodies MB&F's boundary-pushing spirit and elegance with a 38 mm pebble-like case, a bezel-free design and delicately detached lugs. The barrel, balance wheel, and dial appear to float between two invisible sapphire domes, creating a surprising gravity-defying effect. The MB&F in-house movement is manually wound and features 72 hours of power reserve.

[mbandf.com](https://www.mbandf.com)



Longines
Spirit Flyback

With over a century of aviation heritage to their name, Longines revealed a new and highly seductive version of the Spirit Pilot Flyback for 2025. This revised chronograph flyback stays true to the aesthetic of the original collection, featuring a 39.5 mm stainless steel case with a bi-directional rotating bezel, a 30-minute counter at 3 o'clock and a small seconds sub-dial at 9 o'clock. It has a 68-hour power reserve and is COSC-certified.

[longines.com](https://www.longines.com)



Swatch
Golden Tac

A glimmer of gold on intense black marks the Swatch Golden Tac, which features a thin 34-mm round case and bracelet made of bio-sourced plastics. The dial, which is the same deep black, features golden hands, indexes and Arabic numerals which indicate hours, minutes and seconds. It's discreet, chic, waterproof and efficient, powered by a Swiss Quartz movement. And at this price, it won't last long on the shelves!

[swatch.com](https://www.swatch.com)



Frédérique Constant
Highlife Ladies Quartz

With a 31 mm case that's just 7.29 mm thick, this watch merges feminine proportions with modern elegance and refined finesse. Waterproof up to 50 m, it's powered by a FC 240 Quartz calibre with a 60-month power reserve. The dial features the date at 3 o'clock, double indexes at 12 o'clock, single indexes at 6 and 9 o'clock, and 8 diamonds as the other hour markers. The integrated steel bracelet is interchangeable with a rubber version.

[frederiqueconstant.com](https://www.frederiqueconstant.com)



Chopard
Alpine Eagle 41 SL Cadence 8HF

The eagle's eye is again (and forever) the inspiration for this watch's titanium dial, stamped with a radiant Pitch Black motif with touches of orange on the indexes and the second hand. This classy, sporty-chic watch features a 41 mm ceramicized titanium case and a very modern rubber strap. The Chopard 01.14-C calibre, which is COSC-certified, has an 8 Hz frequency and a 60-hour power reserve. This model is limited to 250 pieces.

[chopard.com](https://www.chopard.com)



Omega
Speedmaster Grey Side of the Moon

This astral gem pays homage to spatial exploration with its 44.25 mm polished-brushed and plasma-treated ceramic case, grey dial and new movement decoration that's precisely laser-engraved to recreate the Moon's surface topography. The ensemble boasts three sub-dials (30 min, 12 h and small seconds) and a tachymeter scale. The backside of the watch features a tribute to Astronaut Jim Lovell, with the engraved quote: "The Moon is Essentially Grey".

[omegawatches.com](https://www.omegawatches.com)



H. Moser & Cie
*Streamliner Perpetual Moon
Concept Meteorite*

Born when the cosmos collided with earth, this timepiece contains a true piece of intergalactic history: a fragment of the Gibeon meteorite, one of the largest ever to fall on Earth, in Namibia in the 19th century. Integrated into the dial, the meteorite's unique structure creates a beautiful Widmanstätten pattern, with the addition of a signature smoke effect that Moser is known for and an adjustable moon phase indicator.

[h-moser.com](https://www.h-moser.com)

#trends



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1. Brunello Cucinelli Soft nappa leather long column skirt shop.brunellocucinelli.com
2. Hermès Headphones in Hunter cowhide hermes.com
3. Miu Miu Matelassé nappa leather pouch miumiui.com
4. Loro Piana Horseriding high boot in calfskin ch.loropiana.com
5. Bottega Veneta Intrecciato Leather Gloves bottegaveneta.com
6. Rolex Oyster Perpetual Land-Dweller, Everose gold and diamonds rolex.com

#trends

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1. Giorgio Armani Long lambskin shearling coat armani.com
2. Assouline Scented candle, Library Collection, Leather globus.ch
3. Cartier Tank Louis Cartier, rose gold cartier.com
4. Prada Prada Buckle leather bag with belt prada.com
5. Ferragamo Derby shoe with zip detail ferragamo.com
6. Burberry Check cashmere scarf ch.burberry.com

#trends



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1. Céline *Backgammon in triomphe canvas* celine.com
2. Krug *Champagne Vintage* krug.com
3. Saint Laurent *Le monogramme pet carrier* ysl.com
4. Flexform *Ginger sofa* flexform.it

#helvet



#soireescafedelux



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