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The Manufacture Audemars Piguet

The Vallée de Joux: cradle of the watchmaker's art

n the heart of the Swiss Jura, around 50 kilometres north of Geneva, nestles a landscape which has retained its natural charm to this day: the Vallée de Joux. Around the mid-18th century, the harsh climate of this mountainous region and soil depletion drove the farming community settled there to seek other sources of income. With their high degree of manual dexterity, inexhaustible creativity and enormous determination, the inhabitants of the valley, known as Combiers, were naturally drawn to watchmaking.

Due to their high quality, the movements they produced acquired great popularity with the Geneva firms which used them to create complete watches.

From 1740 onwards, watchmaking developed into the principal industry of the Vallée de Joux. This region was thus transformed, as an 1881 chronicle put it, "into a land of milk and honey, in which poverty has rapidly disappeared".

Two names for a great adventure

n 1875, two young men passionate about Haute Horlogerie - Jules-Louis Audemars and Edward-August Piguet - decided to pool their skills to

design and produce watches with complications in the Vallée de Joux, the cradle of Haute Horlogerie. Determination, imagination and discipline led them to instant success. A branch in Geneva was their next move in about 1885 and new commercial links were forged at the 1889 Paris World Exposition, where they exhibited complication pocket watches. The Audemars Piguet factory continued to expand as the years went by. Its creations represented major milestones in the history of Haute

Horlogerie, like the first minute repeater wristwatch in 1892 and the smallest five-minute repeater movement ever made in 1915.

From 1918 onwards, the founders passed the reins of the business onto their sons, who in turn perfected their expertise in manufacturing wristwatches for gentlemen and ladies and designed new

sophisticated, ultra-thin movements. Audemars Piguet was soon the undisputed specialist in jump hour watches. Perseverance and initiative were the watchwords; the Wall Street crash in 1929 was a bitter blow, but the company directors were soon designing so-called skeleton watches

before embarking on chronograph production. But this new momentum was abruptly interrupted by the Second World War. Re-organisation was necessary in the

aftermath of the conflict. The factory focused on creating top-of-the-range items in keeping with its tradition of innovation. A strategy that would prove its worth, especially since it was backed by

outstanding creative daring.

Audemars Piguet continued to build on its now international reputation with creative designs. 1972 saw the launch of the *Royal Oak*, the first, immediately successful high-quality sports watch in steel, followed in 1986 by the first ultrathin tourbillon wristwatch with automatic winding. The factory's creative spirit has not faltered since, offering aesthetically original timekeepers with outstanding movements. Thus it brought watches with complications back into fashion at the end of the 1980s, launching its extraordinary *Tradition d'Excellence* collection in 1999. In 2006, Audemars Piguet presented the

fifth item (Calibre 2899) in this exclusive series; oval in shape (*Millenary*), it features a linear read-off perpetual calendar with power-reserve indicator and deadbeat seconds hand, a new escapement displaying revolutionary efficiency, no need for lubrication and so much more. All the signs of a bold spirit rooted firmly in tradition and auguring well for the future.

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Features

he hours sing out once more on the new Jules Audemars watch from Audemars Piguet. They also dance across the dial with its jumping display and elegant blued Arabic numerals. Combining two in-house specialities – the Minute Repeater and Jumping Hours – this marvel of precision and harmony perpetuates Audemars Piguet's supreme expertise in the field of complicated watches. With its case and dial featuring a new take on classical styling, it gives a fresh boost to the Jules Audemars collection.

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Musical hours

Watchmakers in the Vallée de Joux have always nurtured a great passion and an innate talent for striking mechanisms. Perhaps because, amid the silence of the mountains and the hushed serenity of long snowbound winters, the crystal-clear sound of these miniature musical marvels strikes an even deeper, more meaningful chord. Or possibly because

such a complex mechanism was bound to stir their legendary inventive spirit.

Founded in Le Brassus in 1875, the Manufacture Audemars Piguet soon demonstrated its skills in the art of striking watches. In 1889, it presented a "Grande Complication" model equipped with a Minute Repeater mechanism striking the hours, quarters and minutes. It also devised a number of technical innovations serving to miniaturise these mechanisms: in 1891, it created a Minute Repeater model measuring a mere 18 mm in diameter; and in 1892, the first Minute Repeater wristwatch. Finally,

in 1910, a Minute Repeater pocket-watch featured a magnificent movement characteristic of the elegant aesthetics cherished by the watchmakers of the Vallée de Joux.

A minute repeater watch strikes on demand a low-pitched note for each hour, a double high- and low-pitched note for the quarters, and a high-pitched note for every minute that has elapsed since the last quarter. It calls for



a particularly sophisticated mechanism, since the watch must not only be tuned like a musical instrument, but must also "know" at any time how many notes it must strike.

Throughout the 20th century, this knowhow was displayed and consolidated in timepieces much coveted by connoisseurs, in which striking mechanisms are often associated with other complex mechanisms. In 1992, Audemars Piguet presented a wristwatch combining a Minute Repeater mechanism

with another of its specialities: jumping hours. As early as 1924, making a complete break with the standard analog reading of time, the Manufacture in Le Brassus had introduced a pocket-watch with jumping hours and small seconds at 6 o'clock, distinguished by the inherently understated elegance of Art Deco.

A state-of-the-art Minute Repeater

The Audemars Piguet Calibre 2907 driving the new *Jules Audemars* Jumping Hour Minute Repeater is clearly inspired by the movement of the historical 1992 model, whereas the architecture has been entirely redesigned to match the new case dimensions. Audemars Piguet has implemented innovative solutions to accommodate the relatively large movement and the complex striking mechanism within a diameter of just 43 mm.

Blending traditional expertise and cutting-edge technologies, the Manufacture has also endowed the audible mechanism with all the fine-tuned technical details that distinguish its latest generation of Minute Repeaters. In particular, the movement has been equipped with a device that eliminates any audible gap when the watch does not need to strike a quarter (e.g. 9:13); the sequence of 9 hours and 13 minutes is thus struck smoothly and without any interruption. Minute Repeater watches generally preclude any manual time-setting when the striking mechanism is in operation, since this might damage the movement. To remedy this problem, Audemars Piguet has developed a system that disengages the time-setting system while the watch is striking. This set of breakthrough developments thereby enhances the reliability, the security and the user-

friendliness of Minute Repeater watches, while remaining true to the aesthetic appearance of the vintage models.

The jumping hour mechanism has also been optimised. So as to enlarge the numerals while making sure the disc was not too large for the movement, watchmakers had to rethink the positioning of the disc and shift it towards the centre of the calibre.





Dial side



Movement technical data

Thickness: 7.60 mm

Diameter: 37.00 mm (16 ½ lines)

Fitting diameter: 29.30 mm (13 lines)

Frequency: 21,600 vibrations / hour (3 Hz)

Number of jewels: 35

Maximum power reserve of movement:

approx. 70 hours (approx. 75 turns of the crown)

Manual winding

Variable inertia balance

Hairspring with Phillips curve

" KIF Elastor " shock protection system for the balance

Number of separate parts: 412

Case technical data

Overall thickness: 12 mm

Diameter: 43 mm

Case in 18-carat pink gold or 950 platinum

Sapphire caseback

Watch functions and indications

(see figure on the inside cover)

- 1 Aperture with jumping hours
- 2 Minute hand
- 3 Seconds hand at 6 o'clock

Your watch is fitted with a two-position crown:

- A Crown in manual winding position.
- **B** Crown in time-setting position.
- Repeater act slide

Sounds on request:

- the hours (low-pitched note)
- the quarter hours (low- and highpitched notes)
- the minutes (high-pitched note)
- Striking-mechanism hour corrector

Setting the time

Precautions before setting the time

Audemars Piguet has developed a gear system which disconnects the time setting when the striking-mechanism is functioning. To avoid wear on the disconnecting-gear system, it is best not to set the time when the striking-mechanism is functioning.

Pull out the crown to position **B**. You may now set the time by winding in either direction without risk of damaging the movement. It is advisable to move past the time sought (by about five minutes) and then return to the correct time.

Winding the watch

Your Audemars Piguet mechanical watch is fitted with a hand-wound movement. We recommend that you wind up your watch fully at the same time each day.

The crown is fitted with a disconnecting-gear system to protect the mechanism against damage to the barrel blocking system.

Striking-mechanism hour corrector

The striking-mechanism hour corrector **D** is a world premiere. If the hour displayed differs from the hour struck, the user may set the hour striking-mechanism with the corrector **D** by moving one hour forward.

Caution: to ensure correct operation, it is preferable to correct the acoustic hour when the minute hand 2 indicates the half-hour (30 minutes).

Triggering the minute repeater function

The Minute Repeater strikes the hours, quarters and minutes on request. Two tiny hammers strike a gong pitched low for the hours and high for the minutes; these two pitches alternate for the quarters.

Example: 3 hours 37 minutes



The striking mechanism is activated by means of the repeater slide built into the left side of the case-middle.

A safety device prevents the release of the repeater mechanism if the slide is not pushed as far as it will go and thus avoids repeating the incorrect time.

The movement now features a system eliminating any audible gap when the watch does not need to strike a quarter (e.g. 09.13); the sequence of 9 hours and 13 minutes is thus struck smoothly and without any interruption.

Important things to remember when using the watch

- While the repeating mechanism is working, the slide must not be constrained in any way whatsoever. The H-Q-M sequence is performed without interruption.
- Caution: your minute repeater watch is not watertight. It is however protected against dust!

Guarantee and care

All details concerning the guarantee and care instructions of your watch are provided in the certificate of origin and guarantee enclosed.

