

# International watch and jewellery exhibition

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self-winding watch. The problem moved from the style to the technical field. It was dumped into the respective laps of company research sections and these horologists puzzled out a variety of solutions.

Here the work of the manufacturers provided primary impetus for a trend — a self-winding ultra-thin watch, finely styled for formal evening wear, yet rugged enough for practical everyday wear. This marketed product developed further an already established consumer preference.

A great many manufacturers of Swiss quality watches developed and marketed stylish, very thin watches with self-winding movements and all of these would be of equal interest. However, since we have no space to study all of these models here, let us look at one of the major technical break-throughs which permitted this combination of features.

Several years ago two Swiss factories discovered accidentally that their researchers were moving along the same path towards development of an ultra-thin wrist-watch that would wind itself. The two firms thereupon joined hands in perfecting the new system, and presented it to the public at a joint press conference. The two firms are Universal of Geneva and Buren of Buren.

Their system succeeded in incorporating the self-winding rotor — the swinging weight activated by gravity and movements of the wearer — within the movement itself instead of as an attachment that revolves behind the movement.

This permitted the makers to reduce the thickness of the movement to 4.2 mm.

The watch repairer appreciates this invention for a more practical reason: when he removes the back of the watch-case he can see the entire movement, since the balance, the train, the barrel, the auto-winding mechanism and, of course, the miniature rotor, are all on one plane. He can easily remove any of these parts without disturbing the rest.

The two-way winding action of the rotor is also interesting. This consists of three small steel wheels with roller bearings. Two wheels, of equal size and in constant mesh, are pivoted between the automatic plates. The third smaller wheel is in mesh with the rotor gear wheel. Under each of these wheels there is a disc of a diameter equal to the pitch circle of the teeth.

The third smaller wheel *has no pivots*, but runs on the edges of the discs and moves from one larger wheel to the other according to the direction of the rotor swing. This system requires no lubrication and, due to the rollers, runs with little friction.

Piaget, another Swiss watch firm, also has responded to the trend towards making self-winding wrist-watches stylishly thin. They launched a new model, in January 1960, which is described as the thinnest automatic ever made. The movement is only 2.3 mm. thick.

And so it goes. What the buyer wants in a time-piece, Swiss watchmakers will give him. And since Swiss horological research often leads watchmakers ahead of the market's taste, the products offered often help develop the consumer taste.

So the jeweller, the retailer, can choose either side in the great debate: who sets watch styles? For no matter how the debate ends, he and his customers are certain winners.

## INTERNATIONAL WATCH AND JEWELLERY EXHIBITION

The world's largest international exhibition of quality watches and jewellery — the 1960 Montres et Bijoux Exposition — will be held at the Rath Museum in Geneva from 9th September to 2nd October.

This announcement followed the decision by the City of Geneva to award two prizes each of 5,000 Sw. Frs. (£414) to the outstanding international creations in two categories: 1, Lady's jewellery watch, without stones; 2, Precious jewellery.

Entries in this international competition have been received from five countries: France, Germany, Italy, the U.S.A., and Switzerland.

Simultaneously the world's largest diamond group, the De Beers Syndicate, announced in London that they would participate in the show, together with diamond houses from Antwerp and Amsterdam. De Beers alone is expected to display some £500,000 worth of diamonds. There will be a daily demonstration of diamond-cutting — and art in which a fortune rides on the tap of a mallet.

Annually, the watchmakers of Switzerland have displayed their finest creations in timepieces at this Autumn show. The exhibition has grown steadily — attracting watch and jewellery connoisseurs from all over the world — until last year, bowing to demands from firms in other countries which wished to exhibit their creations in the watchmaking centre of the world, the Montres et Bijoux Committee announced that the 1960 exhibition would be thrown open to all. The City of Geneva then inaugurated the international contest.

"I don't think we realised that Geneva was considered the watchmaking centre of the world until several years ago when we had to turn down all these entry requests from other countries", a Montres et Bijoux Committee member confessed. "They all wanted their creations to be on display here for prestige purposes. Now that we've thrown the doors open to all, Switzerland can really consider itself as the Land of Time. The world's greatest watchmakers come here to be seen and to be judged."

In addition to the displays of quality watches and jewellery, diamonds and diamond-cutting, and the international competition entries, there will be a special section devoted to futuristic "recherches" watches and jewellery, masterpieces in tapestry, and documentary films showing the history and trends of the watch and jewellery industries.

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