

# Ferdinand BERTHOUD

By KARL-FRIEDRICH  
SCHEUFELE

**T**he famous watchmaker Ferdinand Berthoud crossed my path about 15 years ago, when I was expanding the collection of L.U.CEUM, the watch and clock museum in Chopard's Fleurier manufacture. In an auction, I came across one of his outstanding chronometers, which was to complete a dedicated section in the museum.

At that time, I discovered that Ferdinand Berthoud was one of the most illustrious master-watchmakers in the history of the art. Born in Plancemont in the Val-de-Travers, close to Fleurier, in 1727, Berthoud moved to Paris at a young age and in 1753 was made Master Clockmaker by King Louis XV. The life, as much as the work, of this brilliant watchmaker is worth recalling, as he left us a heritage of exceptional breadth and depth that includes marine chronometers, pocket watches and clocks. In 1760 he presented the construction principle of a

marine clock, and subsequently became horologist-mechanic to the King and the Navy in 1770.

His destiny was equally remarkable, as this shrewd diplomat made his way unscathed through French history from the Age of Enlightenment to the Napoleonic Empire, while surviving the Revolution. Widely renowned and respected for his creations, Ferdinand Berthoud was also a remarkable horological theoretician who authored a number of books amounting to some 4,000 pages, the first publication being *The Art of Operating and Adjusting Clocks and Watches*, in 1759.

However, what impressed me most was Berthoud's visionary spirit, expressed by his work, which remains relevant up to this day.

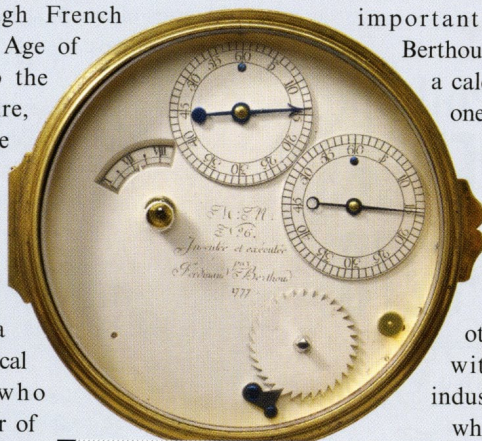
My encounter almost inevitably led to the acquisition of a sizeable collection of Ferdinand Berthoud timepieces, but also to a strong desire to revive the Ferdinand Berthoud name in the form of a contemporary watch. I admit that the project was not based on rational criteria or lengthy prior calculations, which is undoubtedly why it was so exciting. The

determination to train the spotlight once again on Ferdinand Berthoud is not at all linked to specifically thought-out timing or opportunistic circumstances. Reviving the name and the work of a watchmaker as important as Ferdinand

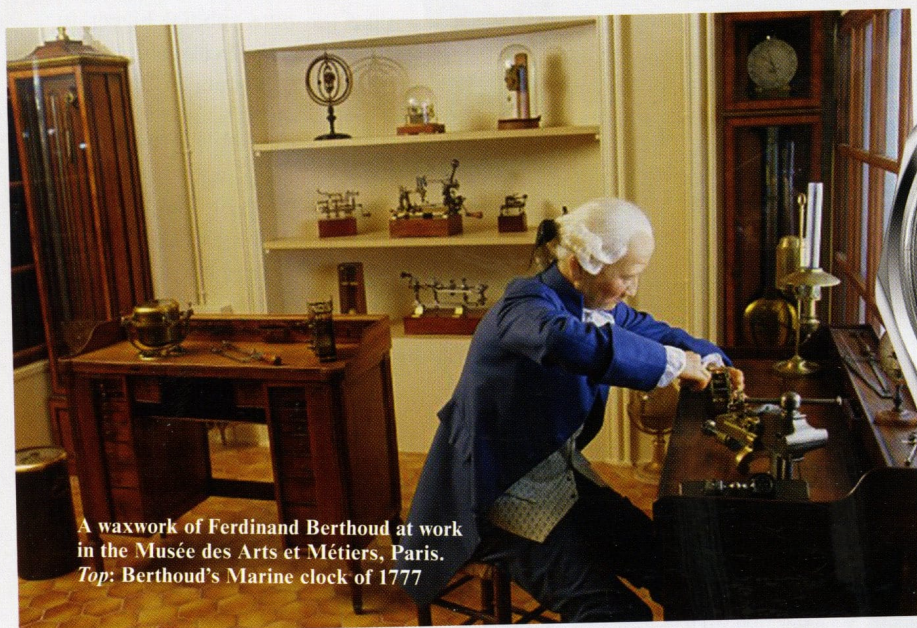
Berthoud cannot indeed be a calculated move, only one based on passion.

To be perfectly honest, for a very long time I had never even imagined developing a brand other than Chopard within the watch industry—until the day when I came across the above story. When, in 2006, I did have the opportunity to acquire the Berthoud name, I did not hesitate for a single moment. My

team and I soon became aware of what the brand should *not* become. But it took us a little longer to be sure of what it should be. At around the same time, we were also very intensely involved in preparing for Chopard's 150th anniversary, and it was thus in the course of 2010 that the project began to take shape. In a nutshell, the approach was



## Essays



A waxwork of Ferdinand Berthoud at work in the Musée des Arts et Métiers, Paris.  
Top: Berthoud's Marine clock of 1777



© MUSÉE DES ARTS ET MÉTIERS-CNAM/PHOTO FRANÇOIS DELASTRE (BERTHOUD AT WORK)

RAINER W. SCHLEGELMILCH/GETTY IMAGES (SIFFERT)



to be: contemporary horology giving pride of place to chronometry (precision timing), in keeping with the spirit of Berthoud's work.

While the rebirth of Chronométrie Ferdinand Berthoud has been an exceptional adventure, filled with joys and thrilling experiences, it has also carried with it a weight of responsibility. Faced with the heritage passed on to us, there was no question of doing anything ill-advised. And therein doubtless lay the chief difficulty: to succeed in offering contemporary watches in harmony with the spirit of Ferdinand Berthoud. I thus repeatedly asked myself the question: what would Ferdinand Berthoud have done in our place if he had to develop a 21st-century mechanical wristwatch? In seeking to channel the vision of this tireless discoverer and inventor, it became obvious that the new timepiece bearing the Chronométrie Ferdinand Berthoud signature had to be contemporary, innovative and daring.

It was with this mindset that the Ferdinand Berthoud FB 1 Chronometer was developed, featuring a case that was to epitomize an astonishing and modern expression of watchmaking: a highly technical, extremely pure and immediately recognizable model whose visual simplicity belies its authentic complexity.

Only time will tell how wisely we staged the revival of Chronométrie Ferdinand Berthoud, but the first signs are extremely encouraging. Some of the finest retailers have agreed to associate in this highly demanding and exclusive approach—since only 20 watches will be produced in 2017. Moreover, barely one year since its presentation, the FB 1 Chronometer has just been honoured by the Aiguille d'Or Grand Prix award in the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève in November 2016. This is the watch industry's highest distinction, granted by a jury made up of 23 independent personalities from a wide range of backgrounds. It is a major token of recognition for all those who have joined me in working towards bringing this exceptional watchmaker back to his rightful place in the watchmaking pantheon, and in forging the renaissance of Chronométrie Ferdinand Berthoud. It was not without a certain sense of awe and gratitude that we proudly accepted this distinction.

## TAG Heuer AUTAVIA

By JEAN-CLAUDE  
BIVER

**B**uilding a bright future at TAG Heuer is what drives us all, both my teams and myself. We are incredibly lucky in that we have this extraordinary capacity for creation and innovation, not to mention a glorious past, to draw on for inspiration. The Autavia is a near-perfect illustration of this winning combination.

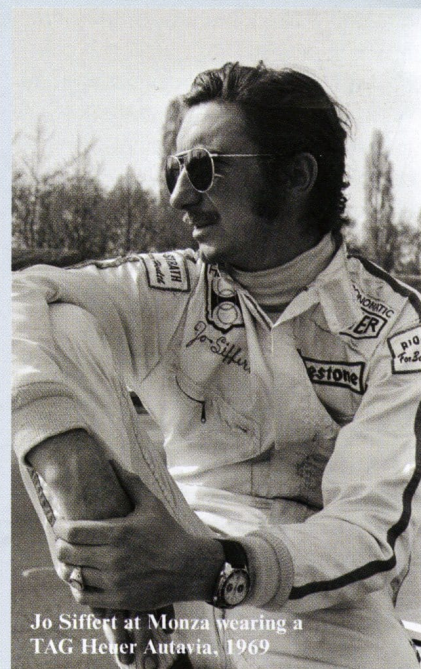
In 1933, Heuer launched a brand new dashboard timer for cars and aircraft—automobile and aviation. Hence Autavia. Its name is as ingenious as its time-keeping

functionalities, which allow accurate journey times to be recorded.

Heuer and the avant-garde were immediately synonymous.

The life of a timepiece is punctuated by the technological developments that define its era. After 24 years of good and loyal service, the Autavia was superseded by the Monte-Carlo, designed to be more legible and practical. The end of an era, but not the end of the story.

1962: Jack Heuer, the fourth generation of the Heuer family at the head of the company, realized that the collection was missing something. He launched a new sports chronograph wristwatch whose signature feature was a rotating bezel. Jack demonstrated an extraordinary audacity in launching a complete range of chronographs as his first endeavour:



Jo Siffert at Monza wearing a TAG Heuer Autavia, 1969

the versions featured two or three counters, with different scales on the bezel. He revived the magnificent Autavia name to christen his very first creation. It was the start of a true renaissance for the Autavia, which remained in the catalogue until 1985. All the great drivers opted for one version or another: Jo Siffert, Mario Andretti, Derek Bell, Clay Regazzoni, Gilles Villeneuve, Jacky Ickx, Jochen Rindt... A truly astonishing and inspiring destiny.

The Autavia is one of what the "Heueristi" call the "Big Three", along with the Heuer Carrera and the Monaco. Collectors love the infinite permutations of this piece: first- or second-execution case? All-lume dauphine or straight hands? Tachymeter, hours/minutes or GMT bezel? So, when the idea to reinstate the Autavia in the collection was born, it was evident they would have something to say. The Heuer community acts as both an ambassador and an adviser; it is a touchstone for the brand. These men and women—the latter fewer in number but extremely engaged—form a community that is deeply passionate and highly influential. Establishing a

