

JEWELRY

Breguet fetes 216th year since tourbillon's patent

June 26, 2017



Breguet revolutionized fine watchmaking with the invention of the tourbillon in 1801. Image courtesy of Breguet

By STAFF REPORTS

Swatch-owned watchmaker Breguet is celebrating its founder's invention of the tourbillon, an innovation that revolutionized precision in timekeeping.

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Considered the father of modern technology, Abraham-Louis Breguet patented the tourbillon on June 26, 1801, or because France was still using the Republican calendar, on 7 Messidor in the year IX. The patent earned by Mr. Breguet would last a decade and would offer the watchmaker legal protection from counterfeits.

Happy birthday, tourbillon

Prior to the June 26 submission, on Dec. 24 of 1800, or 2 Nivose, year IX, Mr. Breguet submitted the technical file for his tourbillon design. The file included a watercolor technical drawing based on Mr. Breguet's in-depth research and experimentation.

Mr. Breguet's tourbillon case file today is stored at the French National Industrial Property Institute in Paris. In addition to the file, the archive includes Mr. Breguet's letter addressed to the Minister of the Interior, who was responsible for granting patents.

The invention of the tourbillon revolutionized timekeeping due to its ability to keep precise time by counteracting the negative effects of gravity in pocket watches. The tourbillon is considered "the pinnacle of high watchmaking."



Breguet's latest creation, the Marine Equation marchante 5887, includes a tourbillon, equation of time and perpetual calendar in its design. Image courtesy of Breguet

On June 26, Breguet remembers its founder's patented invention and contribution to fine watchmaking by celebrating Tourbillon Day. At its New York boutique on Fifth Avenue, for example, the brand hosts a VIP celebration with a tourbillon-shaped cake.

Breguet has devoted much of its marketing to sharing its inventive heritage with horology enthusiasts.

For instance, Breguet partnered with the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco to present horologists in the Bay Area the opportunity to learn more about the brand's innovative works.

Titled "Breguet: Art and Innovation in Watchmaking," the exhibit was held at the California Palace at the Legion of Honor Museum, running from Sept. 19, 2015 to Jan. 10, 2016. On display was the watchmaker's largest collection of antique timepieces ever shown to consumers in the Americas.

The pieces culminated to underscore Breguet's timepieces as "miracles of mechanical engineering and objects of rare beauty celebrated in the courts of Europe by the world's most preeminent personalities" ([see story](#)).

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