

PAUL GERBER

The Integrator



1950
Born in Bern, Switzerland

1966-1970
Apprenticed as a watchmaker in Bern

1976
Purchased his own atelier in Zurich, Switzerland

1989
Debuted the world's smallest wooden-gear timepiece

1989
Accepted into the AHCI

1993
Gave up the small atelier and established a "Workshop for Watch Creations" in Zurich's Albisrieden neighborhood

1993-2001
With interruptions, rebuilt the Caliber 92 from Louis Elysée Piguet to make it the world's most complicated wristwatch

1997
Debuted the Retrograd

1999
Presented a miniature clock with eight-day movement and "flying" tourbillon

2000
Debuted the Retro Twin

Soft-spoken and modest, this master watchmaker has long been known and admired within the industry and in collectors' circles. His notoriety stems from both his masterpieces of miniaturization and the various complicated creations that he has made on behalf of renowned watch brands. For the past several years, Gerber has also been putting his own name on the dials of horological specialties that appeal to the aficionado. All this began in 1997 with Gerber's Retrograd, the first model in the history of the wristwatch with a retrograde seconds display. Gerber further underscored his already undisputed expertise in 2000 when he debuted his Retro Twin. The next step in the evolutionary process that began with the Retrograd, this watch offered retrograde seconds display and also featured an automatic winding mechanism. Gerber began with a hand-wound Peaseux 7001 movement, to which he added an innovative winding mechanism with double rotors. This wasn't the first self-winding watch to encase two oscillating weights, but it was the first in this particular form. The rotors inside the Retro Twin turn in unprecedented overlapping orbits. To accomplish this feat, Gerber first needed to find the right shape for the two runners, then determine the optimal placement of and best distance between the two sets of bearings so that the two wedge-shaped, 18-karat-gold rotors would optimally exploit the space available to them without

Right: Gerber created the world's first retrograde seconds display in a wristwatch in 1997.

One of world's most complicated wristwatches. In 1995, Gerber added a miniaturized "flying" tourbillon to Louis Elysée Piguet's pocket-watch caliber, into which Franck Muller had already integrated a perpetual-calendar mechanism.



The Retro Twin has two rotors whose orbits overlap.

ever touching one another. The result of all this optimization is an attractive construction that Gerber wisely registered for patent protection.

At the same time, he also completed work on a timepiece that surely numbers among the world's most complicated wristwatches. A private collector and long-term client of Gerber's purchased this watch, which ran on a pocket-watch caliber from Louis Elysée Piguet, customized by the great Franck Muller himself, who added a perpetual calendar. The collector commissioned Gerber to install the smallest "flying" one-minute tourbillon. After completing this project in 1995, Gerber was again requested by the watch's owner to further complicate the masterpiece by adding a split-seconds chronograph with a flyback function, a jump-type minutes counter and power-reserve displays for both the ordinary movement and the striking works.

Elena Federspiel

