

# Innovative Watch Creations



An Interview with François-Paul Journe, Founder, Montres Journe SA

**EDITORS' NOTE** *François-Paul Journe is a high-end watch manufacturer in Switzerland who designs brand new movements, even inventing completely new systems. He began his career in his uncle's antique restoration shop in Paris and built his first tourbillon pocket watch in 1982. In 1985, he set up his first workshop on the rue de Verneuil in Paris. In 1987, he became a laureate of the Foundation de la Vocation, and is a recipient of the Balancier d'Or Prize, the Gaia Watchmaker*



François-Paul Journe

*of the Year award, and recently won his third Aiguille d'Or (Golden Hand), the top prize at the annual Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève. In 2006, he was honored with the title of "Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres" by the French Minister of Culture. Journe earned his watchmaker's diploma from Ecole d'horlogerie de Paris in 1977.*

**COMPANY BRIEF** *F.P. Journe is a high-end watch manufacturer in Switzerland, and the motto for the brand, Invenit et Fecit (Latin for "invented and made") denotes that the company builds the entirety of the watches. Journe designs brand new movements, even inventing completely new systems, like the resonance chronometer. F.P. Journe ([www.fpjourne.com](http://www.fpjourne.com)) watches are available around the world through boutiques or authorized retailers in Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Beijing, Geneva, and New York.*

## Would you provide an overview of F.P. Journe and the history of the brand?

I am celebrating 30 years of innovative watch creations, which I invent and manufacture in the center of Geneva, as stated by the label *Invenit et Fecit*, applied on all of our watches. It certifies that each exclusive calibre has been entirely invented, constructed, and assembled in the workshops of our Geneva manufacture.

It is there, on our 2000-square-meter site, that the brand produces the components necessary to make the F.P. Journe precision chronometers in the authentic horological tradition within rigorous craftsmanship.

Excellence and chronometry are the essence of an F.P. Journe watch. Every single creation is made only in the most precious metals: platinum or rose gold. F.P. Journe is also the world's only watch manufacturer to produce the movements of its exclusive mechanisms in

18-karat rose gold, yet another first in the watch industry.

Thanks to their unique conception, originality, and technical performance, F.P. Journe has been awarded the greatest watch prizes around the world since 1994, including six awards at the Geneva Watchmaking Grand Prix, of which three are the ultimate "Golden Hand" honors for the Tourbillon with deadbeat seconds in 2004, the Sonnerie Souveraine in 2006, and the Centigraphe in 2008. We are proud to be one of the last guardians

of the fundamental values of Haute Horlogerie, firmly committed to restoring a dimension of authenticity to the history of time.

## Would you describe the F.P. Journe collections and some of the new designs that you will introduce to the market?

F.P. Journe is divided into two lines: the collection Souveraine, composed of high-precision mechanical watches with manual winding and featuring exclusive complications; and the Octa collection with automatic winding based on a same calibre with the prowess to insert all the complications of the Octa line in the same space.

F.P. Journe is also producing Limited Series, Anniversary editions, and the Black Label line, which is available only in the F.P. Journe Boutiques and exclusive for existing owners of an F.P. Journe watch.

Regarding the new designs, a few projects are running, including a watch of chronometry that will be the embodiment of precision, and a special collection for women presenting an entirely new watch concept.

## How do you define the target market for F.P. Journe based on your price points?

F.P. Journe watches are mainly coveted by collectors who appreciate genuine manufacture watches with exclusive and innovative calibres entirely invented, produced, and assembled within the manufacture workshops. We are not a marketing company and I do not produce specific watches for a specific market; I am a constructor and I make precision chronometers in a constant search for more precision, different from other brands and coveted for the unique conception of their movement, their technical innovation, and their power of aesthetic identity.

## What are the key markets for F.P. Journe and where do you foresee growth opportunities for the brand?

Our strongest markets are those where watch enthusiasts and collectors live, but that means knowledgeable connoisseurs, as one doesn't buy an F.P. Journe watch as a first purchase.

The U.S. is a very strong market for us, followed by Europe, Japan, and Southeast Asia. We are not looking for an important increase but only to be present within territories where connoisseurs are.

## Where are F.P. Journe boutiques currently located and do you have plans to open additional boutiques?

The first boutique I opened was in Tokyo, as I was travelling through the area for the first time in 2002, and there were no retailers serious enough to represent us. I decided to open my own boutique in 2003. The second was opened in Hong Kong. We were not represented there as I didn't like their sales methods. We naturally opened in Geneva, followed by Paris, and in 2009, we opened in New York on 721 Madison Avenue, as well as in Beijing.

I remain attentive to potential opportunities, without any eagerness.

## F.P. Journe is known as a leader in customer service. How critical is this to the brand and what has made you so effective in this regard?

The after-sales service features the word "service" and that is what we are trying to do. The majority of people in the world are careful in their purchase of a watch as a luxury watch is meant to outlive us; it thus means it has to be cared for. It is the seriousness of service that helps someone decide to buy.

## What are your key priorities for F.P. Journe as you look to the future?

To try to do the best watches in the world and develop the know-how of rigorous craftsmanship to my collaborators in order to be completely independent. ●

*F.P. Journe collections left to right: Souveraine; Octa; and Resonance*