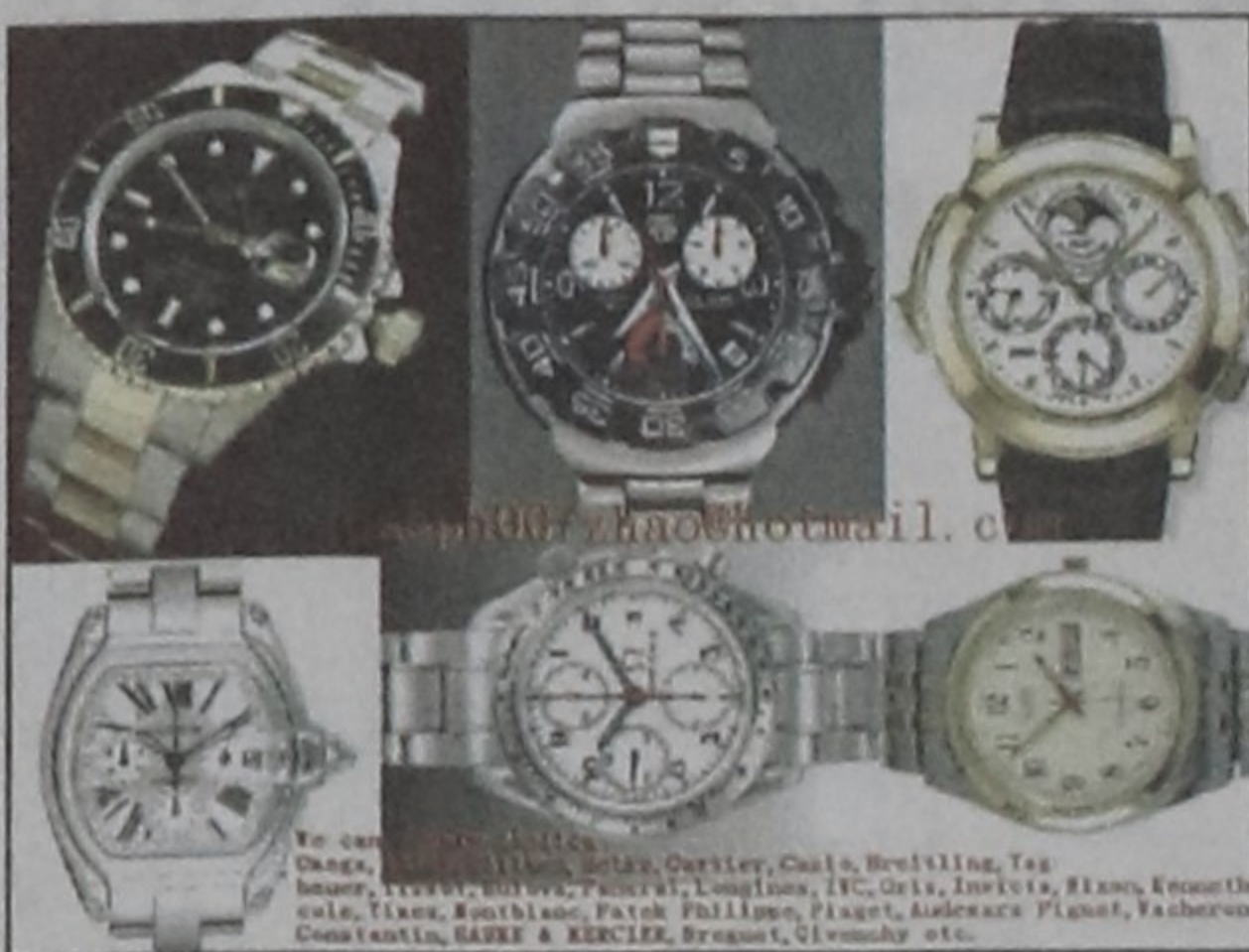


The watch industry in Switzerland

IN the conquest of space or major sporting events, where time has to be measured to the millisecond, Swiss watches and chronometers will regularly be found at the forefront. The impeccable reputation of Swiss products in this sector has been founded on a high degree of inventiveness and long-standing sense of high quality workmanship.

It was Huguenot refugees at the end of 16th century whose technical expertise instigated the development of watch-making in



Switzerland. Geneva was the home of the first guild of watchmakers at the beginning of the 17th century

and the industry finally extended right along the Jura chain from Geneva to Schaffhausen. 1845 saw the arrival of the first machines capable of producing identical parts, thus creating the concept of mass production and turning craftsmanship into industry in one fell swoop. Thanks to mechanization, the Swiss left their competitors behind, and for more than a century dominated the world market.

The 'Swiss-made' label is based both on high quality of the products and on continuous improvements to the components, as well as after-sales service. Almost all the major pioneering developments in watchmaking have come from Switzerland, which has become a synonym for timing. As early as 1921 the Swiss Laboratory of Horological Research was set up, followed by the Centre for Electronic Horology in 1962 and the Swiss Centre for Electronics and Microtechnology SA, in Neuchâtel, in 1983. The latter concentrated on research into the possibilities of miniaturization (microelectronics) and, in addition in 1967 it produced the world's first quartz watch. Another important element is the world's only body certifying chronometers the highly accurate timekeepers used especially in sports.

The Swiss watch industry continued to develop the quartz watch: numerical display using liquid crystal or electrochromic display, high-frequency quartz, and combined analogue and digital display. A recent addition is the thinnest watch in the world, boasting a thickness of just 0.98mm.

Switzerland's world heritage sites



The Swiss Alps

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12 and civil engineering achievements, in harmony with the surrounding landscapes.

7. La Chaux-de-Fonds / Le Locle: A progressive and entrepreneurial spirit combined with a concern for social justice and public health generated in these twin cities a town planning and architecture

that are in perfect adequacy with the evolving needs of clock-making and clock-makers. Production units, houses and public facilities are closely interwoven, to take into account both the economical requirements and the workers' quality of life. Today, the integrity and authenticity of this conserved town planning is in

total symbiosis with the technical, economic, and social demands of an intense clock-making activity.

The three natural regions listed as World Heritage Sites are the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch, Monte San Giorgio and the Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona.

www.worldheritage.ch



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