**Baume & Mercier**

A behind-the-scenes look of a Maison in tune with the times

**“Accept only perfection, only manufacture watches of the highest quality”. More than just a motto, this is a philosophy embedded in the DNA of Baume & Mercier since 1830. Profoundly attached to the Swiss Made label, the Maison produces all its watches in the Swiss Jura and adopts a deliberate historical approach – known as “*établissage*” – that has shaped its success. In contemporary language, this term refers to in-house mastery of the key stages of watch development, assembly, quality control and maintenance, and calls upon the finest watch specialists to produce its components. A pledge of quality, reliability and performance – and all at the fairest price. Close-up and personal with Baume & Mercier.**

As one of the oldest Swiss watch Maisons, Baume & Mercier has been shining in the watch industry firmament for almost two centuries. Such longevity commands respect and the inevitable question comes to mind: what is the recipe behind this success? The key ingredient is undoubtedly expertise, continuously distilled with authentic passion. This perpetually enriched heritage features two other essential elements: rigorous discipline and carefully controlled movements. All enhanced with a timeless flavor.

**B for Baume**

The story begins in the mid-19th century in the Swiss Jura, with the creation of a family firm that developed rapidly. The two siblings Louis-Victor and Joseph-Célestin found themselves at the head of “Baume Frères” and set up a subsidiary company in London, before extending their watchmaking reach to encompass the entire British Empire. Their combined assets – notably commercial flair and rigorous industrial standards – helped spread the brand’s reputation across borders. Known for its classical watches, chronographs and grand complication models, it won a number of international prizes, particularly for the precision of its models. In the early 1920s, William Baume, representing the third generation of the watchmaking dynasty, associated with Paul Mercier in founding “Baume & Mercier” in Geneva, where the brand has its current headquarters. In this temple of luxury watchmaking, the Maison became one of the most active firms in the realm of wristwatches. Expressed through a blend of horological mastery and timeless elegance, the founders’ vision has lived on through a dedication to making high-quality watches incorporating the latest technological advances.

**Epitomizing the very best**

In almost 200 years, the watchword of the Baumes brothers has been scrupulously upheld and applied. One might almost imagine it echoing through the corridors of the Maison. This imperative demand for quality, matched by the fairest possible cost, is based on an historical artisan-style production method: *établissage*. The term carries echoes of the past, just as it should do! In the 19th century when the Baume family opened a watch dealership in the Swiss Jura, its watches were assembled from components made by specialized artisans, each dedicated to a specific part of the watch. Based on the *établissage* mode of operation, the Maison Baume handled the making of the finished product, and its subsequent sale. Much later, at the dawn of the 21st century, Baume & Mercier returned to its roots and set up its Ateliers Horlogers in Les Brenets, a village of its native Jura. Adopting a meticulously careful approach based on manual craftsmanship, the Maison thus revived the “Frères Baume” approach while incorporating all the assets of modern times. The “*établissage* 2.0” concept at Baume & Mercier – an original artisanal method applied to the modern era – is notably designed by in-house control of each stage involved in creating a watch: design, development, assembly and quality control. It also implies drawing on the know-how of the finest specialists when it comes to component production. The core of this organizational mode consists in scrupulous attention devoted to every detail, along with the patience and dexterity of passionately dedicated watchmakers with a sure, deft touch.

**Swiss made, for ever and ever**

Ever since its origins, Baume & Mercier has made its watches in Switzerland. In the course of its history, the quality, innovation and precision of its creations have earned it numerous distinctions, of which some have been patented. These stringent standards were rewarded in the 1920s by the “Poinçon de Genève” quality hallmark, the highest certification of watchmaking craftsmanship. The demand for quality, a full-fledged corporate philosophy at Baume & Mercier, has been a constant characteristic right from the beginning. A fervent ambassador of the ‘Swiss made’ label, the Maison designs and develops its movements in its own design studio inside its Geneva headquarters. All of them are subsequently assembled and tested in its Ateliers Horlogers in Les Brenets, in the Swiss Jura. These light-filled, perfectly equipped workshops also handle after-sales service and restoration of vintage models.

**A perfectly balanced identity**

In the 1960s, Baume & Mercier adopted the Greek letter “Phi” as its visual identity. Now the brand logo, this “golden number” symbolizes finely balanced proportions. It lays the foundations of the archetypal aesthetic – the traditional round watch – as well as the ‘affordable luxury’ status of Baume & Mercier. Through its collections, the Maison offers both classically understated watches as well as chronographs with various useful functions. Women’s models enjoy a special place within this sphere of quality watchmaking at an affordable price. This close attention to their needs and wishes goes back a long way: in 1869, one of the Baume brothers gave his daughter a gold pocket watch; and between 1920 and 1940, the brand offered a number of modern and inventive feminine models, some of which are now legends. Today, two lines are exclusively dedicated to them: Promesse and Linea.

**C for classic, and more besides…**

Firmly rooted in the Baume & Mercier values, a mixed approach appealing to both men and women also characterizes the brand’s two flagship collections: Classima and Clifton. As its name implies, Classima – inspired by a 1965 ultra-thin automatic watch with a micro-rotor – comprises elegant and classical watches. Its range of sizes, materials, Swiss made mechanical and quartz movements, features a blend of understated elegance and technical refinement. Housing Swiss mechanical movements in both men’s and women’s timepieces, the Clifton range is intended for urbanites with a taste for Fine Watchmaking. Aesthetically speaking, the collection draws inspiration from a 1950s model, the epitome of traditional and artisanal watchmaking according to Baume & Mercier. In 2017, the new Clifton Club range marks a turning point in the history of Baume & Mercier, by reinterpreting the ultimate sports watch – one that accompanies urban, active and elegant men on every occasion.

Offering luxury watches embodying the full spectrum of Swiss expertise and featuring an excellent quality-price ratio: such is the enduring mission of Baume & Mercier, and a promise duly kept.