



Authenticity, Innovation, and Chronometry



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

The design (left) and execution (right) of the Chronomètre Optimum

EDITORS' NOTE François-Paul Journe began his career in his uncle's antique restoration shop in Paris and built his first tourbillon pocket watch at the age of 20. He set up his first workshop on the rue de Verneuil in Paris in 1985, and in 1987, became a laureate of the Foundation de la Vocation. He was the recipient of the Balancier d'Or Prize in 1989, received the Gaia Watchmaker of the Year award in 1994, and recently won his third Aiguille d'Or (Golden Hand), the ultimate 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 École d'horlogerie de Paris in 1977.



François-Paul Journe

COMPANY BRIEF The motto for the F.P. Journe brand is *Invenit et Fecit* (Latin for "invented and made") and denotes that the company builds the entirety of the watches. Journe designs brand new movements, even inventing completely new mechanisms, like the resonance chronometer. F.P. Journe (www.fpjourn.com) watches are available around the world via six boutiques in Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Beijing, Geneva, and New York, as well as a few selective authorized retailers.

What makes the F.P. Journe brand special?

I am celebrating over 30 years of innovative and exclusive watch creations. Our label and trademark *Invenit et Fecit* – applied on all of our watches – certifies that each exclusive and innovative calibre is entirely invented, constructed, and assembled in the workshops of our Geneva Manufacture.

At our 2000-square-meter site, we produce 95 percent of 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 and every single creation is composed of only the most precious metals: platinum or red 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, a specificity of our brand.

F.P. Journe has been recognized around the world since 1994 with awards at the Geneva Watchmaking Grand Prix, of which three have received the ultimate "Golden Hand" distinction. F.P. Journe is 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.

What best defines F.P. Journe is "Authenticity, Innovation and Chronometry" and all models of the collection embody that unique brand spirit.

How has the F.P. Journe collection evolved over time?

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 the same calibre but offering a unique power reserve of 120 hours, with the prowess to insert all of the complications of the *Octa* line in the same space.

F.P. Journe is also producing a limited series, anniversary editions, and the *Black Label* line, accessible only for existing owners of an F.P. Journe watch, and those limited series are available only in the boutiques and *Espaces F.P. Journe*. Regarding the new designs, a few projects are in the works. I am still working on a special collection for women presenting an entirely new watch concept and an exclusive timepiece of very high horology.

You have introduced the Chronomètre Optimum as a part of the collection. Would you provide an overview of this piece?

The *Chronomètre Optimum* is the new mechanical timepiece of the collection *Souveraine* with manual winding. It represents 30 years of experience in watchmaking and includes a majority of exceptional components of high horology brought together for the first time in one watch including two barrels in parallel ensuring the stability of the driving force, under the classic configuration of precision chronometers; a constant-force remontoire, which is patented and made for the first time in titanium, which balances the driving force applied to the escapement to make it constant and ensures its isochronism; the high-performance bi-axial escapement, also patented, which is a two-wheel direct impulse escapement that

functions without oil and is the only direct impulse escapement to start up on its own, and also has far greater output than the majority of escapements: 50 hours without loss of amplitude; and a balance with a spiral with Phillips curve that guarantees better equilibrium.

Would you highlight some of your special limited edition pieces?

Our collection is already limited as we are producing only 900 timekeepers per year. But we are also producing limited series such as the *Vagabondage* or *Boutique Anniversary* edition. We consider our clients carefully in planning those series. For example, the *Vagabondage* was imagined in three chapters. The first series sold in no time without any advertising nor promotion and became a legend among the limited series. The second series has already been launched, sold, and delivered, and for the second chapter, we gave priority to owners of the first series so they could acquire the same number within the series as the one they acquired in the first series. The same priority for the third chapter will be given to owners of series one and two and that will allow collectors to have the three *Vagabondage* pieces with the exact same limited number, which will give even more value to their collections.

Would you highlight your strength in complicated movements?

Complication has always been my passion. I started building my first tourbillon at the age of 20 and I became a constructor in chronometric mechanisms at the age of 25. I have no interest in producing the same watches as anyone else, which is why I always construct entirely new and innovative calibres. When I thought of the *Repetition Souveraine*, for instance, the idea was to conceive one like no one that had ever existed; with an ultra slim movement of 4.00 mm, closer to a calibresazre with three hands than a grand complication, and a crystal clear and strong sound. The goal has been achieved. When I conceived the *Grande Sonnerie*, the objective was to construct a grand strike that could not be damaged, as before this, slight manipulation could damage the movement. The *Sonnerie Souveraine* is today the only grand strike completely safe to use. The *Chronomètre à Résonance* with its twin movement beating in opposition is one of the most precise watches available today. All of these watches have been recognized with international horological prizes and distinctions. ●