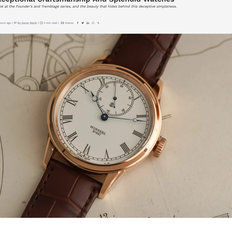
Independent Watchmaking **A Closer Look At Winner's Exceptional Craftsmanship And Splendid Watches**

A look at the Founder's and Tremblage series, and the beauty that hides behind this deceptive simplicity.

5 years ago | By Jacques Bauer | 5 min read | 28 views



Winner! It is a small independent watchmaking brand you do not hear about often, but whose watches really deserve a closer look. Particularly if you are craving watches that focus on the craftsmanship and beauty that hide behind a deceptively impressive level of finishing. We had the privilege of being a closer look at the Winner Founder's and Tremblage series. And you'll discover that the broad discretion of these watches is fully balanced by the incredible attention to detail only a seasoned watchmaking lover will be able to spot.

Winnet evokes an illustrious name, that of a 19th-century watchmaking and instrument-making workshop in Vienna. Winnet, during his apprenticeship, Winnet served for Georg Schmidt Fidel, Kessels, Urban Jürgensen or Breguet in various cities before founding his own business in Paris in 1853. There, he made a name for himself with his remarkable chronometers, pocket watches and astronomical chronographs. These were used in particular for scientific purposes (timing of astronomical observations) and to guide ships over the seas.

Bernhard Zwirlo, Winner's founder

A few years ago, Bernhard Zwirlo, an Austrian independent watchmaker established in the Vallée de Joux pretended the rights to the Winnert name and embarked on a personal journey to realize modern-day actualisations worthy of this legacy. A remarkable craftsman, Zwirlo was the first watchmaker to be trained at the Swiss Federal Institute of Ice Simplicity watches. In 2004, he created his own company and workshop – Zwirlar de Joux – working behind the scene for some of the most prestigious names in the industry – Girodet-Forrez, La Joux-Perret, Girard-Perregaux, WR&F, Urban Jürgensen or H. Moser & Cie. to name a few.

Winner Founder 38 Series

With Bernhard Zwirlo, watchmaking is a one-man show. The watchmaker designs, manufactures and finishes in a traditional way, with a set of ancient machines and tools, utilizing techniques that most contemporary watchmakers have turned away from. His final pieces seem so, at first glance, underrated. But beneath its apparent simplicity lies exceptional craftsmanship in every respect.

The starting point for the model was the historical Winnert ship chronometer Number 80 (which is visible at the beginning of the article). The movement of this elegant 38.8mm watch stands out by its directly driven small seconds at 12 o'clock. Its hand-wound movement features a balance wheel rim that is visible on the dial side, which is a very rare phenomenon. In inertia, its architecture includes a 3/4 plate – or rather a 4/5 plate as it takes most of the movement's diameter, save the balance wheel and its spoonshaped cock. Its balance ticks at a slow 2.5Hz frequency, while the power reserve was given for 48 hours. Its movement is manual-winding and is now rated at 48 hours for the Tremblage series.

The entire watch is remarkably hand-crafted. Although quite simple at first glance, the movement is spectacular in its finishing and effects. Its untreated German silver is hand-finished, with the exception of the bridges, which are of the unique, 3% pure another beautiful sparkling polished jewels ashes, large jewels (Zwirlo shipes some of these by hand) and more. It is a perfect example of "less is more" that will speak to a very seasoned audience. Bernhard Zwirlo doesn't believe in overly demonstrative watchmaking.

Urban Jürgensen Chronometer Number 80 (which Zwirlo took years ago). He had completed his prototype watch (number 000) while the three Founder's series were in the making. We had the privilege to take a look at these three watches (numbered 006, 007 and 008) and compare them to the original. Yes, it is the pride of the new Tremblage series (numbered 001 to 005).

THE WINNER, FOUNDER'S SERIES

The Winnert number 006 comes in white gold with a beautiful blue gold grand dial whose distinctive colour is obtained via pressure and thermal treatment. Its dial is made of one part. The hours and minutes are in the centre, while the seconds are by engraving the dial plate in positive relief. The thin, elegant hands are made by hand by Zwirlo from steel.

The Winnert Founder's Series number 007 comes in pink gold with a white enamel dial – there again the inscriptions on the dial are not printed but are engraved on the dial's silver plate. The recessed area is then filled with black enamel. The hands are in blued steel.

Winnert's number 008 is made of platinum, combined with a black enamel dial. Unlike #006 and #007, the case combines polished and brushed surfaces. Another particularly the unusual technical difficulty demonstrates, with a rose finish grainage and the engraving of a brown patent.

THE WINNER, TREMBLAGE SERIES

A series of 8 watches, the Tremblage series, features a white gold case and pink gold dial. Tremblage consists of hand-finished guilloché patterns, which are made by hand and to create random microscopic indentations and micro-incisions. The hands are thermally-blued. Bernhard Zwirlo offered the 6 future owners the possibility to choose the finishing of the movement, either with Geneva stripes or the Winnert patent finishing. The watch is rated at 48 hours power reserve. The retail price that was announced at CHF 75,000 (excl. taxes) when launched.

For more information, please visit www.winnert.ch.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS – WINNER, TREMBLAGE SERIES

- Case: 18k/white diameter x 9.55mm height / 38 white gold case, brushed and polished – sapphire crystals front and sapphire – mirror polished.
- Case: tonneau 38 (hammered) in solid pink gold – handcrafted, thermally-blued hands.
- Movement: hand-crafted movement – hand-wound – 3/4 bridge – 21 jewels – 2.5Hz frequency – 48 hours power reserve – balance wheel rim visible – gold weight screws and a steel regulator screws – dragon secret-dropping cock.
- Strap: alligator leather strap with Pad-Pat pin buckle.
- Availability: limited edition of 8 pieces.
- Price: CHF 75,000 (excl. taxes)

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