

Press kit

# CHARLES ZUBER

## GENEVE

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Crafts & Skills  
Ethics & Swiss Made  
Convenient

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# **F**OREWORD



## **Charles Zuber multifaceted encounters**



### **One man, one signature**

In accordance with the values cherished by this behind-the-scenes craftsman, 2019 welcomes a new line of high jewelry as well as a stunning watch collection. Magical, such as successful masteries and shared secrets.

Master Jeweller Charles Zuber embodies a little-known artistic and craftsman's reality in Geneva. In the background, this man was technically capable of finely crafting the finest jewellery masterpieces of the most prestigious Swiss watch brands.

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### Geneva, cradle of the haute-jewellery scene

Today's Geneva celebrates its return to its jewellery heritage. While watchmaking is at the forefront of world renown, Geneva's jewellery know-how, most of the time practiced with a high degree of discretion, has historically given watch brands their most glamorous hours.



At a time when an international exhibition dedicated to jewellery and precious stones is being resurrected in the City of Calvin, Charles Zuber's artisanal and entrepreneurial journey will never have been so vivid.

# CURRENT ISSUES



## High jewellery, watchmaking Bellerive Festival Historical research campaign

### Latest press releases

On request [charles-zuber@therightplace.ch](mailto:charles-zuber@therightplace.ch)

Launches of a high-jewellery line and an automatic timepiece designed by designer Eric Giroud, inhabited by a Manufacture caliber.

July 2019 in live and experiential mode, the Charles Zuber Genève brand is performing a preview on a background of world-class classical music: a journey through its 2019 collections in the heart of the Bellerive Festival, in an exceptional estate with a panoramic view of Lake Geneva.

Media campaign. The non-profit organization *Charles Zuber & Tradition Joaillière à Genève* pursues its investigation of unsigned pieces...

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# **H**ISTORICAL ORIGINS



## **Watchmaking and jewellery in Geneva, the same destinies**



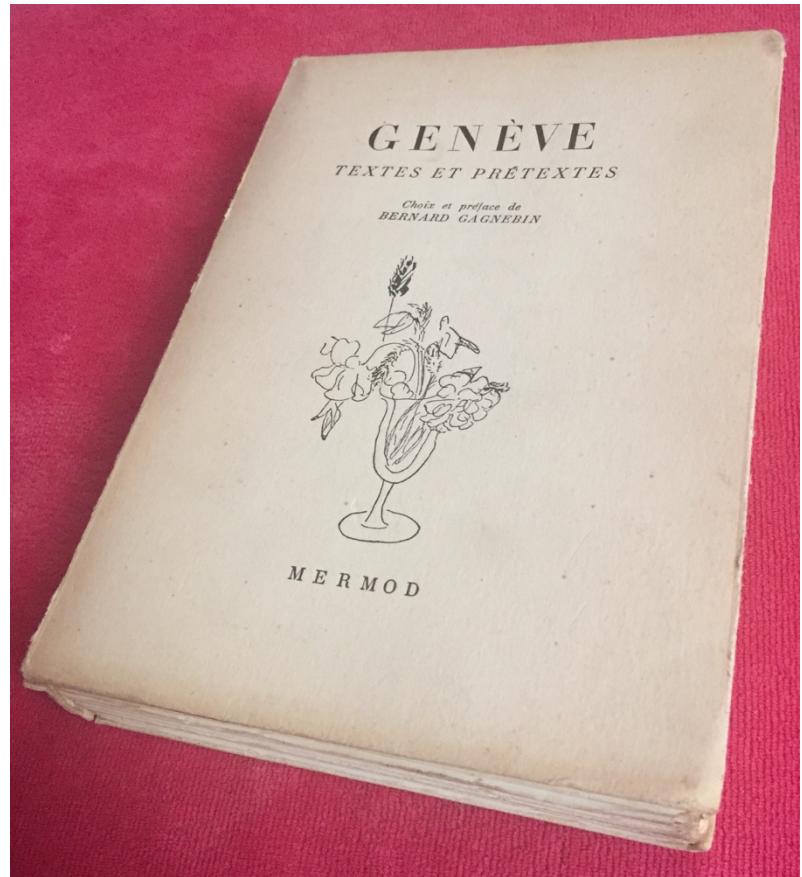
In Geneva in 1600, at the time of the Escalade and even long after, watchmakers and jewellers used to practice in the *rue des Orfèvres* (now the *rue de la Croix d'Or*). The two groups of skilled trades were united. The first goldsmiths' traces date back to 1290, and the major international fairs contributed to the reputation of the lacustrine city and enabled the craftsmanship carried out to shine through. Most of them were jewels adorned with precious stones and achievements for the ecclesiastical community.

### **Skilled local craftsmen and refugees**

Moreover, the first watches observed were real ornamented jewels. In Geneva, watchmaking found the perfect ground for its rapid emergence thanks to the know-how of the jewellery sector, to which was added an amazing tradition of welcoming refugees who were fleeing persecution and arriving with their

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expertise. Thanks also to the fact that Jean Calvin, the architect of the religious movement La Réforme - the birth of Protestantism - obtained approval in 1541 from the city authorities - the General Council - for the 'sumptuary ordinances'. These were laws that regulated the way of life of the population and drastically restricted the wearing of jewellery for women. These laws reduced the production of luxury items made by goldsmiths.



### **The Cabinotiers, the Fabrique**

Was Cabinotier in Geneva, any worker working for La Fabrique, which included both watchmaking and jewellery. In the 18th and 19th centuries, watchmaking was predominant even if the trades remained closely linked: the watch case builder, the enamel painter,

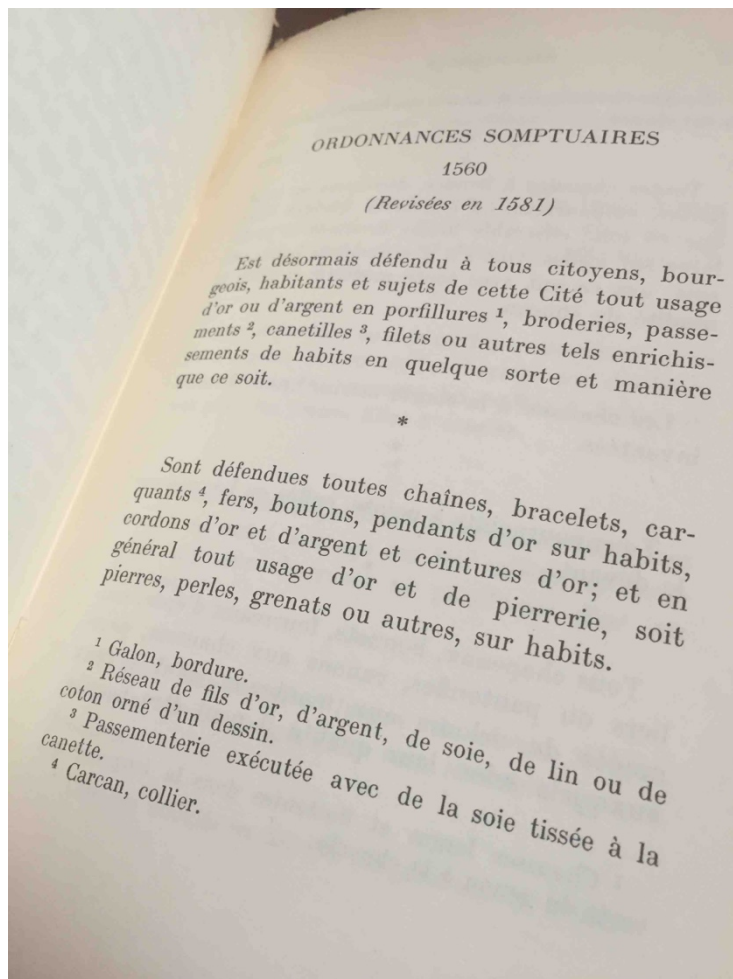


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the spring maker, the rackets finisher, the chainemaker, the hands or dial manufacturer...

### Historical prohibitions

Excerpt from the *Somptuary Prescriptions*  
1560 (Revised 1581)



«  
Any use of gold or silver in porfillures, embroideries, passageways, canetilles, nets or other such enrichment of clothing of any kind and in any manner whatsoever is now prohibited to all citizens, bourgeois, inhabitants and subjects of this City.

«  
Are prohibited all chains, bracelets, pins, irons, buttons, gold pendants on clothes, gold and silver cords and gold belts; and in general all use of gold and gemstones, whether stones, pearls, garnets or others, on clothes.

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### Calvinist Geneva by historian Bernard Lescaze

«

*In 1543, Copernicus published his great treatise on the movement of celestial bodies while Vesalius had his famous book printed in which he reversed the theories of traditional medicine. In 1543, the 'civil edicts' were published in Geneva, then the following year, the 'Ecclesiastical ordinances'. These two laws were to govern Geneva's political and religious life for nearly three centuries, and in their mould were to be forged the distinctive characteristics of Calvinist Geneva.*

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## **Charles Zuber the inspirational identity the ultimate manufacturer**

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Le joaillier genevois Charles Zuber était un maître. Dans l'ombre, cet artisan créateur hors pair matérialisait de folles réalisations de haute joaillerie pour les plus prestigieuses enseignes.

This is how it is described by journalist Malcolm Lakin, who dedicates a book to this exceptional craftworker who is recognized by his peers.

«

A man who had a genius for finding solutions to improbable concepts, whose prowess as a goldsmith, whose creative talent and innate flair for innovation benefitted the world's most famous watch and jewellery brands.

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According to those who knew him, those who shared his workbenches and drawing boards, or more prosaically those for whom he worked on commission, master jeweller Charles Zuber had the rare genius to be able to combine the ancestral techniques of haute-joaillerie with the skills of micromechanics used in watchmaking.

### **Brand, company, association**

More than 3000 photos of the pieces realized by Charles Zuber have been found, all of them carrying his secret hallmark. They are at the headquarters of the Company which, like the registered trademark, is entitled to its name. They perpetuate his exceptional work and supply the current aesthetic offer.

An NGO is called by his name. It is dedicated to the enhancement of its artwork as well as the jewellery professions in Geneva.



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# VISAGES



## Vincent Perego gem-setter in watchmaking and in high jewelry

It all began with his first encounter with Charles Zuber: respect, listening and sharing. "*You should write a book*" whispered Vincent Perego to this Master Jeweler who impressed him and with whom he built and crafted exceptional jewel-watches that would become incredible pieces of jewellery for brands.

As a photographer and artist, a passion he has cultivated since the age of 12, as an entrepreneur at the head of a company with up to 45 employees, this professional of mechanical engineering designed machines, was a builder and then, thanks to a history of family continuity, became a setter.



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### Watchmaking and jewellery, a family history

His uncle's name was José Poncini. He was the son of a watchmaker from Ticino named Alfred Poncini. He developed a jewellery factory on Mauritius dedicated to watch and jewellery suppliers. Vincent Perego therefore learned his new profession from a Geneva-based gem-setter. He then worked at Chopard, founded Swiss Mad Complications SA with Félix Baumgartner (Urwerk) and set up his own business in 2001.

The gem-setting is more than a profession, it is a passion in which the love and knowledge of precious and semi-precious stones are intertwined. Before being bought by one of its most important clients, its company Lancelin managed exceptional achievements for Patek Philippe, Rolex, Piaget, Girard Perregaux, Chanel, de Grisogono, Cartier, Harry Winston, Jaeger LeCoultre, Fabergé or Audemars Piguet...

The joining of **Aram Garabetian** in his team, a multilingual gem setter with an international network of connections and a valuable knowledge of world markets, initiated the meeting with Mohammed Hilal, a visionary aesthetic entrepreneur. This was the beginning of the Charles Zuber project.

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# VISAGES



## Mohamed Hilal aesthete, entrepreneur passion and perseverance



A creator of luxury brands with a rare emotional charge and an inspiration based on sincerity and commitment, this entrepreneur leads an Emirate group of around 1000 collaborators in Dubai. A passionate and committed aesthete, he has his own network of boutiques and distribution outlets with more than 120 stores. His acquaintance with Vincent Perego turns the dream into reality.

To his brands of perfume, fine leather goods and inventive and gustatory explorations in fine food and beverage





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(chocolates, restaurants), the group he leads and which bears his name invites contemporary aesthetes and lovers of exclusive refinements to participate in experiential journeys. Among the destinations on offer, one is now located in the heart of the historic cradles of Swiss watchmaking excellence: in 2019, Mohamed Hilal bought the niche watch brand MCT, Manufacture Contemporaine du Temps and decided to perpetuate the Charles Zuber signature, synonymous with their most beautiful jewellery pages for the most prestigious Swiss watch brands.

A happy family man, Mohamed Ali Hilal was born in January 1975. He studied aviation in the United States and began a promising career as a pilot with Emirates Airlines. His fondness for limitless and borderless exploration extends from the land line of the horizon to the daily challenges of modern business. In everything this man is undertaking, there is the aerial dimension that pushes him to the ultimate lightness: first of all, to have faith in his dreams, especially to give himself the means to make them come true.



mohamed hilal  
F A M I L Y

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# JEWELLERY



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## Charles Zuber The secrets of the *Pomander*

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In 2019, Charles Zuber's offer is being extended to include a collection of high-jewellery that places the *pomander*, an old jewel, full of fragrances and mysteries, in a contemporary setting.

Mastery of jewellery techniques, search for the most inhabited stones, combinations of materials, this inspired line is suitable for all forms of declination promises.

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### Pomander Collection

It was originally a sphere also called a scent apple. Filled with essences for prophylactic purposes such as ambergris, civet or musk, it is still known in history as *the amber apple*.



Since the Renaissance, their small spherical cage has been made of chiselled precious metals and continues to open at the equator thanks to a hinge and spring system.

They are transmitted from generation to generation, continuing to exhale their healing and even aphrodisiac properties in the surroundings. They also embody a social status, worn sometimes on the belt or pendant, or even in miniature versions, at the end of a chain or as attributes of rosaries. Others attach themselves to a bracelet or necklace, turn into a cape button.



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Charles Zuber, faithful to the spirit of the eponymous master, loves the territory of infinite variations offered by this jewel full of meaning. Under the creative direction of Vincent Perego and under the name of Pomander, the brand undertakes to restore life and form to these legendary symbols filled with symbolism and emotions.

### **Pomander by Charles Zuber**

Its shape of a high value warhead, finely enclosed by a protective net with threads so fine that they can be erased, offers all the light to precious and semi-



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precious stones as well as their multiplicity of colours and heats.

### **Spider claws and the magic of materials**

Flying over this infinite territory of jewellery exploration, Vincent Perego and his team practice the art of spider setting, playing with jewellery practices that refuse any



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form of collage or welding. Thus, a precious metal claw discreetly surrounds the polished and deep surfaces of this generous dome cut in lavender jade or black jade, in purple or green amethyst, or in turquoise with lagoon highlights.

### **Quartz crossed with rutile**

Suddenly, the creator, loyal to Charles Zuber's audacious spirit, fell in love with rutilated quartz, a material rare in haute-joaillerie, despite its aesthetic strength and its almost organic texture: crystal hair growing in the heart of the crystals themselves, transforming the transparencies of quartz into tiny opacity.



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### A collection full of promises

Offering the precious or semi-precious stone dome and its powerful design in a puristic case, without a maximum of material, allows the Charles Zuber Pomander to be declined in an infinite series of variations: rings, necklaces with pendant, scarf necklaces, here proposed by an unusually long chain of two meters and ginned with pearls, necklaces, earrings, studs (earrings), slave bracelet dotted with studs....

In addition to this plurality of types of pieces of jewellery, there are also surfaces and elements of an *ogival* shape open to many customizations.



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# WATCHMAKING



## Automatic *Perfos* the Charles Zuber timepiece Geneva watchmaking of excellence

Under the sign of a mix of materials, of colours and of know-how, Charles Zuber's *Perfos* watch crystallizes a galaxy of skills that ties in with the history of a Swiss watchmaking of excellence in Geneva that is particularly close to the requirements of haute-joaillerie.

Universal, iconic, the *Perfos* is inhabited by a Manufacture shape calibre. It was created by designer Eric Giroud. Its case is sleek, powerful, full of contrasts, its dial, particularly recognizable, is distinguished by its ultra-complexity, synonymous with uncompromising elegance.



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### ***Perfos*, a concentration of master skills**

Integrated case and wristband

The so-called sandwich design of the case must not be imprecise. With its angled periphery, it favours the multiplication of faces and surfaces and thus the contrasts between matt and polished, between the natural textures of the materials and their silky touch.

Titanium, steel, the three colours of gold, grey, pink and yellow in its case, play on alternations or encounters. To all the resulting combinations are





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added the five dial colours available and, for the bracelet, the choice of case material or leather of the most noble breed.

Moreover, the techniques of integrating the bracelet, in perfect continuity with the case size, are a technological challenge. The finishing of the links in the spirit of the case reminds us that in high-end watchmaking, the technicality of a bracelet is sometimes more complicated than that of the case for which it is intended.

### Exceptional dial

Among its subtleties, the *Perfos* owes its sophisticated dial one of the most recognizable faces of its elegance. Either on a black background with rhodium-plated grey indexes, or on a white background with pure black piano key indexes, extreme precision is required to machine the relief of such triangular grooves on a master draft, a first dial base on which a second plate is placed, carefully perforated by laser. Each aperture perfectly matches each of the sixty indexes. This infinitely



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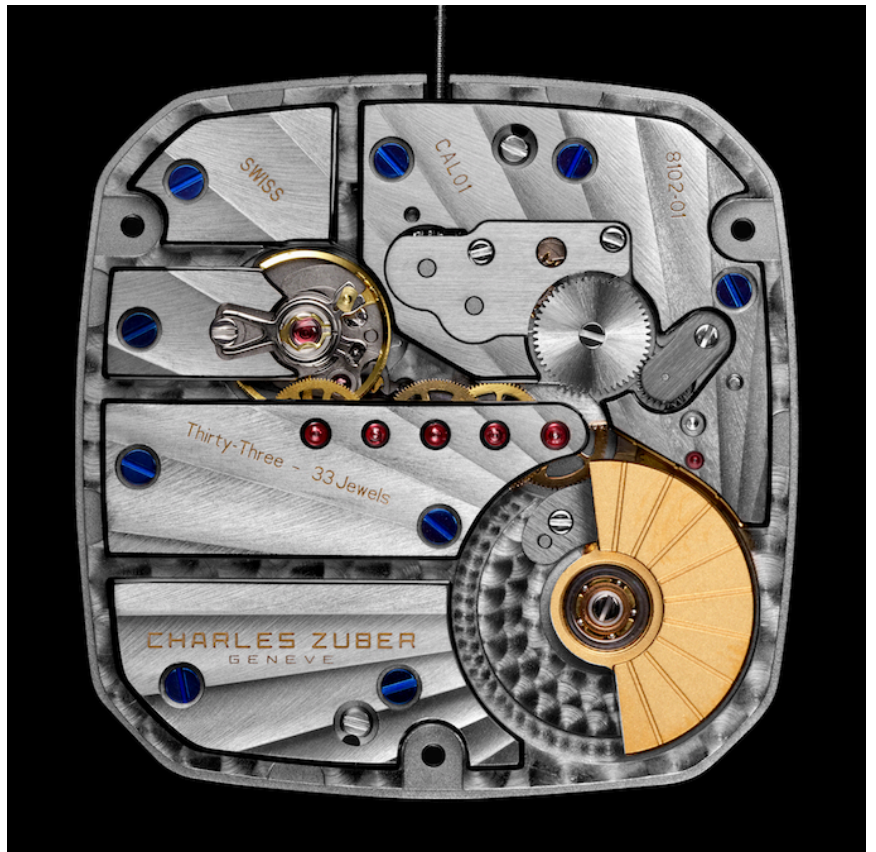
accuracy on a background of absolute mastery based on decades of experience.

### Calibra 01 for the Charles Zuber Perfos

The Charles Zuber brand demonstrates courage and consistency, above all a great mastery of chronometry. She

refuses to compromise and expresses her thirst for universal beauty, which extends into the hidden parts of her *Perfos* through the design of a shape caliber, following the rounded corners of the square case. A

movement that goes far beyond the requirements of the *swiss made* label as described in Swiss law.

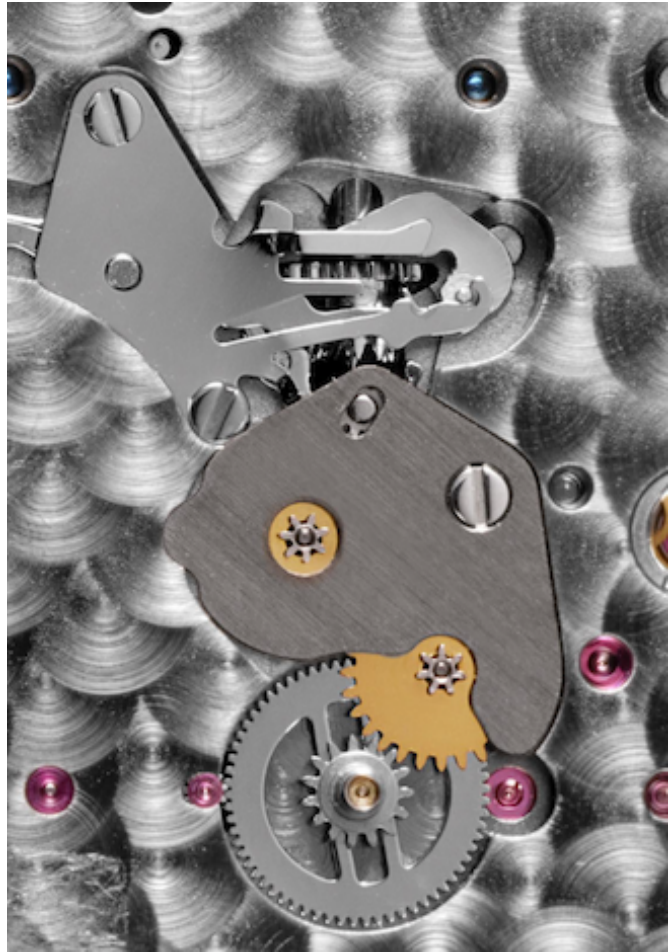


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Mechanical with automatic winding by a bidirectional oscillating mass, this three-handed 164-component caliber is ready for future developments, such as the addition of complications. Decorated and rhodium-plated according to the purest standards of a watchmaking tradition proud of its fundamentals, its blued screws and many other details highlight the "soleillés" motifs chosen as a nod to the dial and crafted on its non-visible surfaces.

*Manufacture Caliber, a unusual shape*

It is common for a rectangular watch, or one that is far from the circle, to work with a round movement. Most movements are designed to be insertable into round watch cases and make shape calibers very rare.



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### **Eric Giroud designer: a tribute to Charles Zuber**

The collaboration with the famous watch designer Eric Giroud, which is more about an encounter than a classic watchmaking briefing, was a natural, humane and far from a priori. However, in pristine lands, the most architect of watchmaking designers feels like he is on the rise. In challenge mode, the idea of creating a non-round watch, i.e. taking the risk of adding one to the 4 or 5 timepieces that have been looping for 40 to 50 years, is simply delightful. A stroke of genius, he had the idea of making a three-part case, without straight lines, to offer it a flat bezel and a festival of curves. He refuses to adopt the logic of a single product. In other



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words, he adopts an evolutionary posture that can easily move towards a sporty model, promoting the successful integration of a wristband. By pure chance, or simply because this untiringly tireless designer never stops walking much further than the red carpets of the sector, Eric Giroud remembers Charles Zuber very well, this jewellery artist capable of making crazy artworks and "shape watches" for the most famous brands. He offers this watch a subtle allusion to the profession of Charles Zuber and Vincent Perego: a watch winder inspired by an old gem-setting tool. A pure delight that adds to the stylistic rays of a sun that, by its curvature, underlines the roundness of the minutes.

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# **P**ROFESSIONS & SKILLS



## **High jewellery the culture of expertises**



### **A man with many talents**

Before becoming a concrete reality, Charles Zuber's achievements were usually laid down on graph paper. This included their sizing and perspectives.

Then, the skilled craftsman used to arm himself with patience, to shape the material from his lathe and to create the necessary reinforcements to guarantee the strength and durability of the piece..

Step by step, shapes were born, their silhouettes refined. Then, delicately, the precious or semi-precious stones took place in the delimited, prepared areas.

From time to time, mechanical solutions, micro hinge or opening systems, had to be used.

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Charles Zuber, expert in these age-old crafts, also knew how to integrate contemporary moulding techniques into his work. He used it to make the complex pieces that the greatest ones asked him to create.

Today, under the leadership of Vincent Perego, the multiple professions of jewellery are organized around the masterpieces of jewellery by Charles Zuber.

Photo album (coming soon):  
Pure gestures and unparalleled craftsmanship.

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## **Swiss Made, materials, sustainable values and respect**

### **Respecting people, materials and history**

Scrupulously Swiss Made, and even well beyond the minimum standards required by Swiss legislation, the Charles Zuber brand is engaged in the process of acquiring the RJC label (Responsible Jewelry Council), a guarantee of good corporate governance.

The RJC certification covers both the respect dedicated to the actors of the sector, women and men, as well as the respect reserved for the origin and traceability of the materials used as well as the machines dedicated to their processing.

Because a little-known part of Geneva's history is dedicated to goldsmiths and jewellers, the brand does everything possible to ensure that the talents it uses are those of local artisans.

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### Charles Zuber hallmark, a sometimes secret signature



As an essential part of Charles Zuber's heritage, this hallmark is the guarantee of the values inherited from this unconventional master jeweller. He used to stamp it on all the pieces that came out of his workshops, including those that had to be stamped with the masterful hallmarks of his

customers, prestigious watchmaking and jewellery companies. So, discreetly and with a twinkle in his eye, he would dissimulate it in a hidden place of the jewel...

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