

Jasmine Audemars

Entrepreneurship

The Prix Gaïa jury recognises Jasmine Audemars for her efforts to ensure the constant and prodigious development of the family company, Audemars Piguet, allowing it to rise to the rank of multinational whilst retaining its independence and preserving its historic networks of suppliers.

Career

The great-granddaughter of Jules Louis Audemars, who co-founded the Audemars Piguet watch manufacture with Edward Auguste Piguet in Le Brassus in 1875, Jasmine Audemars was born in 1941 and grew up steeped in watchmaking in La Vallée de Joux, with both her father and grandfather working at the company. She spent her evenings listening to endless discussions about calibres, movements and dials, and regularly visited what they simply called "The Factory".

At the same time, her English mother instilled in her a love of both travel and reading. After leaving school, she studied commerce in Lausanne before completing her studies at the University of Geneva, where she gained a degree in social science and economic history. With her heart set on journalism, she worked for a number of daily papers in Geneva, before becoming an economic reporter for the Journal de Genève in 1968. Jasmine Audemars was promoted to deputy editor in 1970, a post that she held until 1980, when she became the paper's editor-in-chief.



Here, she was responsible for the editorial content of the newspaper, and was in charge of a team of around sixty journalists and freelance staff. During these years, as an editorialist and analyst, her main areas of interest were the economy, international trade and foreign policy.

In 1992, she left the paper to take over from her father as Chairman of the Board of Audemars Piguet. Sitting on the Board since 1987, she already had a clear understanding of its mission: to maintain the independence of the company, and keep it in the hands of the founding families, so that it could be passed on to future generations. This means preserving and enriching an independent expertise in watchmaking, and monitoring the health of the company to ensure it is ready to face adversity at any time, whilst staying continuously focussed on the long term.

At this time, Audemars Piguet was an SME distributing its watches from Le Brassus via a network of agents across the world. In the nineties, when major groups were buying up companies in droves, Audemars Piguet started to verticalise its upstream operations, setting up in Le Locle, then in Meyrin. Downstream, the company took over the distribution of its watches and, at the start of the 2000s, gradually started opening subsidiaries so that, by 2014, it had its own network of boutiques and AP Houses across

the world. Wishing to raise the profile of the Vallée de Joux, Audemars Piguet also created the Musée Atelier and the Hôtel des Horlogers in Le Brassus, open to other brands and to visitors to the region.



Musée Atelier Audemars Piguet, Le Brassus.

Today, Audemars Piguet is a multinational with more than 2900 members of staff, which has produced 54,000 watches, and has around twenty subsidiaries and more than 90 boutiques. Its turnover is around 2200 million CHF. This development was made possible by the enterprising spirit shown by every stakeholder in the company, and thanks to a network of suppliers who share in the passion for Haute Horology.

In November 2022, Jasmine Audemars stood down from the Board of Directors. Since then, she has devoted her time to charity work, presiding notably over the Fondation Audemars Piguet pour les Arbres, founded in 1992, and the Fondation Audemars Piguet pour le Bien Commun, created in 2022.



Mangroves in Senegal. © Blueventures. Fondation Audemars Piguet pour les Arbres.