



REVERSO: TIMELESS STORIES SINCE 1931

Created 90 years ago, the Reverso has remained eternally modern, daring always to be itself, without compromise, through nine decades of social change, shifting tastes and advancing technology. During the last 30 years, thanks to the revival of mechanical watchmaking and the blossoming of the artistic crafts, it has fulfilled a potential that could not have been imagined at the time of its creation. As a singular example of Art Deco design, it has become an icon in the true sense of the word. In 2021, Jaeger-LeCoultre pays tribute to a timepiece of rare longevity.

THE STORY OF STYLE & DESIGN

Born at the height of the Art Deco period, the Reverso perfectly epitomised the spirit of its time – a dazzling and exuberant modernity that changed everything from music and art to architecture, fashion and sport, and introduced a radically new aesthetic language.

In a world where silvered dials prevailed, the original Reverso models featured a black dial with contrasting indexes. The black dial was described as having incredible legibility and was referred to as “the dial of the future”. Almost immediately, aesthetic variations began to appear with notable-coloured dials. Introduced at a time when coloured dials were rare in watchmaking, made to order dials in bright red, chocolate brown, burgundy or blue lacquer made the Reverso appear even more modern and distinctive. From the beginning, different case metals and re-sized models for women were offered to be worn on a cordonnet bracelet or transformed into pendants or handbag clips.

However, there was never any compromise on the core design elements – the horizontal gadroons that emphasise the rectilinear geometry of the case; the triangular lugs that appear to be a seamless extension of the case sides; and the case that fits so perfectly into its carrier that, at first glance, there is no evidence that it can be flipped over. The proportions of the original rectangular case were crucial to the success of the design. The ratio of its length to width was based on the golden mean – a unique mathematical relationship defined by the ancient Greeks, which humans instinctively find to be the most aesthetically pleasing proportion.

While the modern Reverso has incorporated high complications, the enduring success of the model is fundamentally not about the mechanical complexity of the watchmaking; its value lies in the ingenious conception and perfect execution – a deft synthesis of form and function that responded so well to a particular need that it was able to transcend that utilitarian purpose and take on a life of its own. This is



not to diminish the intricacy of the flip mechanism itself and the ingenuity of its engineering, which combine to produce the tactile pleasure of the case gliding in its carrier and the satisfying click as it locks into place. But that, too, is entirely a matter of the Reverso fulfilling its original intention – with the greatest possible elegance.

From its genesis, through 90 years of evolution and countless variations, the Reverso has continually reinvented itself without ever compromising its identity. Versatile and ageless, a chameleon that changes yet remains unchanged, it has become one of the world's most recognisable wristwatches. But it is more than simply a watch. The Reverso has rightly become recognised as an icon of 20th-century design, in the true meaning of the term.

ABOUT THE REVERSO

In 1931, Jaeger-LeCoultre launched a timepiece that was destined to become a classic of 20th-century design: the Reverso. Created to withstand the rigours of polo matches, its sleek, Art Deco lines and unique reversible case make it one of the most immediately recognisable watches of all time. Through nine decades the Reverso has continually reinvented itself without ever compromising its identity: it has housed more than 50 different calibres, while its blank metal flip side has become a canvas for creative expression, decorated with enamel or engravings. Today, 90 years after the Reverso was born, it continues to epitomise the spirit of modernity that inspired its creation.

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