



The Jaeger-LeCoultre Manufacture unveils its new Heritage Gallery

On the occasion of the 2017 Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie, Jaeger-LeCoultre unveils the new gallery devoted to showcasing the Brand's Heritage at its Vallée de Joux Manufacture in the village of Le Sentier. The Heritage Gallery is designed as an unprecedented encounter with the Maison and its rich history that constantly inspires creativity, even to this day – a setting that stirs the emotions and stimulates dialogue. The space has been considerably enlarged to bring together the Maison's finest pieces through the ages, its historical archives, and a workshop that restores old timepieces. Visitors experience surprise and wonder, in a memorable encounter that is both authentic and contemporary.

An experience at heart of the Jaeger-LeCoultre Maison

The Heritage Gallery extends across more than 500 m² of the oldest buildings in the Manufacture, which used to house the LeCoultre farm in the early 19th century when the destiny of the Maison's founder, Antoine LeCoultre, had yet to unfold. To afford visitors a real experience of the Brand, the gallery design is totally in harmony with Jaeger-LeCoultre's aesthetic codes, with pure colours, understated pale furnishings, and light as a central feature. This area marks the starting point of the complete Manufacture tour that takes in the workshops.

An accompanying guide leads visitors on a journey through the wealth of the Maison's Heritage, leaving plenty of opportunity for independent discovery, thanks to various interactive features. Right from the start, it is fun for visitors: they select a year on a touchscreen – perhaps the year they were born – and get to see what was happening within the Brand that year. An image is projected onto a background symbolising a significant creative moment for Jaeger-LeCoultre, giving an insight into the Maison's rich past and the breadth of its archives. Now visitors can step right into the story and have themselves photographed against this backdrop. The tour continues in this vein, and everyone will go home with some unique memories.

The historical archives, showcasing Jaeger-LeCoultre's powerful past

The journey begins with an exposition of the Maison's outstanding historical archives, never before shown to the public, that constitute the "memory" of Jaeger-LeCoultre. Registers, documents, and old books have been meticulously categorised and line the shelves of the big archive room. They illustrate the Maison's creative force since its earliest days. We can see here that as of the 19th century, the Manufacture was supplying its movements to most of the major watchmaking Maisons. A Patek Philippe pocket watch with a LeCoultre movement is even displayed here for the first time to typify this characteristic of Jaeger-LeCoultre, "watchmaker to the watchmakers". The Maison's archives are a significant asset and source of endless inspiration to today's designers. In this space, visitors get a real sense of that resource. A shelf displays an old cabinet stocked with components, so those who enjoy bygone curiosities can feast their eyes. It is like stepping back into history...

A measure of the Maison's wealth and depth

A visit to the heart of the Heritage Gallery begins with "Reflections of History and Great Inventions". This zone puts the display items into context through a clever play of mirrors: objects displayed on one side are reflected in the visuals on the opposite wall. In this way, for instance, the millionometer from 1844 – a revolutionary instrument for measuring a micron – illustrates the inventive genius of Antoine LeCoultre, whose portrait hangs on the facing wall. The story of the Vallée de Joux, the Maison's founding fathers, and the birth of the Brand are all related through historical objects and photographs, with commentary from the guide who tells stories and anecdotes about the Maison throughout the tour. The innovative spirit of Jaeger-LeCoultre is represented in the key dates that mark milestones in its history and creative achievements.

A very fluid experience, the tour leads into an elegant room bathed in light, with an airy curved staircase winding upwards in the middle. Here the Maison's iconic pieces are on display, with modern-day creations basking in the glory of past masterpieces in a continuum that is purposely highlighted by three-panelled display cases. Atmos, Reverso, Geophysic – the Maison's great icons are displayed in a setting that helps visitors understand how the current collections are legitimately descended from the rich legacy of the LeCoultre Maison and of Jaeger-LeCoultre.

As an example, the backdrop for the Reverso illustrates the Art Deco era when the watch was launched, along with the polo fields of India where it then took root. The display gives an insight into how the model has evolved over the decades, without losing its essence. The story is also brought to life in a digital animation shown in the central display case.

An illustration of Jaeger-LeCoultre's inventiveness

By this stage visitors will not have failed to marvel at the magnificent wall of calibres, wrapping around the staircase like a precious cloak. The effect it creates, as you climb the stairs, is like stepping right inside the Maison's DNA and feeling the heartbeat of its infinite inventiveness. There are 340 calibres on display, out of the 1,262 that have been built since the Brand's beginnings – a number that tangibly and gracefully captures the creativity of all those who have worked under this roof since 1833.

Upstairs, in a more intimate and secret space tucked into the mezzanine under the building's roof, the most exceptional pieces are laid bare. The uncommonly creative models from the Hybris Mechanica collection are set out in individual display cases. And to illustrate the wealth of Jaeger-LeCoultre's artistic know-how, the Manufacture's Rare Handcrafts "Métiers Rares" – gem-setting, enamelling, engraving and Fine Watchmaking – are shown off in a display of old pieces alongside contemporary designs.

The restoration workshop, a demonstration of know-how

Upstairs, the journey continues past the restoration workshop where watchmakers labour calmly at their workbenches behind the wall of glazing that shields them. Jaeger-LeCoultre is a master in the art of restoration, and in this demonstration each stage is explained – since the old timepiece is received and appraised, through the search for components and supplies, up until the restoration itself.

The artisans are happy to answer questions and engage with visitors who are curious about their professional vocation, and all the passion and patience it requires. This demonstration of the Brand's expertise in the field of restoration is reassuring for the client, because this workshop is the only place where the watches can be restored in keeping with traditional methods.



Most watches that are restored here date from the late 1920s to the late 1980s, with some exceptional pieces even dating back to the 19th century. Restoration is carried out both to the movement and to the external parts of the watch. The challenge for the watchmakers is to get the movement back into working order and return the piece to its original appearance. If the components cannot be repaired or exchanged for stock items, the watchmakers will manufacture new ones using the original design drawings. It is a genuine made-to-measure service.

The tour ends on the gallery balcony, where visitors can view some watches on their own wrists, thanks to augmented reality. It is an exciting way to finish off this journey through the Maison's past and present – both so inextricably linked – by taking a look towards the future. Exploring the Heritage Gallery, which serves as a window onto the Manufacture's treasures, is an essential stage in getting to know Jaeger-LeCoultre. It anchors the visitor in a closer relationship with the Grande Maison and promises to be the first chapter of a wonderful story.

THE JAEGER-LECOULTRE MANUFACTURE

Since its creation, Jaeger-LeCoultre has been delighting and surprising devotees of beautiful objects. In keeping with the inventive spirit initiated in 1833 by its founder Antoine LeCoultre, the artisans of the Manufacture combine their talents and expertise to create collections which have been at the forefront of watchmaking both technically and artistically: Reverso, Master, Rendez-Vous, Duomètre, Geophysic and Atmos – this rich legacy built by the Grande Maison over centuries serves as a constant source of inspiration in its ongoing pursuit of excellence. In the wake of many legendary models, the 21st century has seen the emergence of the Hybris Mechanica™ and Hybris Artistica™ collections. These rare pieces are as surprising as they are sophisticated yet again bearing witness to the creative passion of the men and women who work in symbiosis under its roof – some of them descending from a long line of watchmakers.

For Jaeger-LeCoultre, 2017 is an opportunity to reveal watchmaking treasures of stunning beauty from four of its iconic collections: Rendez-Vous, Reverso, Geophysic and Hybris Artistica™. After celebrating the Reverso's 85th anniversary in style in 2016, the time has come for the Manufacture to elevate the new Rendez-Vous line to the apex of ladies' watches; to highlight how the spirit of the Reverso Classic is freer than ever with its automatic movement perfectly embodying the Art Deco philosophy; to pursue the constant renewal of the Geophysic legend; and to showcase mysterious time by creating unique timepieces in very limited editions for the Hybris Artistica collection™.

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