



SYNCHRONISED WITH THE SEA

A quest for performance and beauty borne by oceans of time

The rich history of horology and watchmaking is forever intertwined with maritime endeavours. And it was at a critical juncture of innovation and discovery for both pursuits when Abraham-Louis Breguet affirmed his reputation as one of the world's most influential watchmakers. In the process, he deepened an association with the sea that continues to this day.

Regal recognition

It was 1815 when King Louis XVIII appointed Breguet to the position of chronometer-maker for the French Royal Navy. It was the highest honour to which a French horologist could aspire, given that marine chronometry required peerless scientific knowledge.

Those early Breguet marine chronometers featured cylindrical brass casing and were kept in the captain's quarters, enclosed in a wooden box for stability. It was, after all, the age of sail, with ships pushed to the limits on rolling seas. As such, the success of French naval expeditions relied heavily upon the integrity and accuracy of Breguet's timepieces.

A royal appointment would mark the peak of most careers but Breguet's was notably storied, filled with numerous highs. From independent commercial beginnings until his death in 1823, Breguet revolutionised watchmaking, creating distinctive timepieces for those with taste and means, including many luminaries of the day.

Journey of discovery

After Breguet established his business in Paris in 1775, each finely finished device was recorded and registered. Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI placed orders, as did Napoleon Bonaparte and his empress Joséphine. And Breguet created the first known wristwatch after receiving a commission from the Queen of Naples in 1810.

As his reputation grew he was appointed to the Board of Longitude, and as the official chronometer-maker to the navy. In 1816, he was also admitted to the French Academy of Sciences.

Inspired by the ocean and science, and endlessly innovative, Breguet counted among his inventions a watch that told conventional time but also measured and displayed elapsed time, anticipating the modern chronograph. He created the self-winding mechanism of "perpétuelle" watches. And he also devised one of the most elaborate versions of its day – a watch with a feature called the "equation of time". This showed navigators the difference between time as we know it and true solar time, which varies with the earth's irregular orbit around the sun.

Staying the course

Breguet's legacy has been preserved and built upon, first by his son and grandson, then by subsequent owners. They have all shared a spirit of innovation, adventure and craftsmanship. Most of all, adherence to the brand's nautical heritage has remained constant.

Today, traces of Abraham-Louis Breguet's distinctive maritime instruments are anchored exquisitely within design elements of the brand's modern watches. A case in point: the Marine Lady by Breguet, which pays homage to its founder's chief inspiration – the challenge of the ocean and



Clockwise from far left: A close-up of the Breguet Marine Lady 9518 watch; the Race for Water vessel is on a five-year global odyssey; the Breguet Marine Lady 9518 watch in rose gold; an early Breguet chronometer on display in the British Museum.



the navigational imperative that brought forth Breguet's supreme creativity.

Dedicated to modern-day female explorers, the collection celebrates the marine world in many aspects. From Roman numerals resembling nautical pennants and a mother-of-pearl guilloché pattern that captures the natural movement of water, right through to the words "Horloger de la Marine" (Chronometer-maker to the Navy) on its casing, the watches embody the seafaring spirit.

Naturally inspired

Breguet's intrinsic commitment to the sea is also reflected through the luxury watch house's partnership with the Race for Water foundation. Its vessel *Race for Water* is on



a five-year around-the-world odyssey, powered by solar, hydrogen and kite energy.

"Breguet forged close ties with the world of the marine very early," Breguet President Marc A. Hayek says. "Today, we are proud that the name of Breguet is associated with an important mission that will demonstrate that concrete solutions exist for the preservation of the oceans worldwide."

Breguet was founded when there were endless possibilities for exploring new territories and horizons. And it continues to prosper in the global age, with an ongoing marriage of science and beauty epitomised by its latest creations.