

NEW DIRECTIONS

ZENITH MANUFACTURE IS POISED TO FULFILL ITS POTENTIAL



As the watch industry turns away from the fantastical and focuses on classical watchmaking values and traditional designs, Zenith is leading the charge. Established in 1865, Zenith is one of the most famous names in Swiss watchmaking, with two of the most celebrated movements in the history of horology, the El Primero chronograph and the Elite. Both were designed and continue to be made in house by this Le Locle-based brand.

Zenith's new president and CEO, Jean-Frédéric Dufour, is elegant, gentlemanly and passionate about mechanical watchmaking—and he's the ideal figure to man the helm at Zenith at this moment in its history. This is a brand with true watchmaking roots, and its focus is now firmly on watchmaking, which is just fine with Dufour. "Since I started in June 2009, we have changed many things about the collection, the communication and more, and the response from the markets has been good," Dufour says.

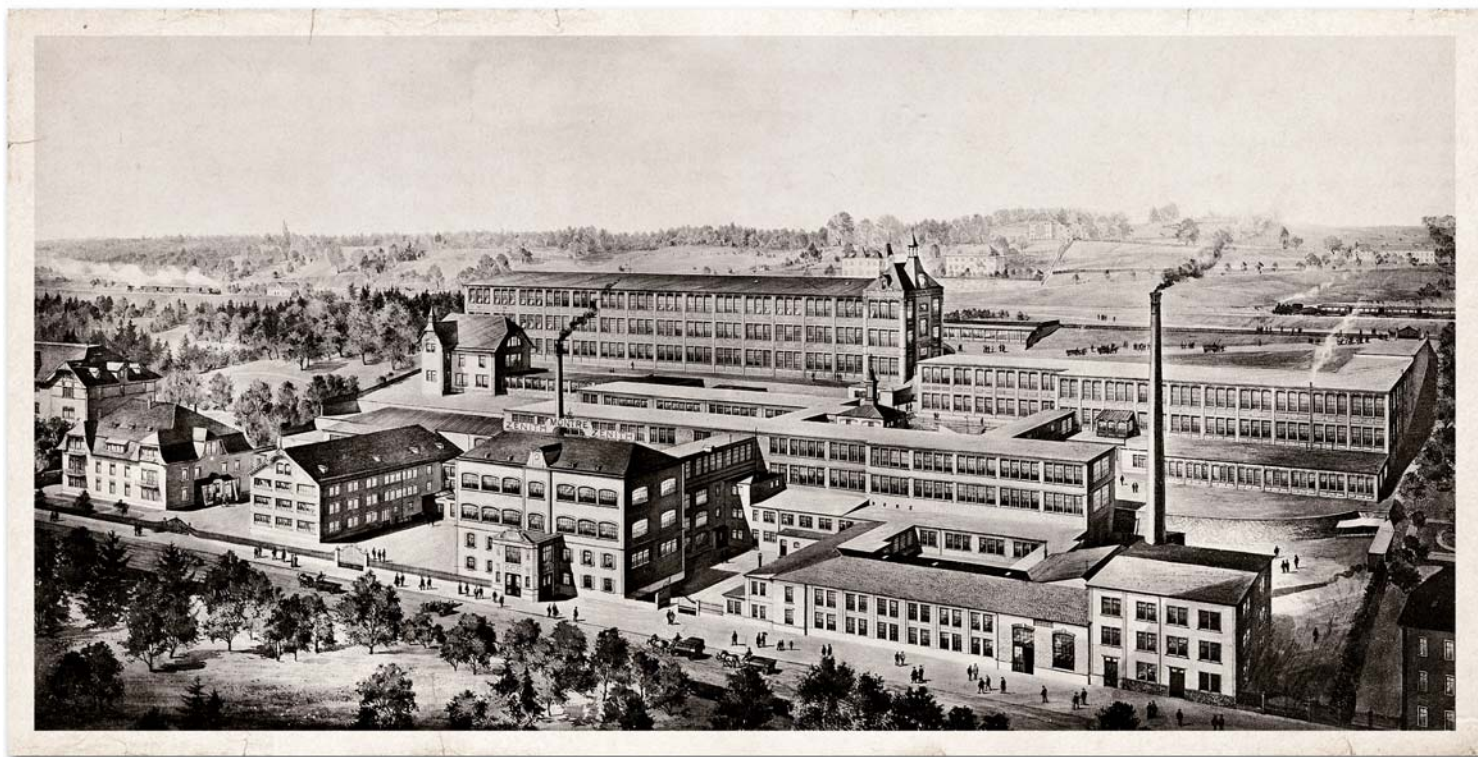
BY KEITH W. STRANDBERG



DEFYING GRAVITY

Zenith's new Christophe Colomb, in development for five years, uses a suspension system involving a gyroscopic cage that keeps its tourbillon regulating mechanism in a horizontal position at all times, regardless of the movements of the wearer.

Stamping tools
at the Zenith
manufacture



“I love the history of Zenith. I am discovering something new every day.”

—Jean-Frédéric Dufour

“We are on the right track, and things are going well for Zenith right now, although we don’t want to be overconfident.”

Following the financial crisis, watch brands and retailers seem to agree that people are looking for good value. Consumers aren’t deciding against spending money on a fine watch, necessarily, but people want to know that the watch they are buying is worth the price. “Today, Zenith is one of the best offerings you can get for the price you pay,” Dufour says. “This is important for me. With the new products, we are exactly where we have to be, and this is the key today.”

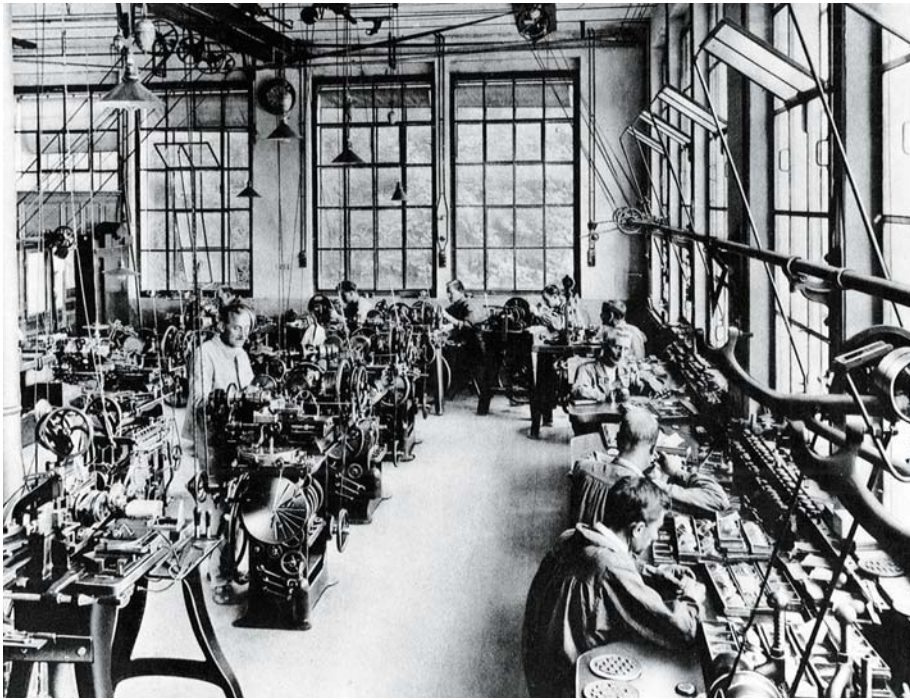
Zenith is an intriguing mix of watchmaking know-how (demonstrated by the chronographs, the tourbillons and minute repeaters in its line), forward-thinking design (the Zenith Open series introduced exposed movements at moderate prices) and innovative technology (the new El Primero Striking 10th). “Zenith today is one of the brands with the greatest potential in the industry, and I can’t wait to see it realized,” Dufour says. “Zenith is a brand that will be number one on the market for chronographs and more.”

THE HISTORY

The Zenith Manufacture is housed in a sprawling, multi-floor factory in the quiet watchmaking town of Le Locle, on the same site where the brand began in 1865. When Dufour first started, he made a point to wander the factory, looking in nooks and crannies, opening the doors of closets and rooms no one had visited in years. In the course of his tour, he stumbled over the production tools for the legendary El Primero 135 movement, something that every-

one had assumed had been destroyed during the Quartz Crisis of the 1970s. Caliber 135 was a groundbreaking development for Zenith, winning it hundreds of awards for precision. The movement was also extremely complex and difficult to produce. Only about 11,000 timepieces with this movement were ever made, and these are highly sought after in the collector market.

Last year, Zenith hosted a 100th birthday party for the developer of Caliber 135,



LOVE STRUCK

One of the watches that makes Jean-Frédéric Dufour’s heart beat faster is the El Primero Striking 10th, a chronograph that legibly displays tenths of a second via a central hand. Unlike most chronograph seconds hands, which circle the dial in 60 seconds, the central seconds hand of the Striking 10th makes a complete revolution in just 10 seconds, a phenomenal watchmaking achievement made possible by the high-frequency El Primero movement. “This new display makes the watch look so exciting—it looks as if time is going so fast,” Dufour says. “It’s something so simple but also something so new, something never before invented.”

The El Primero Striking 10th with Caliber 4052 B

The original El Primero movement, ca. 1969



Jean-Frédéric
Dufour

Ephrem Jobin, and presented the retired watchmaker with a special limited-edition Zenith timepiece to mark the occasion. After finding the production tools and meeting with Jobin, Dufour was more determined than ever to reintroduce Caliber 135. In fact, the vintage caliber has already been rein-

vented as Caliber 681. Dufour explains, "I love the history of Zenith. I am discovering something new every day: a new story, a new prize, a new caliber and more new things. It's wonderful work for someone who is as passionate about watches as I am. I have toys everywhere; the manufacture is like a playground for me."

THE FUTURE

Just about everyone agrees that Zenith is doing things right, but Dufour says that recent changes in direction were more about adapting to the current market than about correcting past missteps. "I don't think Zenith lost its way," Dufour details. "Zenith has faced many crises, many good times, many bad times. Over the past 10 years, Zenith followed the global trend of the Swiss watchmaking industry—truly, the sky was the limit. Watchmaking was a competition for the biggest, the best, the most complicated, the most unusual of everything. Zenith was very successful at this, but then came the crisis, and now people are changing the way they are consuming watches. They have come back to looking for real value or added value."

"It's not a matter of price but of what you can get for that price," Dufour clarifies. "Zenith has been dedicated to precision

DREAM JOB

Dufour is a watch lover from way back, and he is having the time of his life working with one of the great brands in the industry. "I love watches because it's something you can be passionate about," he says. "You have to be very good at bringing emotion to the end customer. The way I see it, my job is to make people happy. I am fortunate to have the chance to work in a field that I love. Working for a brand like Zenith is like a dream for me."

and reliability—these are our pillars—and the price of a Zenith watch is reasonable for what you get."

Looking ahead, Dufour plans to emphasize the manufacture status of Zenith, which he believes is the strength of the brand. "The fact that Zenith is a manufacture is the most significant difference between us and most other brands," he says. "We are a true manufacture using 100 percent of the movements we make. We are the main entryway into the world of real watches."

And, at this moment in history, that is an enviable position and one that Zenith well deserves.

866.675.2079, zenith-watches.com

The El Primero
36,000 VpH
chronograph

