

# LOUIS MOINET

## THE SOUL OF A BRAND



*Jean-Marie Schaller and Micaela Bartolucci of Ateliers Louis Moinet*

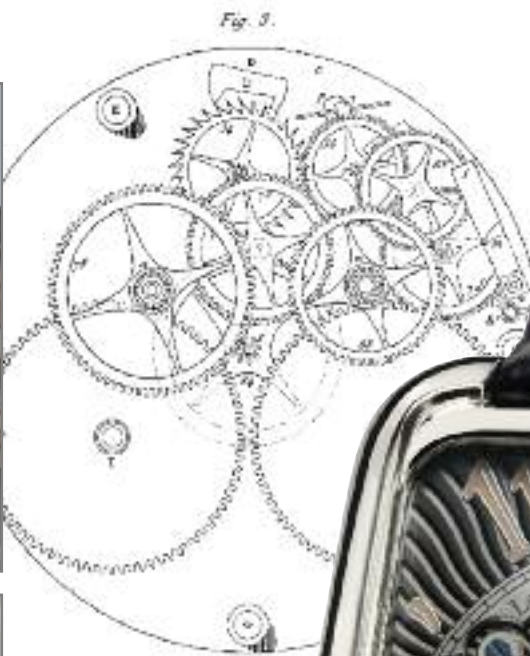
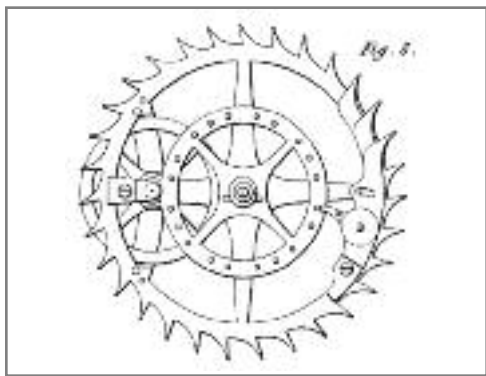
It is important to know Louis Moinet the man—the artist, the scholar, the master watchmaker—before Louis Moinet the watch brand can be fully understood and appreciated. Only then does it become clear that Moinet’s genius is the soul of the brand that bears his name.

Moinet was born in Bourges in 1768. While still a student, he was introduced to the world of watchmaking, and he spent almost all of his free time apprenticed to a master watchmaker. At the age of 20, he traveled to Rome where he lived for five years studying architecture, sculpture and painting. There he came into regular contact with members of the French Academy who were some of the most illustrious artists of that time. From Rome, he went on to Florence to further hone his artistic skills. Upon his return to Paris, he was made a Professor of Fine Arts at the Louvre. He also began his theoretical and practical studies of watchmaking, an art that he already loved most passionately. He became president of the Chronometry Society of Paris and a member of a number of learned and artistic societies. Around 1811, Moinet met Abraham-

Louis Breguet, and the two men became friends and worked closely together. In 1848, Moinet published his *Traité d’Horlogerie*, a two-volume encyclopedia of watchmaking, containing descriptions of sophisticated and ingenious horological techniques and enriched by many illustrations and technical drawings, handmade by Moinet himself. He worked for 20 years on this treatise, which became the go-to watchmaking reference work of the nineteenth century.

Over the course of his career, Moinet improved many existing methods and invented new counters, regulators and astronomical clocks. He made one-of-a-kind, intricate and luxurious clocks for famous historical figures—James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson, George IV and Napoleon—which have become national treasures and are housed in the world’s finest museums. This fact fascinates the independent owners of the Louis Moinet company, Jean-Marie Schaller and Micaela Bartolucci, whose workshops are located in Auvergnier, in the foothills of Switzerland’s Jura mountains.

Not only are the brand’s watches based on Moinet’s sketches, they also contain the DNA of Moinet’s legacy of the high art of



mechanical watchmaking. Schaller and Bartolucci are two people who are as passionate about the artistry of watchmaking as was Moinet. They also strive to bring the personal touch to their brand and a different sensibility to the watch industry. This year, the brand's new US distributor based in Raleigh, NC, Michael Brader-Araje, plans to sell a couple hundred watches directly to individuals, in person and by appointment. If you're interested in purchasing a Louis Moinet watch, a

representative will fly out to where you are and show it to you one-on-one. That kind of customer service is definitely hard to resist! However, Schaller and Bartolucci wish to make and sell no more than 2,500 watches in a year. "You just can't mass produce fine art," says Bartolucci. We think Moinet would wholeheartedly agree. ❖

*Reported by Bill Albers, assistant editor.  
For more about Louis Moinet watches, telephone 919.433.3715 or visit the website [www.louismoinet.com](http://www.louismoinet.com).*

*at left—Ateliers Louis Moinet in Auvernier, at the foothills of the Jura Mountains; the Louis Moinet Variograph wristwatch with time, chronograph, calendar, GMT and moonphase functions; an illustration from Moinet's 1848 treatise.*

*above—The Louis Moinet Twintech wristwatch with retrograde date function and power reserve indicator and partially open Côtes du Jura dial revealing the balance wheel; the watch is shown with the Moinet illustration that inspired its 37-jewel, twin-barrel manufacture movement.*