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The Giovanna Edition Bentley Continental GT

Uncovered... See page 68

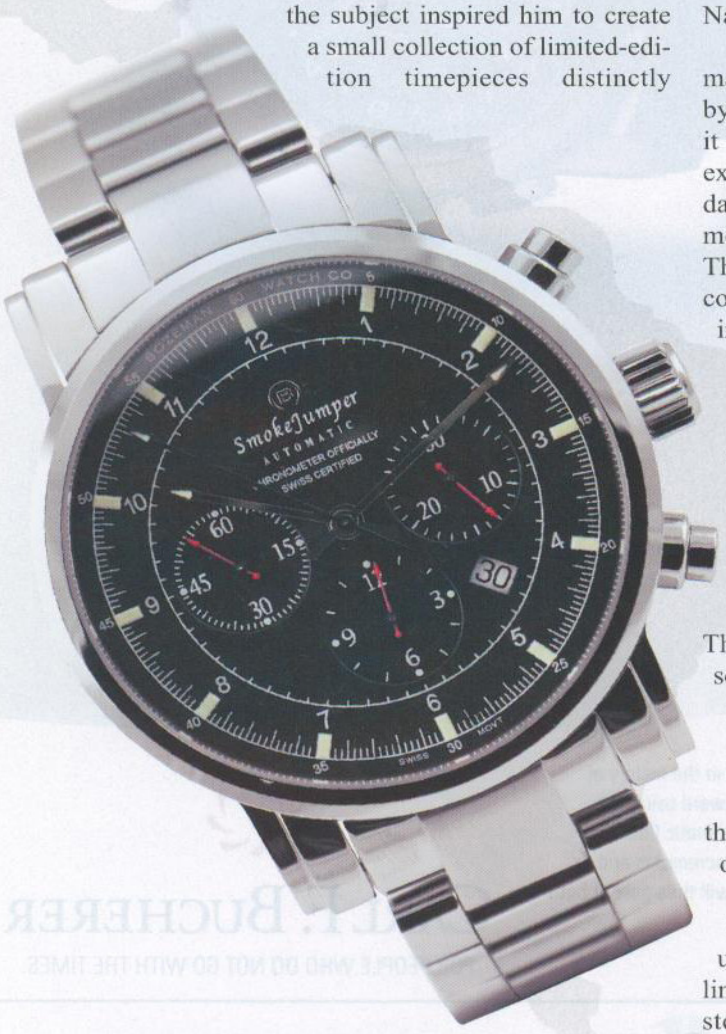
Around the World with Five Watches

By Elizabeth Doerr

Bozeman Watch Company

When Christopher Wardle founded his luxury-watch brand in 2003, he decided to establish it in a location unusual for the watch industry. He didn't choose his native Michigan hometown, the picturesque hills of Switzerland, or even another European country; instead Wardle favored a place known for grazing cattle and rugged outdoorsmen: Bozeman, Montana.

The natural beauty of the place attracted this young entrepreneur, an aficionado of timepieces past and present with a burgeoning collection of his own. His own interest in the subject inspired him to create a small collection of limited-edition timepieces distinctly Swiss in style and origin, but made with a robust Montana attitude. Sporting names like Sidewinder and USS Montana, these timepieces wear the origins of their inspiration on their sleeves.



Kicking off Bozeman Watch Company's premiere line of fine timepieces in 2005 was the Smokejumper Chronograph, a model dedicated to the brave men and women, known as smoke jumpers, who risk their lives to fight forest fires in places like Montana. Smoke jumpers parachute into forests, and with little more than picks and shovels, they fight the fires that ravage the region's picturesque landscapes. The relationship between Bozeman Watch Company and these heroic figures is so close that the Smokejumper Chronograph is the official timepiece of the National Smokejumper Association.

The Smokejumper Chronograph is powered by a Swiss-made automatic movement that is certified as a chronometer by Switzerland's official chronometer institute, meaning that it is one of the most precise mechanical movements in existence. This chronograph has its stopwatch capability and date display cozily embedded in counters and windows that meld unobtrusively with the black background of the dial. The hands of the chronograph's 30-minute and 12-hour counters as well as that of the small subdial for seconds are in red to set them off from the rest. The chronograph's second counter sharply contrasts in blue. Housed in a stately 45-millimeter case that's water-resistant to 100 meters, the Smokejumper Chronograph comes with a stainless-steel bracelet and the choice of either a brown or a black strap.

Bozeman Watch Company's genuine leather straps are hand stitched by a saddle maker in Montana. Made of English bridle leather, the straps are crafted of three pieces of leather that are stacked for added durability. The finished strap has waxed edges like tack and saddle gear, so whether you're riding on horseback after some stray cattle or in the car on your way to the office, you can always have the West's wide-open spaces less than an arm's length away.

"We cherish each of our projects," Wardle explains of the brand's concept. "Therefore we try to keep them original, what would we like to wear ourselves."

According to Wardle, these timepieces are a balance between engineering and design—a concept cleverly underscored by the company's distribution policy: these limited-edition watches are only available at the company's store in downtown Bozeman, nestled in the Rocky Mountains, or through the company's Web site. The Smokejumper Chronograph is limited to 100 pieces and retails for $5,500.

For more information on Bozeman Watch Company's products, visit www.bozemanwatch.com or call 877-878-1780.