

March 18, 2010

Grand Seiko. 50 years of dedication to perfection.

SEIKO WATCH CORPORATION is proud to announce that its renowned and respected luxury watch collection, Grand Seiko, is to be released into selected international markets during 2010. Long recognised by collectors, watchmakers and industry observers as one of the great watches in the world, Grand Seiko has, until now, been available only in Japan and a very limited number of retail locations elsewhere but, thanks to increased production capacity, Grand Seiko will be marketed in partnership with carefully selected retail partners in other markets.

The creation of a legend

It all started with a Marvel. In 1956, SEIKO had launched a watch with the charmingly modest name of 'Marvel'. It was far and away the most precise and best watch ever built in Japan and was hugely successful. However, for the SEIKO team in Nagano Prefecture, high in the mountains of central Japan, it was just a start. Under the leadership of Tsuneya Nakamura, this team had already set its sights on creating what they saw as "the ideal watch" and was working hard to create a watch that would not only exceed the performance of the Marvel, but rival that of any watch in the world. The first task was to set the standard. The Grand Seiko Standard, as it became known, involved testing more stringent than that required by any Chronometer testing agency in the world. One of the key elements of this new standard was the requirement for each watch to be tested in 6 different positions, not the 5 used by others; the sixth position was upright, recognising that many watches were left with the 12 o'clock position on top when not worn. In this and other ways, the SEIKO team set the bar as high as they dared in their determination to make the "ideal watch".

The first Grand Seiko, 1960

The Grand Seiko team defined their goals in the simplest of terms. For them, an ideal watch was a watch that was as accurate, reliable, legible and easy to wear as possible. There were no aspirations to create new or complicated functions; the aim was no more and no less than to create the most beautiful functional watch in the world. And so was born the distinctive, understated elegance of Grand Seiko. From the very first Grand Seiko watch in 1960 until the very latest 36,000 vph* automatic caliber of today, every Grand Seiko watch has shared the functional beauty and design purity that are now its hallmark.



The first Grand Seiko watch, 1960

* vibrations per hour

The secrets of Grand Seiko's excellence

Every component of the Grand Seiko movements and exterior casing parts are manufactured according to Grand Seiko's exacting standards. For example, all Grand Seiko cases are polished by the Zaratsu method to create the flattest and smoothest mirror-finish surfaces. Hands and hour-markers are designed with razor edges to deliver the best possible visibility and readability even in twilight. Even the materials used in Grand Seiko watches are special; the mainsprings in all the Grand Seiko mechanical and Spring Drive calibers are made of SEIKO's proprietary alloy, SPRON, which delivers maximum power reserve and durability.

The Grand Seiko Collection

The Grand Seiko collection includes mechanical, quartz and Spring Drive watches, and a wide range of calibers, the majority of which are designed and developed uniquely for Grand Seiko, including the celebrated 9S85 'HI-BEAT 36000', the 9F quartz caliber with yearly accuracy of +/-10 seconds, and the Spring Drive chronographs with vertical clutch and column wheel systems.



The mechanical caliber 9S85
"HI-BEAT 36000"



The 9F quartz caliber
accurate to +/-10 seconds per year



The Spring Drive Chronograph
caliber 9R86

The Grand Seiko story started over 50 years ago with a simple idea, to create the 'ideal watch'. For 50 years, watch lovers in Japan have been able to enjoy the experience of owning their ideal Grand Seiko watch. From 2010, other international markets will be able to share this experience and SEIKO's global network of national offices will support Grand Seiko with the same high levels of retailer presentation and after-sales care as have always been offered in Japan. The long wait is over!