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INTERVIEW

“It is essential to design each part of the watch beautifully”

Interview of Mr. Kenjiro Tomaru, watchmaker

This month we would like to introduce Mr. Kenjiro Tomaru, a brilliant and humble watchmakers. Mr. Tomaru has left Japan to learn watchmaking in Switzerland and has worked in the Swiss watchmaking industry for almost 20 years.

He kindly answered our questions about his journey and Swiss watches.

Could you please introduce your professional background to our readers?

I started my career in Japan, working for several years for an electronic manufacturing company. I was mainly engaged in product design, prototyping, and development. Later, I took a beginner course at the Watch School (WOSTEP) in Neuchatel, graduating in 2000. Then, I joined Roger Dubuis, where I was responsible for the time adjustment of mechanical movements for three years, and for the time adjustment of the tourbillon-equipped movements for the following four years.

I took a position in DeWitt in October 2006. I was charge of the assembly, adjustment, and casing of the tourbillon-equipped movements for two years. In this company, each watchmaker takes charge of one



Mr. Tomaru working: 400 to 600 parts in some watches

watch from the beginning to the final casing. Then, I was in charge of the assembly, adjustment and casing of minute-repeater movements for five years.

In 2014, I joined one of the oldest watchmakers in Geneva. I am currently responsible for the assembly, adjustment, and casing of minute-repeater movements.

Where does this passion for watches come from?

I studied mechanical engineering in Japan, and became interested in the techniques which artisans need to make products with their expertise and skills. In addition, I learned that in Swit-

zerland handmade mechanical watches are still being produced and became very interested in the craftsmanship of watchmaking, and I wanted to give it a try myself.

I was particularly driven by the fact that in the watchmaking industry, it is still possible to build a watch from scratch. For grand complication watches, the watchmaker is in charge from the beginning to the final casing. It takes about two to three months to produce such a watch.

When I started looking for a school where I could learn watchmaking, I found WOSTEP.

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It is essential to design each part of the watch beautifully

会見

INTERVIEW



Mr. Tomaru is enjoying his life in Geneva

(continued from page 1)

There was no age limit, and they taught in English, which was important for me since I could not speak French at the time.

In your opinion, why are Swiss watches so popular?

Swiss mechanical watches are not only made to be accurate - all items, including watch parts, cases, hands, dials, and mechanical movement parts, are made like crafts.

In addition to being a craft, Swiss mechanical watches have many different innovative functions like 'minute-repeaters' and 'equation of time'.

A 'minute-repeater' watch informs

the time with two different sounds in a high and low tone. A long time ago, when we did not have electricity and there was no light at night, the 'minute-repeater' watch was invented. It indicates the hours, quarters, and minutes through a series of sounds, when activated. For example, if it is 6:27, it sounds six times in a low tone for the hour, followed by one high-low tone for the quarter hour, and then, twelve times in a high tone for the minutes.

An 'equation of time' watch displays the difference between the standard time and the actual astronomical time. This difference exists because our planet does not follow a perfectly round orbit around the sun. Our elliptical orbit means that the distance from the sun varies depending on the moment of the year. Therefore, the length of a day varies with plus/minus 15 minutes during the year. Obviously, it would be too difficult to adapt the time every day, and therefore we keep a 24-hour day setting all year long, but an 'equation of time' watch can display this asynchronous reality.

Watches are made with functionality and are aesthetically pleasing, and I think that is why watch en-

thusiasts, collectors, and the general public are attracted by them and wish to own one.

What are the essential qualities of Swiss watches?

When comparing the accuracy of mechanical watch movements, Japanese mechanical watches are as accurate as Swiss watches. However, I think, for Swiss watches it is essential to design each part of the watch beautifully, like crafts, in addition to their functionality. To be more specific, the components of the movements are decorated or have more elaborate shapes.

How does it feel to work for one of the oldest and more popular watchmakers?

I am not very conscious of working for one of the oldest watchmaker in the world, but my current department allows me to handle the assembly, adjustment, and casing, all by myself. Moreover, I have the chance to be in charge of a limited number of models and sometimes of only one model, and such models will remain on the market for a long period of time. When I think about it, I can really be proud and confident about what I have so far learned.

Introducing WOSTEP, the watchmaking school

活動

ACTIVITY

The WOSTEP Foundation is an independent and neutral watchmaking institution supported by members of the Swiss watchmaking industry.

WOSTEP stands for Watchmakers

of Switzerland Training and Educational Program. It was founded in 1966 to train North American watchmakers. In 1970, WOSTEP opened to watchmakers from all over the world and became a non-

profit association in 1986.

WOSTEP's 3,000-hour-long program is an official part of adult watchmaking education in Switzerland.

Shojin's Chef Toshio Tanahashi in Switzerland for one month

Shojin cooking is an ancient art developed first in the 7th century in Kyoto. To preserve life and honour nature, Buddhist monks have developed Shojin, a vegetarian, seasonal and waste-free cuisine. They mostly use the donation people bring to the temple and try to use as much as possible of it.

This diet is not only healthy and sustainable but can also be delicious. Chef Toshio Tanahashi learned Shojin at Gesshinji Temple in Shiga prefecture. Opening his own restaurant in Tokyo in 1992, he quickly became known for his creativity. Collaborating with great chefs such as Alain Ducasse, Toshio Tanahashi became famous all around the world. In November, he will have several dinners, conferences and workshops scheduled in

Switzerland.

Reservations are mandatory.

If you are interested, we strongly recommend you to read the excellent article by Ms. Véronique Zbinden in the newspaper [Le Temps](#).

If you are interested in one of those events, you can directly contact the restaurant/place using the link on the right.



Chef Toshio Tanahashi

Toshio Tanahashi's schedule:

- Oct 30, Geneva, [Le Cinqième Jour](#)
- Nov. 2, Geneva, Live Dinner at [Les Ateliers by Serge Labrosse](#)
- Nov. 4, le Bouveret, [Culinary Arts Academy](#)
- Nov. 11, Monthèron, [Auberge de l'abbaye de Monthèron](#)
- Nov. 12, Lausanne, [Conference at the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne](#)
- Nov. 14, 15 and 16, Bullet, [Ming Shan](#)
- Nov. 18, Lucerne, [César Ritz College](#)
- Nov. 19 and 20, Zurich [Hiltl Academy](#) in collaboration with [Tibits](#),

Check the program [here](#)

行事

EVENT

Rugby World Cup: A nice journey for the Brave Blossoms

On October 20, the journey of the Japanese national rugby team ended. The Brave Blossoms have fallen during the quarter-final against South Africa, double champion and one of the favourites for the title.

The national team can be proud of what they achieved this time. Not only have they reached the quarter-final for the first time but they also pleased the public thanks to their quick and technical games.

In the final, South Africa will meet England, 2003's champion and winner against the All Blacks in the semi-final.

The game will take place on November second in the International

Stadium Yokohama, in the Kanagawa Prefecture. Yokohama City is considered to be the birth place of

rugby in Japan. The stadium can accommodate more than 70,000 spectators.



More than [1 million people](#) in the official fan zones so far (new record)

行事

EVENT

Nobel Prize season: From atoms to exoplanets

革新

INNOVATION

Once more, both Switzerland and Japan have the pleasure of celebrating three Nobel Prize laureates. Switzerland and the University of Geneva in particular can be proud of Prof. Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz for the discovery of the exoplanet 51 Pegasi b. They share one half of the Nobel Prize in Physics between them.

51 Pegasi b is the very first planet identified outside our solar system (exoplanet). Research suspected the existence of exoplanets for many decades, but they are very difficult to detect. Unlike stars that can be directly seen thanks to the light they emit, exoplanets have to be detected using indirect methods, such as the variation of light of the star they orbit around when they

are between Earth and their star.

The other half of the Nobel Prize in Physics awards Professor James Peebles from Princeton University.

If exoplanets might sound remote, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry awards an innovation everyone can enjoy in their daily lives.

Professor Akiro Yoshino from Meijo University in Nagoya is sharing the Nobel Prize for the development of lithium-ion batteries. Professors Goodenough (University of Texas) and Whittingham (State University of New York) have theorized lithium-ion batteries and Professor Yoshino developed the first working prototype of such a battery. They co-share the award. Thanks to their efforts, Sony was

able to introduce the first mass-produced lithium battery in 1991.

Compact, storing more energy and lasting longer, those batteries completely revolutionized the industry and can be found everywhere from smartphones to cars.



The Nobel Prize medal

Agenda

日程

AGENDA

- ✓ SJCC/JETRO Company Visit: Nestlé Headquarters
November 28th 2019, 17:30 - 19:30
Venue Nestlé HQ, Avenue Nestlé 55, 1800 Vevey.
[Program](#) and [Registration](#). Please, choose your affiliation as "JETRO Member" for free admission.
- ✓ The traditional "Automne de la culture Japonaise" has already started. Check the program on the [Japanese Consulate website](#)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

JETRO

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