

PRESS KIT

ABOUT PATRIA WATCHES

Last Updated 13/07/2019

Foundation of Patria

Patria was founded in Bienne on 10th October 1892 by Louis Brandt. The brand produced some of the first purpose-built wristwatches in Switzerland and supplied many of the watches issued to men fighting in the First World War. Unlike many of the watch companies from this era, Patria was a manufacturer of in-house movements, producing its own calibres on an industrial scale.

In 1848 Louis Brandt founded the 'Comptoir d'établissage' in La Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland; a company that produced key-wound precision pocket watches from parts supplied by local craftsmen. After Brandt's death in 1879, his sons, Louis-Paul and Cesar, under their father's company 'Louis Brandt & Fils' decided to begin producing in-house movements for quality control under various brand names. These names included Jura, Helvetia, Omega and Patria. By 1889, Louis Brandt & Fils was the largest producer of timepieces in Switzerland with an annual production of 100,000 pieces.

Louis Brandt passed away on July 5th, 1879 and shortly after, his two sons Louis Paul and Cesar relocated the company to Bienne. In 1891 Louis Brandt & Fils was renamed to Louis Brandt & Frère. Patria Watch Co was founded by Louis Brandt et Frère in Bienne, Switzerland, October 10 1892.

Patria is a Latin word cognate with the Greek 'Patris', both of which derive from the word for "father", or "fatherland". Louis Brandt & Frere founded Patria Watch Co in 1892 intending to explore the newly emerging wristwatch market which at the time was dominated by pocket watches, making Patria one of the earliest brands to produce purpose-built wristwatches.

One of the World's first Wristwatch Brands

Up until the end of the 19th Century, wristwatches were worn almost exclusively by women, but during the first Boer war, soldiers discovered how much more practical a wrist-worn timepiece was in battle. Before the invention of the wristwatch, the 'wristlet', or a small clock worn as a pendant on a bracelet was fashionable before the 20th century. Generally, wristwatches were worn by women as men thought them to be feminine and unreliable.

Records from the second Boer war (1899-1902) describe soldiers upgrading pocket watches by soldering on wire lugs and attaching leather straps to them for use on the wrist. Hands-free timekeeping could make the difference between life and death on the battlefield, allowing a soldier to coordinate attacks and defeat the enemy.

Patria was founded with the express intention of industrially producing purpose-built wristwatches. In the 1890's this was incredibly rare.

Patria in the Trenches

By the advent of the first world war in 1914, the wristwatch had already been established as a valuable tool in combat, having been used extensively in the first and second Boer wars. When the first world war broke out in 1914, a tactic known as the creeping artillery barrage was frequently used. This involved artillery fire moving forward in stages just ahead of the advancing infantry and required perfect timing to avoid friendly fire. As a result of this, 1/4 of all soldiers were wearing wristwatches by 1916. In 1917, the War Office began issuing wristwatches to all soldiers. A significant number of the watches issued to the men fighting in the trenches were Patria Military Trench Watches.

By 1917 the Patria 13''' military wristwatch was widely used by soldiers due to its radium numerals that were visible in the dark, steel shrapnel guard and discrete 36mm case.

Patria Disappears

During the 1940s the legacy of Patria started to fade, although present during WW2, Louis Brandt & Frère focused their energy on their other brands and subsequently Patria Watch Co slowly started faded from existence.

The last known example of a watch made by Patria Watch Co was a 1940's military mechanical chronograph watch with a Landeron 17 Jewel movement. The case takes typical design traits from this wartime era and combined with a glossy enamel dial; this was Patria Watch Co's last foray in Swiss watchmaking history.

Revival of Patria

Patria was revived on May 29th 2019 by the company's current CEO, Jolyon Lambert. The launch model, the Brigadier Chrono was entered into the GPHG (GRAND PRIX D'HORLOGERIE DE GENÈVE) just 1 month after the revival launch of the brand.

Brigadier Chrono

Brigadier is the first new-generation model of Patria Watch Co. It carries the legacy of Patria watches and the distinct characteristics of the historic watches that were shaped on the battlefield. Brigadier is adapted for a present-day market and is updated with features such as 50M water-resistance, date feature, automatic-winding and display back.

The Brigadier has a 42mm 5-piece stainless steel case with expertly-crafted lugs, featuring sweeping, concave-profiled chamfers. The case also features a box sapphire crystal on the front with 8 layers of AR coating and also a double-domed sapphire crystal on the caseback with 5 layers of AR coating.

The Patria Calibre PA-16 features a column wheel for operating the chronograph. The column wheel is heated to blue by intense heat treatment. The mainplate is hand-finished in perlage and the bridges are all finished with a circular côtes de Geneve finish and treated with rhodium. The 35 jewel PA-16 also features a flyback cam which is heated to cobalt blue along with all of the screws in the movement to match the blue column wheel.

The dial of the Brigadier is white enamel. The numerals are finished with hand-applied Swiss Super-LumiNova in 'GL Old Radium' to match the appearance of the radium numerals on the original watches.

The hands are heat-blued steel with the hour and minute hands filled with 'GL Old Radium' Swiss Super-LumiNova.

The strap is made from molded full-grain Italian leather, waxed on its edges and features quick-release springbars. The buckle is a solid 316L stainless steel tang type.

The Brigadier is presented in a genuine burl walnut wooden box with suede interior.

Made in Bienne

Just as they were in 1892, the new generation of Patria watches are manufactured in Bienne, Switzerland. The movement for the first model is manufactured by Eterna in the neighbouring town of Grenchen and components are hand finished by various artisans around the Bienne area.

Brand Ethos

Patria Watches are made with an ethos of tradition and virtuosity.

Patria Watch Co believes in upholding the key principles of Swiss watchmaking; traditions that have been proudly passed down for generations and that have characterised Swiss watches above all others. Patria watches don't have any unfinished metallic surfaces, inside or out. Surfaces are finished either with polishing, côtes de Geneve, perlage, bead blasting, linear brushing, radial brushing or snail brushing.

Blue steel parts are authentically heat-treated to give the distinctive cobalt blue colour and only genuine Swiss SuperLuminova is used for low light visibility components. Sapphire crystals are coated inside with anti-reflective coating to give the feeling of there being no crystal at all. Patria movements are finished with rhodium, which is one of the rarest metals on earth and gives a brilliantly bright finish.

The history of Patria is a fascinating one that has resulted in iconic, beautiful and historically significant watches. The design language of Patria is one that adapted to the battlefield at the turn of the 19th century: Big, bold numerals that glow in low light, elegant cathedral hands, brilliant white or deep black glossy lacquer dial and an oversized crown are all characteristics that represent the spirit of Patria. New Patria watches are designed to inherit the DNA of their ancestors so that they can carry forth the legacy of the brand.

In place of the radioactive radium that was originally used for the numerals, Patria now uses genuine Swiss GL Old Radium SuperLuminova which has no radiation.

Patria watches are assembled by hand in Bienne, Switzerland where they are tested for timekeeping accuracy, resistance to magnetic fields and water resistance. We are so confident in the reliability of our watches, we offer a 2 year international warranty with all our watches. You can wear your Patria watch day in, day out and rest assured it will keep on performing.