

PRESS KIT
JULY 2026

French watchmaking & motor racing

THE MECHANICS OF PASSION

Mastering time and taming speed like a legendary racing driver, French watches put the sensations of the track within arm's reach.

As twin products of mechanical ingenuity, watches and racing cars share the challenges of precision, reliability, energy management, ergonomics, legibility and endurance.

The original link between the two industries sprung from the need for accurate timepieces to measure track performance.

Today, vintage spirit and contemporary high-tech capabilities are providing the impetus for new forms of collaboration and creation. French brands are drawing inspiration from the exciting world of roaring engines, streamlined bodywork and tantalising races. Among them, Lorige, Arpiem, Depancel, Kelton, BRM, Reservoir and Yema, each in their own way, are deepening this dialogue between watchmaking and motor sport.

The golden age of racing chronographs

The 1960s and 1970s were a turning point. The explosion of motor sport, expressive car designs as yet unhampered by regulatory constraints and mass industrialisation made the period an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

The drivers were fascinating, charismatic personalities forming an intimate bond with their machine in order to confront the dangers ahead. Alpine's victories in rally racing, the Matra Bleu de France prototypes at the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the spectacular Facel Vega fired the imagination of the French people.

The defining codes of the genre took hold during this time: chronograph complications, 'panda' and high-contrast dials, tachometer bezels used to calculate average speed, perforated bracelets reminiscent of driving gloves, as well as robust case geometries in cushion or tonneau shapes. Yema launched the Rallygraf, Kelton brought out its first racing watches and Lip excelled with chronographs like the Lip Rallye.



A natural link

For many years, the watchmaking and automotive industries continued to develop in parallel. From the end of the 19th century, the dashboards of the very first cars were reminiscent of watch dials, with their fine hands and highly contrasting numerals for easy reading.

France played a major role in this development. Micromechanical and watchmaking production worked side by side in Besançon and the surrounding Jura industrial basin. Meanwhile, big names in the automotive industry began to emerge in France, including Bugatti, Delage, Delahaye, Voisin and Facel Vega. Areas of expertise overlap: both industries boast expertise in miniature machining, tolerance control, friction and energy management, material resistance and the search for precision.

The first motor racing competitions emerged in the 1920s and 1930s: Mille Miglia, Le Mans, Monte-Carlo, Targa Florio. Long before the onset of electronics, chronographs were essential instruments for measuring average speed, lap time and race intervals.

The new generation joins the race

Modern-day watchmakers freed from the pressure of performance have found the automotive world a bottomless pit of inspiration. A watch enables the wearer to carry on their wrist emotions distilled from the essence of a car model, race, driver or a model that marked its time.

Lorige has transformed carbon brake pads into a case. Arpiem has revisited the pressure gauges and dashboard instruments of competition cars, as well as rally circuits. Depancel has reinstated the chronograph as a dashboard instrument. At Kelton and Yema, the aesthetics of the 1970s and nostalgia for the tool watch are back with a vengeance. At Reservoir, tachometers sporting the look of a dashboard instrument have found a new home on the wrist. B.R.M Chronographes blends watchmaking mechanics with automotive elements, using a technology reminiscent of competition suspension systems.

Brand ambassadors have also told, and continue to tell, the story that has unfolded between two industries fuelled by a quest for performance and precision. One could name Emerson Fittipaldi at Kelton in the 1970s, Mario Andretti and Franck Montagny at Yema and, today, Marco Sørensen at Lorige and Antonin Bernard, Nicolas Roumezy and Ethan Pharamond at B.R.M Chronographes.



LORIGE



Lorige at the forefront of innovation

Lorige’s founders have motor sport pinned to their bodies. In 2018, these two experts consummated their passion by bringing out watches infused with the spirit of the racetrack.

After three years of research, they patented a complex process for transforming carbon or carbon composite brake pads, heated to 900°, into watch cases. The watch is directly shaped by a component of the car symbolising its racing track record. Each of these limited-edition watches embodies a story, the soul of a competition.

Lorige has developed a partnership with Aston Martin’s Heart of Racing team and Marco Sørensen, driver of the No. 009 Valkyrie. As such, in late 2025 the brand presented a new collection, the BL-Evolution, starting with the “Hyperblack” version, followed by the “Bleu Asphalte” and “Gris Circuit”. The brake pads incorporated into this 50-piece limited-edition collection were taken from prototypes of the Aston Martin Valkyrie AMR-LMH entered in the endurance competition during the 12 Hours of Sebring in 2025 and the 24 Hours of Daytona in 2026.

The watches have a high-performance movement including a double-barrel LOR-DB manual-winding calibre developed exclusively for Lorige by Chronode. They have a power reserve of 168 hours (7 days). Nor have aesthetics been left behind, as witnessed by the challenging, specially developed “Duo-Tone” finish. The finishes – Côtes de Genève, hand chamfering, artisanal satin-brushing – have helped earn these watches their standing among the elite of fine watchmaking.

ARPIEM® WATCHES



Arpiem, embodying the spirit of vintage rallies

Arpiem pays tribute to the golden age of competitions in the 1960s and 1970s. Its founder loved these adrenaline-packed years, when cars still had real character and drivers are charismatic heroes who rubbed shoulders with watchmakers on the edges of the track.

Arpiem’s dials revive the look of vintage pressure gauges, bodywork colours and the graphic codes of dashboard instrument.

The Ride & Drive collection revives the tradition of the drivers’ watches that appeared in the mid-20th century, when watches for car drivers were directly inspired by the sloping dials of aviators’ timepieces. The angled display allowed the driver to quickly read the time without letting go of the steering wheel. The watches’ rotating dial switches between two positions using a system without parallel in the world of automotive watches: “REST” in standard position, “DRIVE” in the driving position with the dial offset at 2 o’clock. As such, the instrument can switch effortlessly between normal mode and racing mode.

Each Ride & Drive watch is associated with a thrilling rally: the Fesh Fesh evokes the Dakar and Cyril Neveu, the Macchia is devoted to the Tour de Corse and the Time Control pays tribute to the mythical stages of the World Rally Championship.



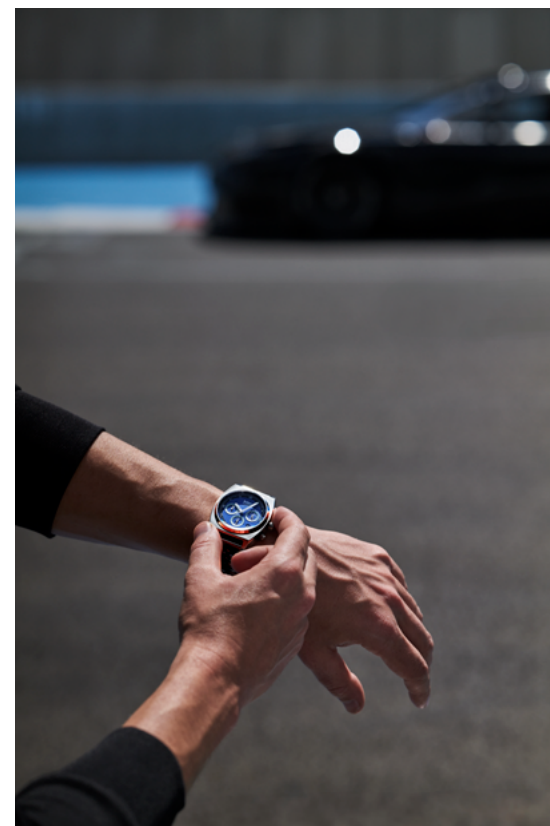
Depancel: dashboard instruments for chronographic measurement

Founded in 2018, Depancel is based in Besançon. The name is a portmanteau coined from a combination of Delage, Panhard and Facel Vega.

The brand's watches and chronographs revive the classic moments of motor sport – designed and assembled by hand in its Besançon workshop, they exude precision, durability and respect for watchmaking tradition. The components are carefully adjusted and checked for maximum accuracy and reliability.

The Autosport Racing Chronograph model boasts the features of a real dashboard instrument, paying homage to the chronographs of the 1960s and 1970s. Each feature of its design recalls the defining codes of the motor racing world. With its characteristic rangefinder scale on the aluminium bezel, the Autosport Racing Chronograph by Depancel boasts true speed-measuring functionality. The average speed reading is generated by the chronograph function over a defined distance, usually 1 km or 1 mile, depending on the time measured by the central seconds hand.

Kelton.



Kelton revives the racing spirit of the seventies

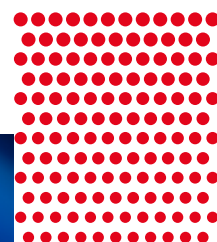
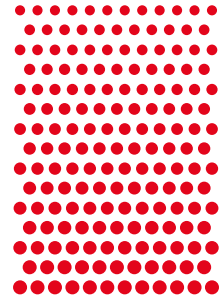
Kelton's connection to the automotive world is so strong that it is engraved in the collective memory of the people. From the 1970s, the brand benefited from the partnership forged by Timex, its parent company at the time, with Emerson Fittipaldi, two-time Formula 1 world champion in 1972 and 1974.

From 1975, Kelton created three limited-edition models signed by the Brazilian racer. The first was inspired by a manually wound Timex Rally M25 with a horizontal chequered flag, defining the codes of a sporty aesthetic featuring massive cases, bright colours and a cool racing look.

Today, the RC collection revives Kelton's passion for the world of cars and speed. Meanwhile, the brand has teamed up with Gentleman class driver Guillaume Brichard, who competed in the Ligier JS Cup France endurance race.

The RC 2, probably the brand's most iconic model, casts its striking silhouette – cut like a muscle car – on the wrists of contemporary wearers driven by a passion for vintage vehicles.

The RC 24 breathes a contemporary, more tense and nervous touch into the historic case design, paired with an integrated jubilee bracelet in polished and satin-finished stainless steel. Several types of calibre – automatic, meca-quartz or quartz – make the RC 24 throb to the rhythm of the road.

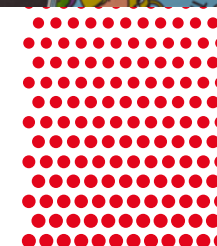
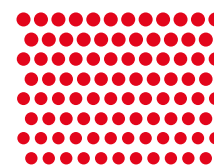


Yema: the chronograph heritage

Since the 1960s, Yema has delighted drivers and motor racing fans alike with its Rallygraf chronographs. Mario Andretti and Franck Montagny are among the distinguished wearers of these watches paying tribute to speed, passion and a rich French heritage in motor racing.

They embody an instrumental approach to timekeeping aimed at precision and speed: clear displays, instant reading and a characteristic aesthetic.

The recent partnership with the Alpine Elf Cup Series, for which Yema is the official timekeeper, brings this important part of the brand's history to life. The Rallygraf Alpine special editions designed as a tribute to Alpine's legendary spirit of competition revive the codes of vintage chronographs with their internal tachymetric bezel and perforated rally-style bracelet with its retro, sporty look. The blue dial version recalls the colour of these vehicles of unequalled power and elegance that helped build the reputation of French motor racing.



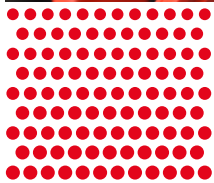
Reservoir: a design capable of hitting the red zone

Speedometers and rev counters provide essential information on car dashboards. Precision and legibility are and have always been key attributes for racing drivers. Reservoir has instilled the functionalities and aesthetics of these instruments into its Kanister models.

Awarded a Red Dot Design Award in 2022, the collection retraces the lines of the legendary Porsche 356 Speedster's counter. First released in 1954, the model was born from a visionary idea: strip off the frills in order to offer an affordable vehicle to young American adepts of road trips and car races. James Dean and Steve McQueen drove the vehicle and helped build its iconic status synonymous with high-adrenaline rides along the coastal roads of the American West. The Kanister collection pays tribute to the spirit of freedom and speed of the 1950s.

The silver dial of the Reservoir Kanister Silver recalls the body colour of the 356 Speedster. On the black dial version, a large central white hand points to the pastel green minute markers, crossing a red zone between 45 and 50. The hour is displayed in a window at 6 o'clock just above the power indicator. Reservoir extends the polished-finish grade 5 titanium case with a leather bracelet reminiscent of the bucket seats of the day.





B.R.M Chronographes : the mechanics of competition

Driven by his passion for watchmaking and motorsport, Bernard Richards founded B.R.M Chronographes in 2003.

From the outset, the French manufacturer sought to capture the excitement of the paddock and racetrack, channelling it into high-end watches. Handmade and assembled in France, B.R.M Chronographes watches combine craftsmanship, precision and customisation.

The brand's first signature design elements emerged in 2005, with the V12 collection's piston-shaped case and boldly styled push buttons. The brand also draws on its own 'Shock Absorber' technology: an innovative system directly inspired by race car suspension, designed to absorb shock, impact and vibrations to support enthusiasts in even the most demanding conditions.

The lightweight, resistant materials used – titanium, carbon, stainless steel and Makrolon – are a nod to the world of motorsport. The cases recall the pistons, brake discs and wheel rims, while the dials and hands recall competition car gauges and the iconic chequered flags.

Over the years, B.R.M Chronographes has forged close ties with countless stakeholders in the automotive sector, from drivers (Jade Jacquet, Raul Marchisio, Mathieu Baumel) and teams to championships (French Drift Championship FFSA) and other events. The brand also developed its Record TB model, featuring a DS E-Tense-coloured dial and a 90° tilted case reminiscent of a dashboard, available in a range of special editions (Honda Racing Corporation, Corvette Racing, and more).

French mechanics in full swing

Lorige, Arpiem, Depancel, Kelton, Yema, Reservoir and B.R.M Chronographes bear witness to the development of contemporary French watchmaking.

Long dominated by diving, military or classical aesthetics, French watchmakers are once again experimenting with the automobile as a field of expression backed by the legitimacy of their history and expertise. Enough to inject a fresh dose of watchmaking energy into the sensations born from the automotive world.





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