





IWC INSIDE

Still anchored by its original workshop in Schaffhausen, 140-year-old IWC is expanding its watchmaking operations and increasing its production of in-house calibers.

BY JENS KOCH
PHOTOS BY MARCUS KRÜGER

The International Watch Company, IWC for short, was founded in the Swiss town of Schaffhausen in 1868 by an American named Florentine Ariosto Jones. At the relatively tender age of 27, Jones famously crossed the Atlantic to realize his dream of marrying classical Swiss craftsmanship with modern American industrial technology to produce fine timepieces. When the watchmakers in the more traditional watchmaking centers of Geneva and the Jura Mountains proved distrustful of this foreigner's agenda, Jones came to this German-speaking enclave near the banks of the Rhine River to realize his dream. Erected in 1875, during the so-called *Gründerzeit*, a period of rapid industrial expansion in German-speaking Europe at the end of the 19th century, the main building displays that era's characteristic architectural features and represents the company's heart. Construction of another building toward the south began in 1895, but IWC was already bursting at the seams again by 1911. Ensuing years saw additional floors added to the main building, and eastern and western wings eventually built.

IWC's expansion during the *Gründerzeit* is rivaled only by its similarly strong growth in more recent years. Since 2000, the firm has resumed making many of its own watch movements and the number of IWC *manufacture* calibers (including, recently, its own chronograph movement) has risen significantly. The staff in Schaffhausen, which had been reduced from 300 to 150 during the dark days of the 1970s-1980s quartz crisis, now totals 450. An-



The recently opened IWC museum in the old headquarters building is furnished in a modern style and showcases the brand's 140-year history.

other 100 are employed elsewhere throughout the world.

IWC acquired the top floor of the adjacent building, formerly a gabardine-spinning mill, in 2000. This floor now holds the brand's marketing and construction departments. Other small departments are hived off within walking distance. In 2005, IWC opened its new, large eastern building, a modern glass edifice with space for the ateliers where cases and movement components are made and given their final finishing. Most recently, construction began on a new western building, larger than its eastern counterpart but sharing the same architectural styling that will provide additional room for watchmakers' workplaces.

All that extra space is not devoted solely to watchmakers who work on the many *manufacture* movements. Above all, the company's increasing vertical integration requires manpower and workspace — for watch and movement design, toolmaking, engraving, even producing the company's customer magazine.

AS IWC CELEBRATES its 140th anniversary this year, it has also carved out

For the complete article please look for the WatchTime August 2008 issue, now available at newsstands and the bookstores.