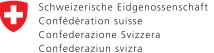


# **GP GIRARD-PERREGAUX**

WATCHES FOR THE FEW SINCE 1791

### FRANÇOIS PERREGAUX, PIONEER OF SWISS WATCHMAKING IN JAPAN

Under the distinguished patronage of the Swiss Embassy in Japan



**Embassy of Switzerland in Japan** スイス大使館







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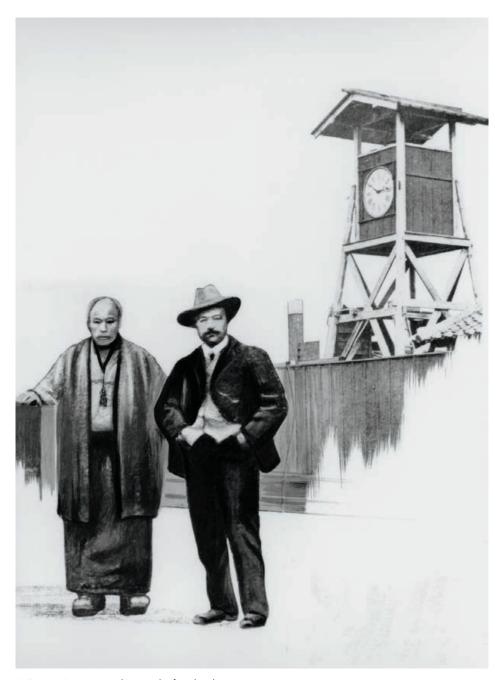
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1. François Perregaux and Hanzo, his friend and assistant

In February 1864, Swiss emissaries and representatives of the Imperial Japanese Government signed a Friendship and Trade Treaty. This bilateral agreement would be the basis for the special relationship between Japan and Switzerland, and would permit the first Swiss watch exports to the Land of the Rising Sun. Though not exactly the first... At the time of the long-awaited signature, a watch merchant from Switzerland had already been in business for several years on the Japanese archipelago: François Perregaux (Le Locle 1834 – Yokohama 1877).

2009 marks the 175th anniversary of his birth, but also 150 years since his departure for Asia. The brother of Marie Perregaux, who with her husband Constant Girard founded the Manufacture that to this day bears their combined surnames, François Perregaux actually set out in Spring 1859, to be the ambassador for the Girard-Perregaux firm on the far side of the Indian Ocean.

The remarkable story of this man, the first Swiss watchmaker to set up in Japan, calls on us, each and every player in the destiny of Girard-Perregaux, to promote our Firm's continuing development. Our pride and respect for the work of François Perregaux have led us to tell you about his career. We have gone on historical documents kept by our Firm and by private individuals, on research conducted in the various archive centres, libraries and museums, not to forget the Yokohama City Archives. Similarly, the adopted town of the Le Locle watchmaker is this year celebrating the 150th anniversary of the opening up of its port to the West.

This publication aims to be a tribute to one of the pioneers of Swiss watch-making in Japan, to his brief but exciting life, and a testimony to the profound links binding Girard-Perregaux to the archipelago for over one-and-a-half centuries. This story also illustrates the spirit of innovation that has always led the Swiss Firm to new horizons. Driven by the avant-garde ideas of the pioneers who have forged its renown since 1791, Girard-Perregaux has been behind major advances in the world of watchmaking. It continues in this vein, enhancing its exceptional craftsmanship; naturally in Switzerland, the cradle of this activity, but also all around the world.

Luigi Macaluso, President of Girard-Perregaux



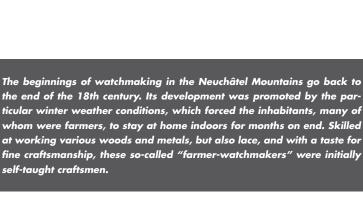




However, the organisation was very different to what we are familiar with today: there was no factory, but a host of small businesses, generally specialising in manufacturing watch parts, and which delivered their production to watchmaking merchants. They had the watches assembled, and put their name to them. They were known as the établisseurs. The two cities in the Neuchâtel Mountains, La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle, whence François Perregaux came, had over one hundred of them.

Consequently, forces were extremely scattered, and few merchants had the financial power necessary to explore new markets, though they were essential for their survival. This scattering was also the reason why the concept of a brand as we know it today was not yet well established. It would not be until the latter third of the 19th century that the most powerful of these merchants, such as Constant Girard-Perregaux, imposed their name, and the first factories appeared: when watchmaking definitively entered the industrial era.

the end of the 18th century. Its development was promoted by the particular winter weather conditions, which forced the inhabitants, many of whom were farmers, to stay at home indoors for months on end. Skilled at working various woods and metals, but also lace, and with a taste for fine craftsmanship, these so-called "farmer-watchmakers" were initially self-taught craftsmen.





- 2. Charles-Samuel Girardet, Neuchâtel interior, 1819
- 3. La Chaux-de-Fonds, rue des Juifs, circa 1840





# SOMEWHERE IN THE SWISS JURA

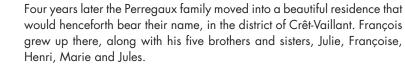


4. Henri-François Perregaux (1797–1847), father of François Perregaux



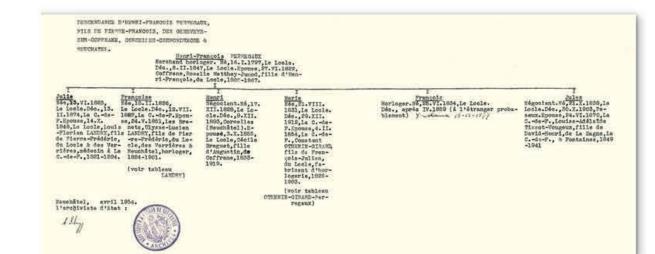
It was in the small city of Le Locle, situated in the heart of the Neuchâtel Mountains and just a few kilometres from La Chaux-de-Fonds, that on 25 June 1834 François Perregaux was born, the son of Henri-François, a militia captain and watchmaking merchant, and Rosalie, born Matthey-Junod.





The premature passing of the head of the family in 1847 confirmed the calling of the Perregaux brothers: all three would be watchmakers!

- 5. Extract from the Perregaux family tree (1954)
- 6. Le Locle, view from the East, circa 1860









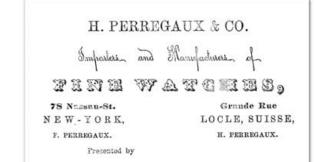
In the wake of the first universal exhibition, an extraordinary gathering held in London in 1851, the Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations was opened two years later in New York.

Did François Perregaux decide to set off for the Americas for this event? The fact remains that in early 1853 the Neuchâtel authorities issued him with a passport, dated 22 January, bearing the following remarks:

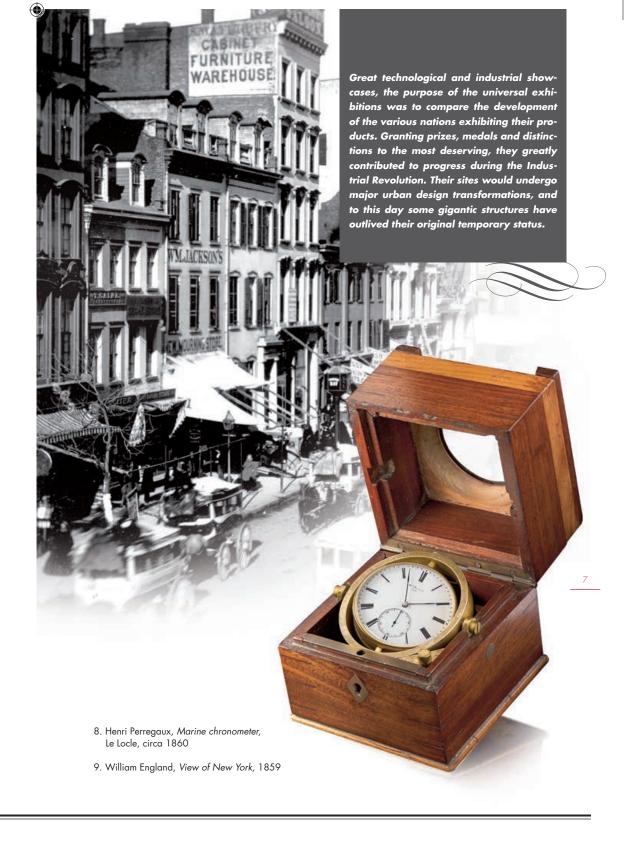
"Citizen Fs Perregaux, Merchant, originally from Corcelles & Cormondrèche, and resident of Le Locle, bound for North America, aged 19, height 5 feet 3 inches; hair dark chestnut, forehead bare, eyebrows chestnut, eyes grey, nose regular, mouth medium, beard chestnut, chin round, face oval, complexion pale, special sign –." \*

He would remain in New York for six years, representing the firm H. Perregaux & Co. Besides this office set up in the New World, the Perregaux brothers, continuing their father's work, also had an export centre in Calcutta, then the capital of British India.

\* Neuchâtel State Archives, C 561, no. 39, 22 January 1853



7. Business card of the firm H. Perregaux & Co., New York





Though the Perregaux brothers were among the biggest watchmaking merchants in the Homeland, i.e. Le Locle, the same applied to the Girard brothers in La Chaux-de-Fonds, which soon became known as the Watchmaking Metropolis.

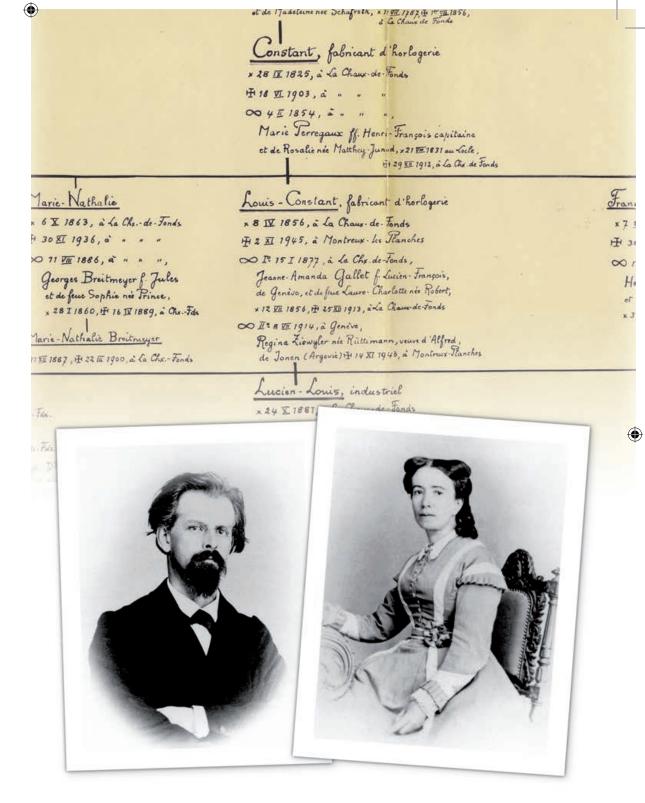
The career of Constant Girard, born in 1825, got started with an apprenticeship with a watchmaker of La Sagne, near La Chaux-de-Fonds. Initially in partnership, he worked under the collective name of "Calame-Robert & Girard" (1845), and then from 1852 under that of "Girard & Cie", alongside his elder brother Numa.

Two years later, Constant Girard married a young lady from Le Locle, twenty-two years old: Marie Perregaux, none other than the sister of François. Girard-Perregaux, the Firm that to this day bears the combined surnames of Constant and Marie, came into being in 1856. With its activity developing extremely quickly, it soon became one of the most powerful in the market.

This alliance was reinforced a few years later when Henri Perregaux joined the company, undertaking with the consent of his mother Rosalie the liquidation of his father's set-up. Constant Girard-Perregaux appointed his brother-in-law the Firm's special agent in the various States of North and South America, a mandate that would later extend to the West Indies. Henri set off for Buenos Aires in 1865, accompanied by his wife Cécile. The youngest of the Perregaux family, Jules, also committed himself to developing the family business across the Atlantic.

But what became of their brother François, who returned from the Americas in 1859?

- 10. Extract from the Girard family tree (1954)
- 11. Constant and Marie Girard-Perregaux







12. Girard-Perregaux, *Pendant watch*, La Chaux-de-Fonds, circa 1860

13. La Chaux-de-Fonds, view from the North, circa 1860

Tribute to the Firm's long tradition of watchmaking expertise, the Girard-Perregaux Museum is a stone's throw from the Manufacture, in a beautiful neoclassical style building. Inaugurated in 1999, it has a selection of old watches illustrating the Brand's history.

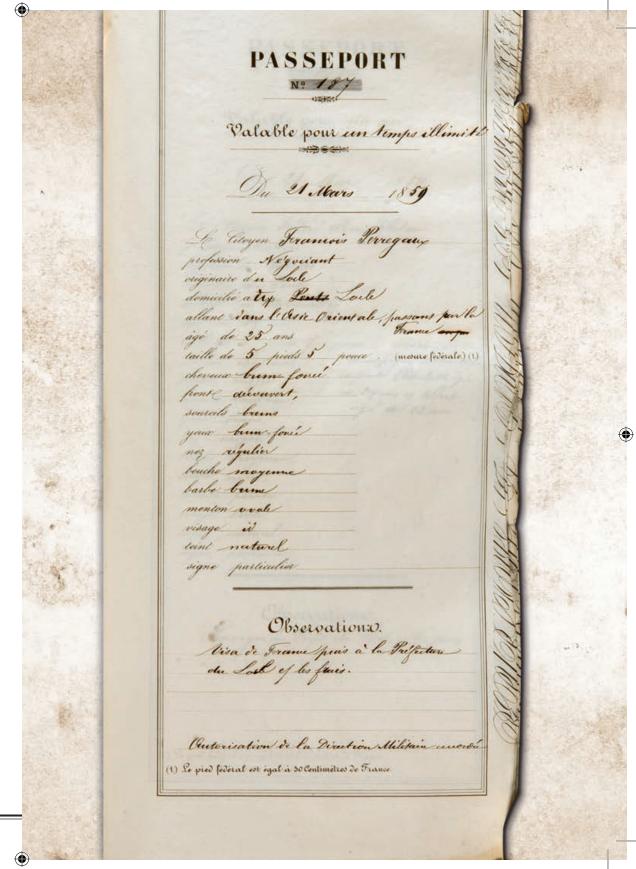


Altering mankind's relationship with space and time, the railway connecting Le Locle and La Chaux-de-Fonds, essential for the accelerated development of the watchmaking industry in the region, was inaugurated in 1857. Henri Perregaux was one of the first promoters of this new means of locomotion in the Neuchâtel Mountains.

One year after the construction of the railway bringing the two cities together, the industrial links between them were reinforced through the foundation of the Watchmaking Union. This counted among its members François Perregaux, Henri and their mother Rosalie, and his brotherin-law Constant Girard-Perregaux, without forgetting the latter's brother, Numa Girard.

The purpose of the association, which brought together watchmaking manufacturers from the sister cities, was to promote the interests of the Swiss watchmaking industry, particularly abroad, with the creation of export offices. Indeed, Swiss merchants, in order to sell their manufactured products, were forced to seek ever further for new markets. Neuchâtel watchmakers were not to be outdone, and some, in the early 19th century, ventured as far as China, under the protection of Western powers that had already opened offices there.

The Watchmaking Union very soon conceived the project of setting up an export office in Asia. Its gaze turned towards Japan, which had opened up to international trade a few years previously, in 1853, and which appeared to be a promising new market. The young company entrusted this important mission to two men: the primary agent would be Rodolphe Lindau, a man of letters originally from the Kingdom of Prussia, and the deputy agent, specialised in the watchmaking trade and recognised for his experience in this domain, François Perregaux. Barely back from New York, he would not stay long in his home town. It was now Spring of 1859.



# On 20 April 1859, François Perregaux left Le Locle for Marseille, where on the 28th, accompanied by Rodolphe Lindau, he boarded a steamship bound for Alexandria, via Malta.

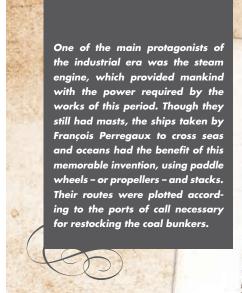
Until the mid-19th century, ships setting out from Europe for Asia had to sail round the African continent, passing via the Cape of Good Hope. The Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, would only open in 1869. The first pick was swung ten years previously, on 25 April 1859, i.e. a few days before Perregaux passed through Egypt; as the Le Locle watchmaker and his Prussian companion, passing up the Cape option, went for the quick solution and took the railway connecting Alexandria to Suez, via Cairo. Inaugurated at the end of the previous year, it enabled the isthmus to be crossed in around twelve hours.

At Suez, the two men boarded another steam ship and sailed down the Red Sea, passing through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to reach Aden, before undertaking the crossing of the Arabian Sea. From Bombay, they set off across the Indian Ocean, stopping at Galle, at the very South of the island of Ceylon, and then to the island of Pulau Pinang. Emerging from the Malacca Strait, they reached Singapore on 31 May, barely more than a month after their departure from the port of Marseille.

Lindau stayed there for six weeks, and then set off for the Empire of the Rising Sun, with the assignment of setting up an export office there. He was invited by the France's General Consul to Japan, and reached the city of Yeddo\* in his company. Perregaux meanwhile remained in Singapore, a genuine trade centre under British control, to look into establishing an office which he would manage. Setting up on Battery Road, he lodged at the *Hôtel de l'Espérance*.

\*Old name for Tokyo. The terms Yedo, Jeddo, Jedo or even Edo may be encountered.

- Extract from report of the Watchmaking Union Board of Directors for the assembly of 4 February 1860
- 16. Battery Road, Singapore, circa 1860



- 16

# III. COMPTOIR ASIATIQUE.

Notre rapport de février 1859 vous a déjà informés que, comme première mesure d'exécution du projet de fondation d'un comptoir asiatique, nous avions désigné deux agents chargés d'explorer diverses contrées de l'extrême Orient, et que notre choix s'était arrêté sur M. Rodolphe Lindau et M. François Perregaux, lesquels, à l'époque de notre assemblée générale, s'occupaient encore des préparatifs de leur mission. Ils se sont dès lors embarqués à Marseille le 28 avril, et le 54 avril, et le 54 avril et d'extrême d'exécution de la comme de la co

Après avoir séjourné six semaines dans cette ville avec so collègue, M. Lindan a non-





Soon appointed to take over from Rodolphe Lindau at the head of the Yokohama office, François Perregaux prepared for his voyage for the Japanese Archipelago by stepping up his administrative approaches. Indeed, since no trade and free establishment treaty had been signed between Switzerland and Japan, it was impossible for the Swiss trader to set up in this country. The next stage in François Perregaux's journey depended on the benevolence of the accredited Consuls and goodwill of the Japanese Government, with the Swiss needing to obtain exceptional protection of one of the foreign legations in place in Japan. Having been

resident for six years in New York and with the support of the United States Consul to Singapore, he sought to obtain in August 1860 the protection of the American Consul stationed in Yokohama. It was in vain. In the end, he was granted protection by France.

In October 1860, entrusting the Singapore office to the care of his compatriot Fritz Nicolet, our watchmaker set off across the sea once more, bound for Yokohama, where he was awaited by a certain Edouard Schnell.



It was the Swiss Pierre Joseph Rossier, born in 1829 in the small village of Grandsivaz, in the Canton of Fribourg, who in the late 1850s took the first stereographs of Japan. Hired by the big London firm Negretti & Zambra, this compatriot and contemporary of François Perregaux had cuttingedge equipment, and initiated the Japanese in the art of photography.

17. Pierre-Joseph Rossier, The Emperor's Temple, in Jeda, 1861



### **(**

When François Perregaux disembarked in Yokohama in 1860, Japan was experiencing a period of transition known as "Bakumatsu" (1853–1867), consisting of profound transformations caused by the transition from the feudal age or "Edo" to the modern era or

"Meiji", established in 1868. Following a first treaty signed with the United States in 1854, the archipelago was forced to open up to international trade and end its policy of isolationism. For Japan these were years of violent change, torn as it was between its desire to keep its self-sufficiency and traditions, and its desire to find out about Western culture and assimilate its industrial techniques.

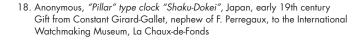
At this time, the measurement of time in this country was completely different from the Western system. There were two systems, one called equinoctial, used by astronomers, and the other called civil time, which was displayed by clocks used in Japanese society.

In summary, the civil time system took six periods of equal length from dusk to dawn, and six from dawn to dusk, but the length of these periods varied with the seasons. So clocks had

to be regularly adjusted, in fact every fortnight, or twenty-four times a year. Note that the Japanese counted "hours" backwards, with the highest number, 9, attributed to midday and midnight, and so on down to 4. Each period bore the name of an animal corresponding to a sign of the Zodiac (9 midnight was the period of the rat, for example).

Japanese clockmakers therefore had to build clocks taking into account these "variable hour lengths", which could go faster or slower over time. In most cases they used movements equipped with two foliots, one for the daytime, and the other for the night. Inertia blocks that could be moved along the arms of the foliots enabled speed regulation.

















This system was perfectly suited to a period when people got up and went to bed with the Sun, and when all activities were organised accordingly. The Imperial Palace or Castle of Edo, as well as shops, opened their doors at sunrise and closed them at nightfall. This system also set the meal times, as well as the opening times of bath houses.

In this context, we might ask what sort of commercial success François Perregaux could expect to gain with his Western timepieces... To ensure his survival in Japan, he would have no choice other than to diversify his business.

On 1st January 1873, Japan, now in the Meiji era, driven by the constraints of modernisation, and in particular the construction of the rail network, adopted the European time and calendar system. At a stroke, all Japanese clocks and timepieces became obsolete... Regular imports could begin.



Several Japanese clocks figure in the collections of the International Horological Museum in La Chauxde-Fonds. Four were donated to the institution by the nephew of François Perregaux, Constant Girard-Gallet, the eldest son of Constant and Marie Girard-Perregaux.



 Anonymous, Weight-driven clock "Yagura-Dokei", Japan, early 19th century Gift from Constant Girard-Gallet, nephew of F. Perregaux, to the International Watchmaking Museum, La Chaux-de-Fonds







### While the List of French Subjects resident at the Port of Kanagawa on 31 December 1861, drawn up by the British Consulate at Kanagawa, testifies that François Perregaux was established at this date on Japanese territory, the correspondence of the Swiss diplomat Aimé Humbert (1819-1900), included in the Neuchâtel State Archives, tells us that he was already sailing for Yokohama in mid-October 1860, and had arrived in December.

François Perregaux took his first steps in a rapidly changing country alongside a valuable guide, Edouard Schnell.

Originally from The Hague, and speaking his native language as well as German, French and Japanese, the young Dutchman arrived in Japan in 1858, and was hired by Rodolphe Lindau for the service of the Watchmaking Union in early 1860. His nationality – the Netherlands and Japan had had commercial links since as far back as 1609 - enabled him to arrange with the Japanese Government, in his own name but on behalf of the Union, the deeds necessary to obtain a land grant. This would be the site of a house and outbuildings (godowns, kitchen and stables): the Yokohama office.



But the mission of Perregaux and Schnell, manager and employee of the establishment, who very quickly became friends, was not easy, as their reports sent to the Watchmaking Union (1861) attest:

The sale of watches was very difficult. The Japanese did not use them; only a few Customs officers, who due to the dealings that they had with Europeans, had to know the time. But the difference that there was between the Japanese system and our way of reckoning time, the luxury that it was for a Japanese to buy an item costing 40 to 50 Itzibus, while all the clothes on their back cost 3 to 4 Itzibus, meant that watches could not be sold in big quantities, and it would be a long time yet before this article had the success that it enjoyed in China.

Musical items, watches, clocks, fancy items, jewellery etc. were never mass consumption goods: these articles were sold at very high prices, and as objects of curiosity rather than utility; as imports of these articles grew in number, they ceased to be objects of curiosity, and prices fell; soon selling them became nearly impossible.\*

23. Pierre-Joseph Rossier, Young Japanese women in winter kimonos, 1861





[...]





<sup>\*</sup> Neuchâtel State Archives, Aimé Humbert collection, volume 3, 25 February 1862

Under these conditions, the Asian office quickly proved to be a commercial failure. It was liquidated in July 1863, during the first Swiss diplomatic mission to Japan.

The Watchmaking Union did not survive it for long, dissolved in the Spring of 1865, with its banking affairs taken over by the Neuchâtel Discount Bank.

Released from their obligations to the Union, and firmly resolved to stay in the fascinating archipelago, Perregaux and Schnell decided to team up, and extend their activities.

In Yokohama, on 12 January 1864, they founded the company SCHNELL & PERREGAUX, importing and distributing European goods in Japan (General Commission and Import Merchants).

When Edouard Schnell took the decision to get involved in the conflict between the Emperor's troops and the supporters of the Shogun, this first company was dissolved one year later. The Dutchman set up in trading European arms, and went to the North of the country where civil war was raging.

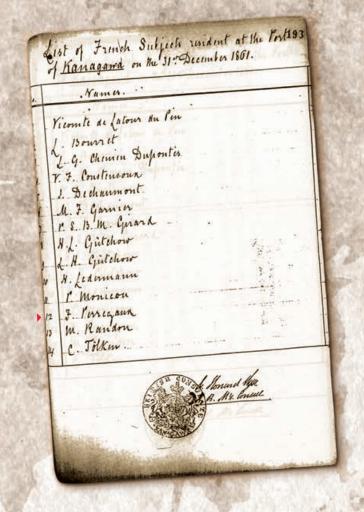
For François Perregaux, a pacifist, it was out of the question to take part in hostilities. He stayed in Yokohama, and that same year created his own company, *F. PERREGAUX & Co.*, horology – watches and clocks – and jewellery, imports, repairs and setting. He was the official agent of the Girard-Perregaux Firm, and its only representative in Japan.

24. List of French subjects resident in the Port of Kanagawa, 31 December 1861

25. Announcement of the "Schnell & Perregaux" partnership [The Japan Herald, 16 January 1864]

26. Announcement of the dissolution of "Schnell & Perregaux"

[The Japan Herald, 25 February 1865]



### NOTICE.

We have this day established ourselves at this port as General Commission and Import Merchants, under the style of Schnell & Perregaux.

E. SCHNELL. F. PERREGAUX. Yokohama, January 12th 1864.

### NOTICE.

The partnership hitherto existing between EDWARD SCHNELL and F. Perregaux, under the style of Schnell & Perregaux, is this day dissolved by mutual consent.

All outstanding accounts will be liquidated by F. Perregaux. EDWARD SCHNELL. F. PERREGAUX.

Yokohama, 1st January, 1865





On 6 February 1864 in the Choji temple in Edo, the friendship and trade treaty was finally signed between a small Swiss delegation and representatives of the Imperial Japanese Government, which would legalise the position of François Perregaux in Japan.

The man entrusted by the Federal Council with this delicate mission, who had worked for years for this historic moment, was the La Chaux-de-Fonds native Aimé Humbert (1819–1900), appointed for the occasion "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Confederation in Japan".

Achieved with Dutch support, this diplomatic success was also good business, as it would enable Swiss watchmakers to export their products to the Japanese market officially.

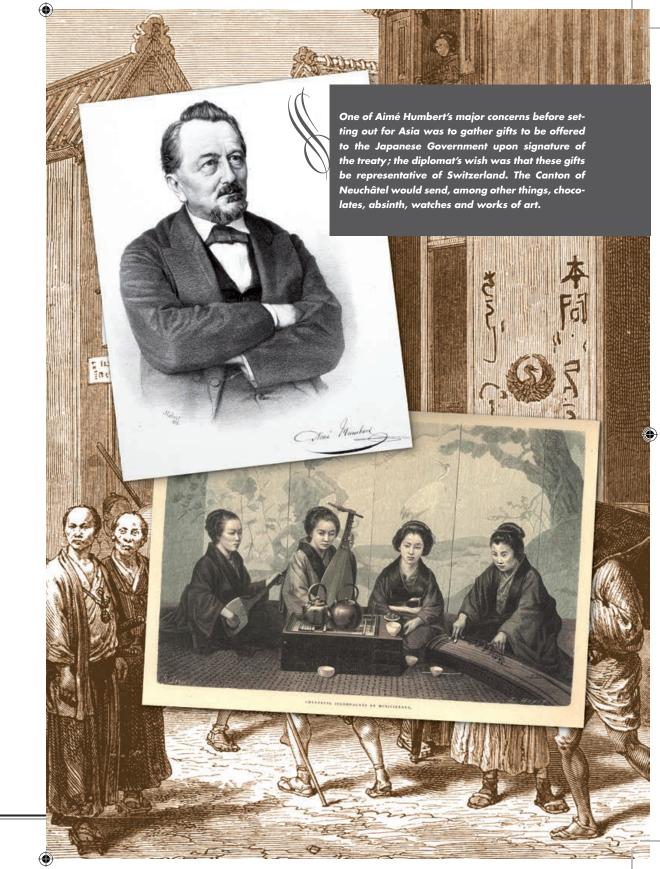
Arriving in the Land of the Rising Sun in April 1863, Aimé Humbert would have to wait nearly one year before the Japanese authorities consented to enter negotiations. He put these long months of waiting to good use to visit the country, immersing himself, making notes, collecting testimonies, drawings, stamps, photographs, etc. which would form the base material for the book he was planning to publish about Japan.

Upon returning to Switzerland, Humbert, bearing messages from François Perregaux, visited his family, in Le Locle and La Chaux-de-Fonds. The diplomat wrote to the watchmaker back in Japan, asking him to keep him up to date with affairs on the archipelago. He encouraged him to develop a trade in silkworm eggs, as well as Japanese teas. But above all, he asked him to gather any story, popular legend, children's tale or other song that might enrich his ongoing work. Humbert also sent Perregaux to photographers in Yokohama, so that he could select and send back the latest photographic material: the big result of which was Le Japon Illustré, which appeared in 1870, published in two volumes by Maison Hachette in Paris.

27. Aimé Humbert (1819-1900)

28. Singer accompanied by musicians, circa 1870

29. A bookshop in Yedo, circa 1870





# Lycumber.

Setting up in Yokohama the year after the opening of its port to international trade, François Perregaux was at the heart of the extraordinary metamorphosis that the place underwent in the second half of the 19th century, changing in some twenty years from its status as a fishing village to that of a modern city with Western style architecture. The transformation of Yokohama mirrored that of Japan, a Feudal State cut off from the world which evolved in the space of a few decades into a global industrial power. The city, whose commercial port had become the most important in the country, was built over the years on marshland drained by a number of canals. It comprised various districts, including the "Bluff", a residential area reserved for foreigners, the "Settlement", where the foreigners carried out their business activity, "Native Town", plots occupied by the Japanese themselves, not to forget "ChinaTown", where the Chinese gathered.

The plan drawn up for it by the French engineer Clipet in 1865 – a colour copy of which has been preserved in the Swiss Federal Archives in Berne – shows the location of the various legations, private properties, trading houses, customs houses, religious buildings, hospitals, etc. Annotations and added colours (doubtless by the hand of Rodolphe Lindau in 1866) confirm the presence of the Swiss François Perregaux at lots 136 and 138 of the "Settlement".\*

As for the "Bund", i.e. the docks, it housed the most prestigious structures, occupied by the big banks and companies, shipping companies, various stores and galleries, the Grand Hotel, clubs and some private residences.

\* Archives fédérales suisses, Berne, E 6 / volume 36, file 169

Public gardens, recreation areas and sports grounds were established, while restaurants, bars and theatres offered a wide choice of activities and entertainment to residents of the port.

Numerous clubs were set up such as The Swiss Rifle Association, founded by Swiss merchants prior to 1865, and which was chaired by François Perregaux. This association organised a big festival twice a year, reputed to be the finest of the city, in which representatives of all nations established in Yokohama took part. On that day, all visitors were invited to take part in the competition, just like members of the club, and substantial prizes were awarded to the best marksmen.

The foreigners based in Yokohama were primarily businessmen, diplomats and missionaries. In 1863, Aimé Humbert's writings tell us that the community of Western traders comprised 80 Britons, 70 Americans, 30 Dutch, 30 French, 16 Germans, 8 Portuguese and 8 Swiss.

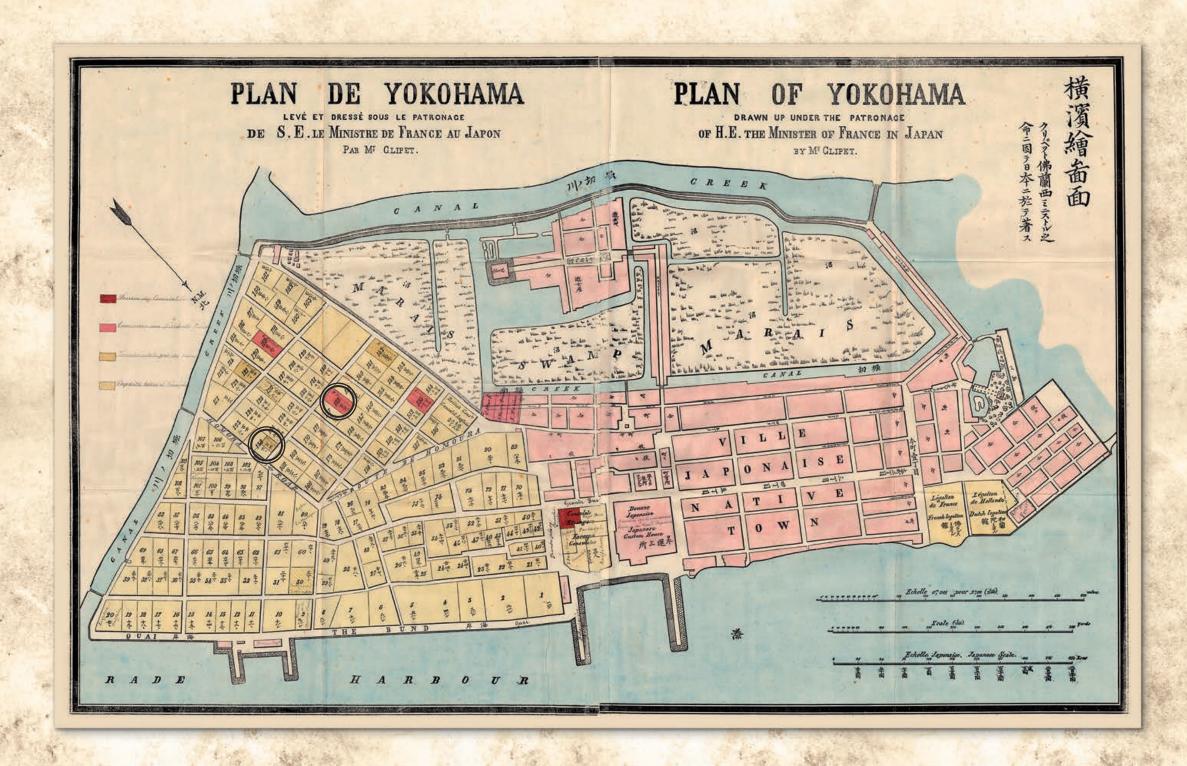
The life of the immigrants was punctuated by the movements of the ships in the harbour: arrivals/departures of nearest and dearest, outgoing/incoming merchandise, as well as letters and parcels, which represented the only link with the West. It was also punctuated by the daily publication of newspapers, including *L'Echo du Japon*, a political, commercial and literary newspaper, and Organ of French interests in the Far East, reflecting the life of the Francophone community.

- 30. Panorama of the town of Yokohama at the time when François Perregaux set up there
- 31. Following pages: map of Yokohama, circa 1866









Besides his compatriots, the close friends of François Perregaux were the diplomats of the foreign legations, but also personalities such as Joseph Heco, born Hikozo Hamada (1837–1897), active in diplomatic circles and the first Japanese to gain American citizenship, the Italian photographer Felice Beato (1834?–1907?), Charles Wirgman (1832–1891) the English journalist and caricaturist, not to forget his friend James Favre-Brandt (1841–1923), another Le Locle watchmaker, who arrived in Japan in 1863 with the diplomatic mission led by Aimé Humbert, and who would soon be joined by his brother Charles.

In spite of this precious circle of friends and the fascination that the Land of the Rising Sun held for the Swiss watchmaker, there was no respite to life in Yokohama. Fires and earthquakes regularly ravaged the rapidly expanding town. Long lasting in the memory, the fire of 1866 destroyed a large part of the town, causing serious damage to the business of François Perregaux, who was already experiencing difficulties in selling his watchmaking products.

In 1874, as reported by *The Far East* for April (Vol. 5, No. IV), he was victim of a robbery. In his absence, his home at the Bluff No. 168 was robbed of a barometer, a clock, books, various personal effects and a gold pocket watch bearing the name of its owner engraved inside the case.

Besides his watchmaking business, François Perregaux set up a carbonated drinks factory, which in the mid-1870s was "the only establishment in Japan making all the carbonated drinks using the latest recipes from the best firms in Paris and London"! Also offering various cordials, absinth and a wide range of wines, this firm founded in Yokohama in 1872, had an agent in Tokyo.

The Japan Directory reported the presence of the Le Locle watchmaker as a trader in Yedo (Tokyo) for the years 1872, 1873 and 1874. It was doubtless the construction of the railway connecting Yokohama to Tokyo that made up his mind to set up there for a while. The line was inaugurated in 1872, enabling the nearby city to be reached in around one hour. It formed both a commercial and social link between the two conurbations.

For both Yedo and Yokohama, this period of extreme change would be crucial. At the end of the 19th century, François Perregaux's adopted city was considered to be one of the most cosmopolitan in the world.



138, YOKOHAMA 138.

LE seul Établissement au Japon fabriquant toutes les boissons gazeuses d'après les dernières recettes des meilleures maisons de Paris et de Londres.

### EAU DE SELTZ—SODA—TONIC, Salsepareille, Limonade,

Sirops de toutes descriptions, Absinthe Elise Gilliard en Caisses,

F. PERREGAUX & Co.,

Propriétaires.

Yokohama, 29 Avril 1875.

Among the Swiss specialities imported and introduced by François Perregaux to his new Japanese friends was absinth, a local product from Neuchâtel. Made primarily in Couvet, a locality neighbouring Le Locle, this aperitif with supposedly therapeutic virtues was nicknamed the "Green Fairy". Later accused of driving its devoted consumers mad, it would be prohibited from 1910 and only rehabilitated in 2005.



32. Advert for Sparkling drinks factory (L'Echo du Japon, 29 April 1875)



33. The Swiss Rifle Association, Yokohama (*The Far East*, 1st June 1871)





### Demonstrating exceptional gifts for watchmaking, Constant Girard-Perregaux devoted himself to designing and making various escapement systems, in particular the Tourbillon escapement. The quality and beauty of his creations were rewarded by a number of prizes and distinctions at national and international exhibitions and competitions. His chronometers obtained similarly remarkable results from the Neuchâtel Observatory.

It was at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1867 that Constant Girard-Perregaux first presented a watch of a particular calibre, featuring straight bridges with pointed ends, a piece to which he would make constant refinements.

A passionate and generous man, he also took an active part in the social, political and economic life of La Chaux-de-Fonds, his home town, for which he was among the authorities.

In the early 1880s, he teamed up with his son Constant Girard-Gallet. They had their culmination in 1889, when their famous Tourbillon with three gold Bridges, today the icon of Girard-Perregaux, won a gold medal at the Paris Universal Exhibition.

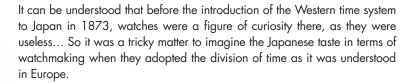


34. Girard-Perregaux, Tourbillon with three nickel-plated Bridges, La Chaux-de-Fonds, circa 1860

- 35. Girard-Perregaux, Tourbillon with three gold Bridges "La Esmeralda", La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1889
- 36. Girard-Perregaux, Tourbillon chronometer produced for Latin America, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1878







While not being able to say for sure, it appears that the aspect of curiosity persisted, since watches with a glass case-back revealing the movement were the public's first favourites. In addition, movements were often adorned with engravings, making the watch more precious. For the case, gold was not a priority, silver was preferred.

Bit by bit, the Japanese public adopted Lepine type pocket watches (without a cover on the dial) but with a metal or hunter case-back (with cover). Subsequently, François Perregaux was able to import more modern watches, while adapting them to local tastes.

Among these pieces, four are now the property of Mr. Nobuyoshi Okawa, based in Osaka. Following the gift from his grandmother of a Swiss-made pocket watch dating from the 1870s, he started collecting timepieces from this period. This was the start of a genuine passion that has led him to be a devoted visitor, for over thirty-five years, to watch retailers, antiques dealers, repairers and restorers, flea markets and auctions.

Nobuyoshi Okawa dedicates a particular interest in François Perregaux, whose extraordinary spirit of adventure and human values he admires. Moved by this pioneer who, exercising his patience and ingenuity, first established the Japanese watch market, he wants to restore him to his rightful place, and searches in particular for the pieces that he imported. They are difficult to find, but that does not discourage this collector who, by virtue of perseverance, has managed to acquire four watches created by Girard-Perregaux for the Japanese market in the 1870s.

### Lepine watch, signed "Girard-Perregaux", circa 1865

Silver case splined around the circumference Diameter: 39.60 mm White enamel dial Double glazed case-back

Movement: 15½", hand engraved and mercury gilt. Lever escapement with long crane's head shaped balancing rod, bimetal self-compensating balance. Functions: hour, minute, small seconds.





### Lepine watch, signed "Girard-Perregaux", circa 1875

Silver case splined around the circumference, guilloché on the case-back

Diameter: 43.80 mm White enamel dial

Movement: 17%''', hand engraved and mercury gilt. Lever escapement with long balancing rod, bimetal self-compensating balance.

Functions: hour, minute, small seconds.

### Lepine watch, signed "Girard-Perregaux", circa 1875

Guilloché silver case Diameter: 41.80 mm White enamel dial

Movement: 16¾''', mercury gilt. Lever escapement, bimetal self-compensating balance. Functions: hour, minute, small seconds.







Double-sided Lepine watch, signed "Girard-Perregaux Chaux-de-Fonds", circa 1877

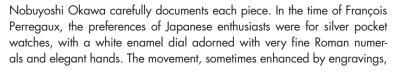
Guilloché yellow gold

Diameter: 50.90 mm Two white enamel dials

Movement: 19"'. rhodium-plated. Lever escapement, Brequet hairspring, bimetal self-compensating Functions: hour, minute, small seconds, triple date

(day of the week, date, month) and moon phase indicator.





was protected by a glass revealing the impressive mechanism. No inscriptions were made inside the cover or the case, which was preferred with a flat back, since the slightest mark was considered to be an insult to the object.





### Adrertisements.

## F. PERREGAUX & CO.,

IMPORTERS OF

WATCHES AND CLOCKS OF ALL KINDS.

### WATCHMAKERS & JEWELLERS.

WATCHES, CLOCKS, AND JEWELLERY REPAIRED AND ADJUSTED. CLOCKS WOUND UP AND KEPT IN ORDER BY THE YEAR.

### Agents for GIRARD PERREGAUX,

MANUFACTURER OF WATCHES,

CHAUX DE FONDS, SWITZERLAND,

Prize Medallist at the Paris Exhibition, 1867: holder of Prizes at the Neuchatel Observatory, 1874 and 1875, and from Chill, 1875.

37. Advertisement, F. Perregaux agent for Girard-Perregaux (*The Japan Gazette, Hong List and Directory,* 1st January 1877)

The accelerated development of industry on the Japanese archipelago and the construction of a railway network, topped in early 1873 by the adoption of the Western time measurement system, were all transformations that altered the status of the pocket watch. From being a luxury item reserved for an elite, it became an essential instrument for modern life, and was soon accessible to the majority. The number of imports grew progressively, but François Perregaux, whose Watchmakers and Jewellers business, favourably located for trade at No. 71 Main Street promised a bright future, would only live in this new era for a short time. After suffering an apoplectic attack on 10 December 1877, he succumbed eight days later, i.e. on the 18th.

38. Caricature of François Perregaux, foreground right-hand side (*The Japan Punch*, June 1875)

Société Suisse de Tir Ju du 6 Juin 1875. Among the outstanding figures of the Francophone community in Yokohama, and one of its longest standing residents, François Perregaux was sketched by the Englishman Charles Wirgman. From 1862, and for twenty-five years, this famous charicaturist related, in his satirical publication "The Japan Punch", the colourful life of the Foreign Settlement.



The obituary published by L'Echo du Japon the same day presented the Swiss watchmaker as "one of the longest standing residents of Japan", adding: "The death of Mr. Perregaux leaves a sense of great sorrow in the colony, where he enjoyed the esteem and affection of all." L'Edition de la Malle of 31 December confirmed that he was "as loved as he was esteemed by all who knew him, that is to say the entire community".

### YOKOHAMA MARDI, 18 DÉCEMBRE 1877.

Mr. F. Perregaux, l'un des plus anciens résidents du Japon, a succombé ce malin aux euites d'une attaque d'apoplexie dont il avait été atteint il y a huit jours. La mort de Mr. Perregaux laisse de vifs

regrets dans la colonie où il jouissait de l'estime et de l'affection de tout le monde. Ses funérailles auront lieu demain Mercredi 19 courant à coze heures du matin. Le convoi partira de la maison mortuaire No. 138, l'okohama.

Les amis et connaissances du défunt qui, par oubli, n'auraient point reçu de lettre de faire part, sont priés de considérer le présent avis comme une invitation.

39. Obituary of François Perregaux (*L'Echo du Japon*, 18 December 1877)



47



On 22 December, L'Echo du Japon published a notice inviting creditors and debtors of the trader to report to the executor of his will, his friend James Favre-Brandt.

Two auctions of his property (land, buildings, furniture, objects, etc.) were held on 28 March and 6 April 1878 (L'Echo du Japon, 15 and 23 March, 2 April 1878).

The second sale, offering the property of lot No. 138 of the Swamp, and the equipment and stock of the Carbonated Drinks Factory, would not be held. It was refused by his heirs, as reported by L'Echo du Japon of 16 April 1878.

Succession de feu F. PERREGAUX.

Mr. F. A. COPE.

VENDRA AUX

### ENCHÈRES PUBLIQUES Le Samedi, 6 Avril

à 10 heures du matin. SUR LES LIEUX.

La jolie Propriété

### DU LOT Nº 138, SWAMP,

Contenant environ 461 Tsoubos, avec le BUNGALOW, les GODOWNS, et les dépendances qui s'y trouvent ainsi que tout

Le Matériel, le stock de Marchandises les aménagements et la clientèle, DE LA

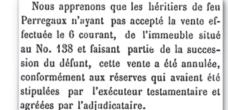
### **AERATED WATER** MANUFACTORY

Comprenant: Machine à vapeur, Chaudières, Filtres, Fontaines à Sirops, Syphons, en-viron 15,000 bouteilles pour eau gazeuse.

UNE VOITURE EN TRÈS-BON ÉTAT. Pour d'autres détails s'adresser à l'en-

Yokohama, 1er Avril 1878.

40. Report on public auctions (L'Echo du Japon, 2 April 1878)



41. Refusal of the last sale by the heirs of François Perreagux (L'Echo du Japon, 16 April 1878)





But who were the heirs of François Perregaux? His family in Switzerland? Descendants in Japan? We still do not know.

The watchmaker was laid to rest in The Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery. The epitaph on the monument, carefully maintained by an anonymous hand, states: "TO THE MEMORY OF FCOIS PERREGAUX, BORN LE LOCLE, CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND, 24 JUNE 1834, PASSED AWAY IN YOKOHAMA ON 18 DECEMBER 1877, HIS FRIENDS."

On the same plot is a small tomb in the form of a truncated marble column, traditionally dedicated to a child dying at an early age. On it the inscription reads "ELIZA DIED 9 JULY 1864".

Did François Perregaux have a daughter? Was he married? We do not have any proof at present.





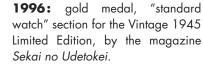
### François Perregaux blazed the trail: even after his death, the bond with Japan remained rooted in Girard-Perregaux's activity. The Firm soon established links with Tenshodo, a Japanese import firm created in 1879 in Tokyo. In the Land of the Rising Sun, Tenshodo became an outstanding intermediary for Girard-Perregaux's expertise. A long-lasting and high quality relationship was formed between the two companies. In 1922, at the "Peace Commemorative" exhibition in Tokyo, Tenshodo received on Girard-Perregaux's behalf a prize awarded by His Imperial Highness Kotohito, Prince Kan'in (1865-1945).

The integration of Girard-Perregaux into the Japanese watchmaking landscape has continued down the years. The links gradually woven by François Perregaux, and then by the Brand's new representatives, are solid and enduring. Since 1992, the Sowind watchmaking group has managed Girard-Perregaux's distribution in Japan. This representation has been fully provided by a group subsidiary since 1998. Thanks to a network of high quality retailers, Girard-Perregaux watches are available throughout Japan. The subsidiary provides a personalised and local service to its customers long after they have purchased their timepieces. Indeed, it includes a Customer Service, whose gualified watchmakers are dedicated to servicing and repairing watches bought in Japan. The attention dedicated to each Girard-Perregaux model in its design is maintained well beyond this stage, to safeguard the service life.



43. Prize awarded to the Tenshodo firm by Prince Kotohito (1922)

The exclusivity of the collections and the care taken with every detail have led to crowning success. Girard-Perregaux timepieces have received several testimonials of recognition from Japanese watchmaking institutions and magazines, which attests to the widespread interest in the creations of the Swiss firm.



**2000:** bronze medal, "mechanical watch" section for the Scuderia Ferrari Chronograph with jumping seconds, by the magazine *Sekai no Udetokei*.

**2004:** ladies' watch grand prix for the Cat's Eye Power Reserve, in the Tokyo Grand Prix organised by the magazine *Sekai no Udetokei*.

**2007:** technical watch grand prix for the Vintage 1945 Jackpot Tourbillon, by the magazine *Sekai no Udetokei*.

**2008:** watch of the year prize, "standard" category, for the Girard-Perregaux 1966 Full Calendar, by the magazine *Sekai no Udetokei*.

Today, prestigious collections such as ww.tc, Girard-Perregaux 1966, Vintage 1945 or the ladies' Cat's Eye continue to be a brilliant representation of the Brand's expertise in Japan, 150 years after the arrival of François Perregaux in this country.

GIRARD-PERREGAUX 1966 Full Calendar







Switzerland.

1853 Set off for New York, United States, where I

1834

Set off for New York, United States, where he would stay for six years, representing the Firm H. Perregaux & Co.

On 25 June, birth of François Perregaux in Le Locle,

854 Signature of a treaty between the United States and Japan, marking the opening up of Japan to international trade.

**1856** Foundation of the Firm Girard-Perregaux, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland.

Return of François Perregaux to Le Locle.
Assigned by the Watchmaking Union, he set off for Asia.
Opening of the port of Yokohama to international trade.

18591860 Resident in Singapore.

**1860** In October, François Perregaux set off for Japan, setting up there in December.

1864
12 January, foundation with Edouard Schnell of the company Schnell & Perregaux, Yokohama.
6 February, signature in Edo of the friendship and trade treaty between Switzerland and Japan.

1865 1st January, dissolution of the company Schnell & Perregaux. Foundation of F. Perregaux & Co., Yokohama.



44. François Perregaux











1867	François Perregaux was mentioned in The Japan Directory
	1867 as "Acting Chancellor of the Swiss Consulate",
	and "Chancellor" for the years 1868 and 1869.

- **1871** Chairman of The Swiss Rifle Association, Yokohama.
- 1872 Diversification of his business, with the creation of a carbonated drinks factory, again in Yokohama.
- **1873** Adoption of Western time by Japan.
- 1877 18 December, death of François Perregaux in Yokohama.
   He was laid to rest in The Yokohama Foreign
   General Cemetery.
- 1889 Girard-Perregaux won a gold medal at the Paris Universal Exhibition for its Tourbillon with three gold Bridges pocket watch.
- 1922 During the "Peace Commemorative" exhibition in Tokyo, the Japanese import firm Tenshodo was awarded a prize for Girard-Perregaux by His Imperial Highness Prince Kotohito.
- 1992 The Sowind watchmaking group took on the management of Girard-Perregaux's distribution in Japan.



45. Figurine of a woman, Japan, second half of the 19th century
Former collection of Florian and Lucien Landry, brothers-in-law of F. Perregaux















- François Perregaux and Hanzo, his friend and assistant Girard-Perregaux Archives
- Charles-Samuel Girardet, Neuchâtel interior, 1819 (engraving)
   Private collection
- La Chaux-de-Fonds, rue des Juifs, circa 1840 (plate taken from the "Album neuchâtelois" of H. Nicolet) Musée d'histoire La Chaux-de-Fonds
- 4. Henri-François Perregaux (1797–1847), father of François Perregaux Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 5. Extract from the Perregaux family tree (1954) Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 6. Le Locle, view from the East, circa 1860 (engraving of F. Burkhard)
  Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 7. Business card of the firm H. Perregaux & Co., New York Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 8. Henri Perregaux, Marine chronometer, Le Locle, circa 1860 Villa Marguerite Collection, Girard-Perregaux Museum
- 9. William England, View of New York, 1859 Hulton Collection Archive
- 10. Extract from the Girard family tree (1954) Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 11. Constant and Marie Girard-Perregaux Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 12. Girard-Perregaux, Pendant watch, La Chaux-de-Fonds, circa 1860 Villa Marguerite Collection, Girard-Perregaux Museum
- La Chaux-de-Fonds, view from the North, circa 1860 (lithography of J. Devicque)
   Musée d'histoire La Chaux-de-Fonds
- François Perregaux's passport for Asia Archives de l'Etat de Neuchâtel, C 567 Number 187, March 21, 1859

- 15. Excerpt of a connection of the advice of the administration of the Watchmaking Union (taken from "Rapports du Conseil d'administration et de la Commission de surveillance de l'Union Horlogère à l'assemblée générale des actionnaires du 4 février 1860", Imprimerie Georges Bridel, Lausanne, 1860) Archives de l'Etat de Neuchâtel, Fonds Brochures
- Battery Road, Singapore, circa 1860 (photography excerpt from the "Album Wilhelm Heinrich Diethelm") Diethelm Keller Holding Ltd., Zürich
- Pierre-Joseph Rossier, The Emperor's Temple, in Jeda, 1861 (seen stereoscopically taken from: Negretti & Zambra, "Views in Japan", Number 64, Series 1) Old Japan Picture Library
- 18. Anonymous, "Pillar" type clock "Shaku-Dokei", Japan, early 19th century International Museum of Watch Making Collection, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Inv. IV-111
- 19. Japanese clockmaker crafting a clock, early 19th century (excerpt from "RYAKUGA SHOKUNIN TSUKUSHI", 1824)
- 20. Traditional Japanese clock dial
- 21. Anonymous, Weight-driven clock "Yagura-Dokei", Japan, early 19th century International Museum of Watch Making Collection, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Inv. IV-110
- 22. François Perregaux
  Piquilloud-Gardet Collection
- Pierre-Joseph Rossier, Young Japanese women in winter kimonos, 1861 (seen stereoscopically taken from: Negretti & Zambra, "Views in Japan", Number 79, Series 1)
   Old Japan Picture Library
- 24. List of French subjects resident in the Port of Kanagawa, 31 December 1861, established by the "British Consulate Kanagawa"
- 25. Announcement of the "Schnell & Perregaux" partnership (The Japan Herald, No. 99, January 16th, 1864) Yokohama Archives of History
- 26. Announcement of the dissolution of "Schnell & Perregaux" (The Japan Herald, No. 157, February 25th, 1865) Yokohama Archives of History







- 27. Aimé Humbert (1819–1900) (engraving of Hébert, 1875) Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Neuchâtel
- 28. Singer accompanied by musicians (drawing of A. de Neuville based off a photograph, taken from: Aimé Humbert, "Le Japon Illustré", Librairie de L. Hachette et Cie, Paris, 1870, Volume Two, page 53)
- A bookshop in Yedo (drawing of L. Crépon based off of japanese engravings, taken from: Aimé Humbert, "Le Japon Illustré", Librairie de L. Hachette et Cie, Paris, 1870, Volume Two, page 5)
- 30. On the left, Yokohama Harbour and part of the French district; on the right, the Swamp and the Japanese city of Yokohama; snapshots attributed to Felice Beato, around 1863.

  Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel, Fonds Aimé Humbert, Ch.III B-4 et B-5. Reproduction: Alain Germond
- 31. Map of Yokohama, circa 1866 Archives fédérales suisses, Berne, E 6 / volume 36, file 169
- 32. Advert for Sparkling drinks factory (L'Echo du Japon, April 29, 1875)
- 33. The Swiss Rifle Association, Yokohama (The Far East, June 1st, 1871, Vol. II, No. 1) Yokohama Archives of History
- 34. Girard-Perregaux, Tourbillon with three nickel-plated Bridges, La Chaux-de-Fonds, circa 1860 Villa Marguerite Collection, Girard-Perregaux Museum
- 35. Girard-Perregaux, Tourbillon with three gold Bridges "La Esmeralda", La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1889 Villa Marguerite Collection, Girard-Perregaux Museum
- Girard-Perregaux, Tourbillon chronometer produced for Latin America, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1878
   Villa Marguerite Collection, Girard-Perregaux Museum

- 37. Advertisement, F. Perregaux agent for Girard-Perregaux (*The Japan Gazette, Hong List and Directory,* January 1, 1877)
- 38. Caricature of François Perregaux, foreground right-hand side (*The Japan Punch*, June 1875)
- 39. Obituary of François Perregaux (L'Echo du Japon, December 18, 1877)
- 40. Report on public auctions (L'Echo du Japon, April 2, 1878)
- 41. Refusal of the last sale by the heirs of François Perregaux (L'Echo du Japon, 16 avril 1878)
- 42. François Perregaux's tomb in the Foreign General Cemetery, Yokohama (2009) Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 43. Prize awarded to the Tenshodo firm by Prince Kotohito (1922)

  Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 44. François Perregaux Girard-Perregaux Archives
- 45. Figurine of a woman, Japan, second half of the 19th century Warehouse of the Musée d'histoire naturelle, La Chaux-de-Fonds – Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel, Inv. K. 48. Photo: Alain Germond







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Jean-Pierre Jelmini Antoine Simonin

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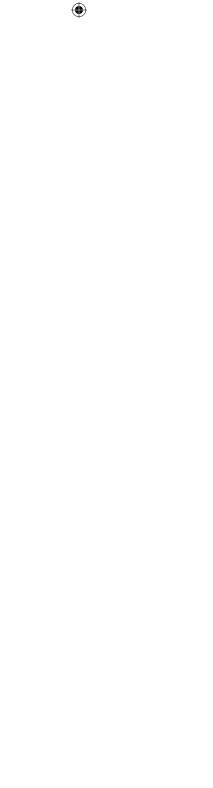




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