
IWC INGENIEUR SL “JUMBO” REFERENCE 1832

In the 1970s, Geneva watch designer Gérald Genta gave the Ingenieur from IWC Schaffhausen an entirely new visual identity. With its strong aesthetic codes, the Ingenieur SL ranks among his most important creations from this era. To this day, the Reference 1832 perfectly embodies Genta's vision of a robust yet elegant steel sports watch.

The 1950s were a time of change and departure. New devices simplified household chores, and the belief in technical progress was almost limitless. Technical Director Albert Pellaton had just completed the development of IWC Schaffhausen's first in-house automatic movement. Its remarkably efficient winding mechanism used even the slightest rotations of the oscillating weight in both directions to wind the mainspring.

During this eventful period, IWC launched the Ingenieur, its first anti-magnetic wristwatch for civilian use. It was specially developed for professionals exposed to strong magnetic fields in their daily work, such as engineers, technicians, chemists, pilots, or doctors. A soft iron inner case effectively protected the movement against magnetic fields. Like a Faraday cage, it guides the magnetism around the movement and prevents the sensitive components inside from becoming magnetised and affecting the watch's accuracy. IWC had developed this technology a few years earlier for the Pilot's Watch Mark 11.

The first Ingenieur, Reference 666, was launched in 1955 with a modest, round case. IWC continued this rather inconspicuous design in 1967 with the second generation, Reference 866. By the end of the 1960s, however, the idea of developing a “new, heavy Ingenieur Steel model” was already circulating among IWC's management. Minutes of meetings indicate that IWC launched the project on 1st August 1969.

The new Ingenieur was to become even more robust by integrating a shock protection system. But there was also a desire for a new case to further emphasise the watch's technical character. The first prototypes were produced and tested in 1970 and 1971. However, they did not meet the manufacturer's exacting quality standards, failing the rigorous impact tests.

IWC subsequently went in search of an external designer. Gérald Genta from Geneva was a freelance watch designer at the time and no stranger to the company. He had already created a steel chronograph for the Schaffhausen-based manufacturer in 1967, but this project was never realised. Finally, IWC commissioned Gérald Genta with the creation of the new Ingenieur. The designer delivered the result of his work in 1974. His sketches show a striking watch with an integrated steel bracelet and a structured dial. Its most important design feature, however, was the screw-on bezel with five recesses.

At that time, the Swiss watch industry faced pressure on several fronts. Cheap quartz watches from the Far East were flooding the market. But far more severe was the fact that the dollar exchange rate plummeted, and, at the same time, the price of gold climbed to ever-new heights. IWC's product portfolio, which at the time consisted mainly of gold watches, suddenly increased in price by a factor of three to five. Hannes Pantli, the marketing and sales

manager at the time, decided to significantly expand the brand's offering in stainless steel. He developed IWC's commonly named SL collection, comprising different luxury steel sports watches.

Gérald Genta's Ingenieur SL, Reference 1832, became the talking piece of the SL collection and was launched in 1976 for the then steep price of 2000 Swiss francs. Due to its size of 40 millimetres, the watch was soon nicknamed "Jumbo." The automatic calibre 8541 was mounted on rubber buffers and thus optimally protected from shocks and impacts. The soft iron inner case effectively shielded the movement from magnetic fields of up to 80,000 A/m.

In the following years, the Ingenieur SL was also issued in steel-gold or gold. IWC also produced several versions with quartz movements. However, despite its innovative design language, the model did not enjoy commercial success. The Ingenieur SL felt large and heavy, almost bulky, on the wrist. Since clients at that

time mostly demanded flat quartz watches, little more than 1000 pieces were sold between 1976 and 1983. It was not until the 1990s that collectors became aware of the "Jumbo." Today, it is one of the most sought-after watches from IWC's history.

The fact that Gérald Genta created the Ingenieur SL at the peak of his creative period in the 1970s is historically significant. Between 1972 and 1976, the designer produced several steel sports watches, thereby establishing an entirely new product category in the Swiss watch industry. For the first time, watches made of stainless steel were being sold at such high prices.

With its strong aesthetic codes, such as the screw-on bezel with its five recesses, the dial with a unique pattern and the integrated H-link bracelet, the Ingenieur SL reflects essential elements of Gérald Genta's artistic signature. It is one of the designer's most important creations and perfectly embodies his vision of a robust yet elegant steel sports watch.

IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

IWC Schaffhausen is a leading Swiss luxury watch manufacturer based in Schaffhausen in the north-eastern part of Switzerland. With collections like the Portugieser and the Pilot's Watches, the brand covers the whole spectrum from elegant to sports watches. Founded in 1868 by the American watchmaker and engineer Florentine Ariosto Jones, IWC is known for its unique engineering approach to watchmaking, combining the best of human craftsmanship and creativity with cutting-edge technology and processes.

Over its more than 150-year history, IWC has earned a reputation for creating professional instrument watches and functional complications, especially chronographs and calendars, which are ingenious, robust, and easy for customers to use. A pioneer in the use of titanium and ceramics, IWC today specialises in highly engineered watch cases manufactured from advanced materials, such as coloured ceramics, Ceratanium®, and titanium aluminide.

A leader in sustainable luxury watchmaking, IWC sources materials responsibly and takes action to minimise its impact on the environment. Along the pillars of transparency, circularity, and responsibility, the brand crafts timepieces built to last for generations and continuously improves every element of how it manufactures, distributes, and services its products in the most responsible way. IWC also partners with organisations that work globally to support children and young people.

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