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Subject: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial

Posted by [JackW](#) on Mon, 14 Dec 2015 02:26:53 GMT

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These watches were likely what was later just simply marked with the 'Pan American' stamp on the case back. Otherwise there is not a discernible difference between these plain backs and Pan Ams. Case back is otherwise correctly hallmarked for Gruen. Dates to early 1945 on serial numbers from the movement.

So... Early Pan American styled watch in chromed basemetal bezel with stainless steel (Guildite) back.

Movement has been overhauled, including restaffing the balance, and a new white alloy mainspring. Runs with good amplitude and low error.

Dial shows some minor loss on the details in the seconds track and the hands show signs of exposure to moisture. To be upfront the movement was pretty rusty but cleaned up well and what couldn't be cleaned was replaced. Specifically the setting bits and the ratchet wheel.

\$200 + shipping.

More pictures on request.

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### File Attachments

1) [Pan Am\\_dialside.jpg](#), downloaded 3844 times

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [Gary](#) on Mon, 14 Dec 2015 02:33:30 GMT  
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\$\$\$? or are you asking for an offer?

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [JackW](#) on Mon, 14 Dec 2015 03:03:13 GMT  
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Fixed the lack of price.

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [Thojil](#) on Fri, 18 Dec 2015 19:43:05 GMT  
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JackW wrote on Mon, 14 December 2015 03:26 These watches were likely what was later just simply marked with the 'Pan American' stamp on the case back. Otherwise there is not a discernible difference between these plain backs and Pan Ams.

My experience is that there is a critical difference between the Gruen only and Pan American signed ones. I found this when trying to replace a bad case of a Pan America signed watch. These cases are usually strongly corroded and I bought a good non Pan American case as a replacement. Unfortunately my joy was short lived when it arrived and found there is a 3.5mm difference in the thread diameter of the case back.

Initially I thought that I was just unlucky, but over time I have measured 3 Gruen only signed case backs and 4 Gruen Pan American case backs and found the same results. Why this difference I dunno. Maybe Gruen wanted to avoid exactly what I tried to do...

So be careful, you can't swap the case backs!!

## File Attachments

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1) [Img\\_3721b.jpg](#), downloaded 3582 times



2) [Img\\_3723b.jpg](#), downloaded 3578 times



3) [Img\\_3724b.jpg](#), downloaded 3710 times



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Ahhhh, very cool bit of information!!! I had no idea, and many thanks for that info!

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [JackW](#) on Sat, 19 Dec 2015 16:42:12 GMT

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Thojil,

I remember you posting on this one some time ago. However, I do have an all stainless case for what I think is a VT Knox, case serial is 1068426. The diameter on the threads is 28.05. I think this watch is about 1943/44; it has a 411ss movement in it but fit a 421ss just as easily (there is a ring around the movement in addition to the normal spring retaining ring) and all stainless suggests prior to the 1944 loss of access to German made stainless.

The back on the one for sale is not stamped 'Pan American', even though it has what I'd call a typical Pan Am dial. Considering the condition of the watch as I got it, I don't think there was any swapping going on in the past. Case serial is 882852 and the thread diameter is 28.40 mm on my calipers.

I don't recall as to how the diameters match up with the Pan Am verses the non-Pan Am.

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [MonKee](#) on Thu, 21 Jan 2016 17:32:10 GMT

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I wish I knew more about Metallurgy but I am beyond ignorant on the subject. Given this I have to ask that since the majority of these that were not marked Pan Am were Stainless Steel cases and the ones marked Pan Am were some metal that was then plated is it possible the the shrinkage factor between the two would cause the need for this thread adjustment?

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [Thojil](#) on Fri, 22 Jan 2016 18:14:56 GMT

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Not really as the difference is in the stainless case back as well.

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Subject: Re: Fully restored all-Swiss watch with 24-hour dial  
Posted by [JackW](#) on Sat, 23 Jan 2016 03:07:49 GMT

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No the only way to account for the difference in the thread size and diameter is that they were done that way on purpose. Just as Thojil supposes. Threads are cut after the cases were milled but before the plating on those that are base-metal bezels. They were not cast with the threads in place.

Anyway... This watch is on hold until I get the "studio" back in order... should there be an offer for its purchase. I'll post a picture of the current state of the studio on the "incoming" thread.

I'm still of the opinion that the dial was part of the "pre-Pan Am's that were being sold with all the look and feel of the ones that just a few months later were sold AS Pan Ams. You look at the old adverts from the time, I don't think it is a stretch that Gruen was testing the field with these "nearly-but-not-quite" Pan Americans. Monty er...I mean MonKey once shared a write up of case serial numbers for the 24-houred dialed watches that were sold between 1943 and 1948 that were marked and not marked Pan Am. This one falls into that range easily. One can argue what is the defining characteristic of a Pan Am: The dial or the mark on the caseback. If one remembers the Pan Am series in the Wadsworth and Star cased ones, then it should be the dial and how it fits into the overall scheme of Gruen's marketing. This above watch fits into the time period where they were teasing the public, while still enjoying nearly full production out of Switzerland, despite loosing one shipment and the reduction in supply of stainless steel in Switzerland. There was a war and an embargo, after all....

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