Subject: Quadron Import 220
Posted by Thojil on Fri, 01 May 2020 14:53:18 GMT
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Model name : Import 220
Type : Quadron Crown Guard
Period/date : 1930-1933
Gender : Gents

Case Maker : Unknown, Swiss made (marked Alpina Gruen)
Case Material : Two-tone, steel with rose gold
Case Serial : 45821
Case Style no :

Caliber : 175
Movement Maker : Marc Favre Co. Biel (Factory "M")
Movement Serial : A451 (?)

Bracelet : After market

Other info :
Although very similar the dial is not identical to the Import 220 model as shown in Mike Barnett's Gruen Watch Catalog (page 107). This catalog also shows a second dial variation called Import 223.

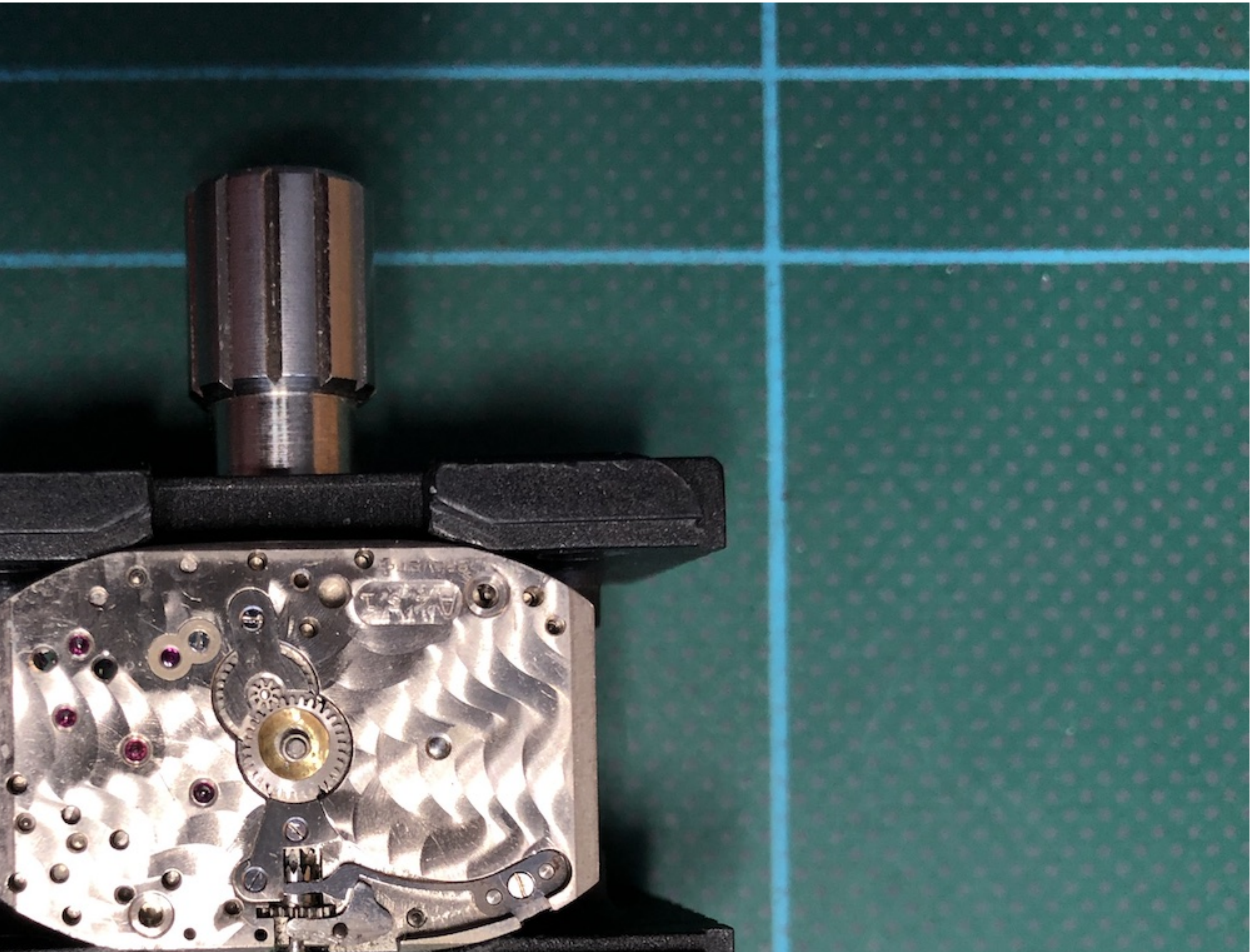
Caliber 175 is a big unknown to me. There is no reference in any of the Gruen documentation available to me of this caliber. Though it is not a "Precision" or "Extra Precision" grade, the level of finishing is to a high standard when comparing to similar calibers like the 325 or 157. Not only the beautiful surface finishing on all sides, but also the one-piece milled yoke and the fact it has an intermediate setting wheel are indications this is a high grade movement.

My feeling is that it could have been produced by Marc Favre Co., Biel. Reason for that is Gruen was also sourcing their 157 and 165/167 Quadron calibers from M. Favre and the escape design is the same or very similar to caliber 157 (but maybe not unique to M. Favre?). Another point is I was able to carry over the detent screw from a 165 which was broken on my 175. I tried detent screws from many different Gruen calibers, but none of them fitted, the detent screw of the 165 was literally identical to the one on the 175. Also the set bridge design of caliber 165 resembles the design of this 175.

EDIT : Information has been updated in line with new info provided by fellow Gruenites. The movement is confirmed as caliber MF175, produced by Marc Favre Co.

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Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by Barney Green on Fri, 01 May 2020 16:36:56 GMT
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Congratulation,very fine watch!
I can confirm that caliber 175 is Marc Favre made, it is even their caliber number. Seems to have been only used in Alpina-Gruen watches, I also have one although the movement is incomplete. Need to purchase a donor movement, but am currently hesitating to spend $100 to get one. There are two in the swamp since a while, but I am not yet willing to spend that amount of money.

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by Thojil on Fri, 01 May 2020 23:11:11 GMT
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Thanks Barney. I tried to confirm the manufacturer in many different ways, but of course forgot the most obvious one which was checking what you just confirmed :roll: :lol:

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by JackW on Fri, 01 May 2020 23:13:53 GMT
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The 'Staybrite' mark is interesting....
Quote:Staybrite steel was made by Thomas Firth John Brown Ltd. of Sheffield and was protected by Swiss patent No. 138 647. Use of the name Staybrite like this required permission from Firth, and it could only be put onto items that were actually made of Staybrite steel.
from - https://www.vintagewatchstraps.com/stainlesssteel.php

Different watch and markings, but I've an example that is also marked Staybrite.... I also presume this is pre-Guildite other wise it would be marked in addition.

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by Barney Green on Sat, 02 May 2020 06:00:10 GMT
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Jack,

you might be perfectly right. Didn't they register the Guildite trademark in 1933?
Alpina Gruen was started in 1929 and the colaboration started to cool down in 1933. So most Alpina-Gruens are dated between 1929 and 1933.
But do not gorget that for the Alpina-Gruen watches different rules apply. These were intended to be sold in Europe and here European trademarks rules applied. The casemaker not necessarily stamped Guildite in the back even also when watches for the US from the same time had the

mark already.
I also have one Alpina-Gruen with the Staybrite marking which makes it more likely being pre 1933 but I would not take it as a proof.

Barney

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by thesnark17 on Sat, 02 May 2020 15:24:28 GMT
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My goodness! Two phenomenal watches shown on the same day... *jealous*

This one interests me more than the other. Alpina-Gruen and Europe-only stuff is fascinating here in America (where it is rarely seen for sale).

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by JackW on Sat, 02 May 2020 15:47:23 GMT
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I think you are correct for Guildite in 1933. Staybrite was registered in 1928 from what I have read (used for tableware originally) but was also registered in the US and Canada. The tradmark and the patenting in the US was somewhat confused due to independent developments in the metal alloys with US based companies. Convoluted to say the least.... but likely the requirement that those using Firth made stainless in the US also could mark it with the name. I don't read that it was required.

There are examples of Guildite and Staybrite marked cases.... here is one: at WUS forums But the markings are difficult to read.... believing the OPs read.

Anyway.... Very cool stuff to see.

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by thesnark17 on Sat, 02 May 2020 17:33:24 GMT
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I have a couple of the Ultra-Verithin cases marked Staybrite. So far, every one of them I have seen or own has also been marked Guildite, and they're all Swiss made.

I note that all UV steel cases I've seen so far are from the later Unadjusted production (554k and later). So at least post-1930, probably 1933 and later.

This has no direct bearing on the subject (wristwatch cases), but maybe will be helpful along with

Jack's comments above.

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by afire on Mon, 04 May 2020 18:09:55 GMT
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JackW wrote on Sat, 02 May 2020 10:47There are examples of Guildite and Staybrite marked cases.... here is one: at WUS forums But the markings are difficult to read.... believing the OPs read.

Hah! I've been maintaining for years that I've seen a case marked both Staybrite and Guildite, but always had to tack on the disclaimer that it's a fuzzy memory and I have no proof. Finally.

And just to illustrate how peculiar these Import models from the Guild era can be, here's my post on an Import 220 I used to own. And here's the one I currently own:

Not only different calibers, but different case makers. Mine were both Webers, while yours made by the other unidentified Swiss case maker with the five-digit serial numbers. Gruen's supply chain must have been positively Byzantine. And the gold accents (very nice). I've now seen four Import 220s, and all four have had different dials, and none were the same as the dial shown in the Master Book.

I've seen two examples of Import 113s - mine in green gold with white accents, the other in white gold with green accents, both with different side engravings and slightly different bezel engravings. And the Import 144 shown in the Master Book has an inset crown, while mine does not.

Why so much variation? Bob Ayers ("Air" at VWF) posited an explanation that makes sense to me, that they were going for bespoke. The idea being to offer unique watches to upscale jewelers in big cities whose customers may not be interested "off the shelf" goods. I can't think of any better explanation.

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220
Posted by JackW on Tue, 05 May 2020 16:37:47 GMT
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Afire, nice!

Subject: Re: Quadron Import 220

Posted by Thojil on Wed, 06 May 2020 21:03:03 GMT
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afire wrote on Mon, 04 May 2020 20:09Why so much variation? Bob Ayers ("Air" at VWF) posited an explanation that makes sense to me, that they were going for bespoke. The idea being to offer unique watches to upscale jewelers in big cities whose customers may not be interested "off the shelf" goods. I can't think of any better explanation.
Looking at the some of the extravagant case designs amongst the import models I think that could very well be the case.