Subject: Gruen Autowind Rocket
Posted by asilver on Sun, 28 Feb 2021 16:19:39 GMT
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I have my grandfather's Gruen and was having trouble figuring out the different codes/numbers to determine when it was made. Below is the information from inside the case, I'm hoping this is something this group can help me decipher.

Cased and Time by Gruen Watch Co.
Guildite Back
F58427
550SS-022

There are also some etchings that seem to be from when the watch was serviced over the years, the first of which appears to be 1961. Finally, I'm not sure if this is correct, but the serial number appears to be 1560, and there's an "F" in a crown-like shape immediately before the number. Thanks!

Edit by admin: inserted images into the message

File Attachments

1) 20210227_115748.jpg, downloaded 3998 times

2) 20210227_121152.jpg, downloaded 3817 times



3) 20210227_121222.jpg, downloaded 3882 times



Subject: Re: Men's 550SS-022
Posted by Barney Green on Sun, 28 Feb 2021 17:53:42 GMT
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Hi Asilver,

welcome to the vintage Gruen forum!
Thanks for asking, this is a nice watch your grandfather passed to you. You have provided the relevant information to ID and dat the watch and you are right, the first service mark should be from 1961, five years after the purchase of this watch.
To help you decoding the numbers:
F58427 is the serial number. Unfortunately the company records are lost, but from other watches of that timeframe we can say that the watch will be from 1956.
550SS-022 is indicating the movement, it is a Gruen caliber 550SS, SS stand for sweep second.
The 022 is already a bit more complicated, it is the "style number". This number indicates the crystal shape for crystal replacements. This is style number 1022, the 1022nd Gruen crystal shape since start of use of this system around 1920.
The F1560 marking at the movement shows that the Gruen 550SS caliber bases on the Felsa 1560 caliber which. so in reality the movement was produced by Felsa.
Guildite is Gruen's trademark name for stainless steel.

The watch itself is the Super Gruen Autowind Rocket model which was introduced in September 1956 and available for only about 1 year.

Here is an old advertisement from a newspaper of that time showing the watch:

Have fun with the watch!
Barney

File Attachments

1) Autowind Rocket.jpg, downloaded 3468 times

Regardless of its age,

Super Gruen Auto

SELLS EVERYWHERE

LESS SUPER TRADE-I

You Pay Only

- Self-Winding
- Water-Resistant!

Subject: Re: Men's 550SS-022
Posted by asilver on Sun, 28 Feb 2021 18:03:47 GMT
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Wow, thanks for the quick reply! This is really helpful. Two more questions for you:

1. Is it worthwhile to bring this to a watchmaker to get it cleaned up? It still functions well, but is obviously pretty beat up.
2. Any idea of the value? I wouldn't want to sell it, but I am curious about what it might be worth.

Thanks again!

Subject: Re: Men's 550SS-022
Posted by Barney Green on Sun, 28 Feb 2021 18:12:55 GMT
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Asilver,

1. It depends if you want to wear / use the watch. Old oil with dirt is acting like sand paper to the bearings, so that permanent use of unserviced watches kills them after a while. If you just want to keep without using it, I would probably just give it a good and gentile cleaning of the outer case.
2. There is no big value in such watches. In its present shape it might sell for $20 to §50, cleaned and serviced it may sell for probably up to $100. Just compare with similar watches from that time frame at ebay...

Best
Barney

Subject: Re: Men's 550SS-022
Posted by afire on Mon, 01 Mar 2021 19:11:44 GMT
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I agree with Barney's comments on the value and servicing. The cost of cleaning, oiling and adjusting should run around $100 (if you hunt around for a reasonably priced watchmaker, some charge much higher prices). If you go all in and have your watchmaker replace the crystal and get the dial refinished, that's maybe another $100. So, you've put $200 into a $100 or so watch. But you'll be able to wear your grandfather's watch in sparkling condition. Is that worth $200 to you? It would be to me. I have my grandfather's Gruen that's no more valuable than yours, but I've had it overhauled multiple times over the years.

Subject: Re: Men's 550SS-022
Posted by asilver on Tue, 02 Mar 2021 22:40:15 GMT
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Thanks! Appreciate your insight and feedback!