## INDUSTRY OF NATIONS

Great exhibitions of the nineteenth century - held in the world's major cities - brought together innovators and industrialists at a time of unprecedented growth
Among the great changes that have swept across the world as part of the tide of history, the Industrial Revolution must rank as one of the strongest currents. From its beginning in the late eighteenth century, it spread swiftly across Europe and the United States, drawing millions of workers to the ever-expanding cities making rapid improvements in transport, productivity, and communications, and laying the foundations for the modern world. In France, industrialization had gathered pace in the wake of the 1789 revolution, and among its most enduring legacies were the government-sponsored fairs that brought manufacturers together from all around the country
The highly successful French Industrial Exposition was held in Paris in 1844, in a vast temporary structure on the Champs-Elysées, and it was here that Antoine Norbert de Patek came across Jean Adrien Philippe's brilliantly innovative keyless winding mechanism. Although the two men didn't actually meet at the exhibition, this event was to mark the start of Patek \& Cie, Even in those early years, Patek was thinking about foreign markets and how to promote the company abroad. As a Polis emigre who had wandered Europe before finding a safe haven in Switzerland, he was keenly aware of the dangers of relying on a single market. Though the young Patek was an ardent supporte of independence for his own country, the businessman in him must have felt his worst fears had been justified by the uprising that swept across Europe in 1848 , toppling monarchies and disrupting the international trade in luxury goods.
Fortunately there was one country whose wealth and social stability seemed to offer continued opportunity: Britain. As Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, wrote to his cousin, the Kin of Prussia, "We have no fear here either of an uprising or an assassination. Brits had the ing in wo and


- perhaps inspired by the success of the 1844 Paris products of tropical climates being brought nearest to show - Prince Albert announced that the capital would the transept, and those of colder regions being placed host a Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all at the extremities of the building." Hundreds of visitors Nations in 185 I, Patek was ready to spring into action. $\quad$ waited in line daily to view one of the exhibition's crown
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jewels, the Koh-i-Noor diamond, displayed in a golden The Great Exhibition was a defining moment of the jewels, the Koh-i-Noor diamond, displayed in a golden
 what became known as worlds fairs. A vast pre- ance of the giant gem.
and high enough to enclose full-grown trees, was display proved a brilliant, though, the Swiss watch and high encted along the southern edge of London's Hyde Park Between May and October II I85I Pver six million and soon named the Crystal Palace. Half of its interior people - one-third of Britain's population at the time was devoted to British products, from giant steam visited the Crystal Palace According to Philippe "Our engines and early bicycles to Nottingham lace and display was undeniably the most important and the a pink glass fountain nearly 30 feet high. most superb of the whole exhibition in terms of its a pink glass fountain nearly 30 feet high.
other countries, arranged around the central transept, flattering compliment from one of the principal watch according to the official guidebook, "in a manner makers of London, Mr. Dent, who remarked to him corresponding to their distances from the equator, the after examining our display: 'Mr. Patek, you are the


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King of watchmakers!'" But the truly royal seal of approval came in August, when Queen Victoria visited the Swiss display and bought a powder-blue enamel Patek (now in the Patek Philippe Museum), later ordering a gold, hunter-cased chronometer for Prince Albert. It was the start of a royal connection that continues to this da
Behind the scenes, though, the Swiss exhibit was slightly less than perfect. Hundreds of watches from different manufacturers were crammed into a single huge case, each times did I see Professor Colladon - wrang no fix the number cards with such persis
 floor and the impact of people passing by would simply reproduce the same disarray" The Great Exhibition was a resounding success - financially in terms of visitor numbers, and as a way of demonstrating Britain's wealth and power to the world - so other countries scrambled to hold world's fairs of their own. First off the mark was the United States, which lreedy saw itself as an emerging superpower, and whose large-scale maruStates, which aready saw itself as an emerging superpower, and whose large-scale manufacturing was, if anything, more advanced than Britain's own. On july 14 , 1853 , the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations opened after 1873 their prestige was increasingly supplanted in Patek's $\begin{array}{ll}\text { in Reservoir Square (now Bryant Park) in New York, complete with } & \text { eyes by the Geneva Observatory timekeeping precision trials - not } \\ \text { its own Crystal Palace and an observation tower over } 300 \text { feet tall. } & \text { least, one imagines, because Patek Philipe when }\end{array}$ its own Crystal Palace and an observation tower over 300 feet tall. Ieast, one imagines, because Patek Philippe watches won the top Though it wasn't as spectacularly successful as the Great five Geneva Observatory awards the year after they were begun.
Exhibition (the New York fair received only a million visitors and lost USS $\$ 300,000$ ), it was the first of five American world's fairs on. Though the company was to participate in further world's fairs that Patek Philippe participated in between 1853 and 1915, firmly well into the twentieth century, it was these early exhibitions that establishing the company's reputation in the U.S. (It also really helped establish its renown. Antoine Norbert de Patek may provided the impetus for Patek's first visit to the States just a few have begun life as a victim of his times, but he showed that, with weeks later - though this trip did not go without incident. The will and imagination, history's great currents could, at least Atlantic crossing took 14 days instead of io due to the appalling to a certain extent, be harnessed to his own ends. $\%$ winter storms. And Patek's room was then burgled on his first For more on this subject see the exclusive content on Patek Philippe night in New York, with everything of value stolen from his trunk.) Magazine Extra at patek.com/owners
Still, Patek, Philippe \& Cie - Fabricants à Genève (as the firm had become in 185I), won a silver medal at the New York fair and cemented its relationship with Tiffany, which was to become the company's most important and longest-standing representative in the U.S. In all, the firm won 20 gold medals at international exhibitions between 1844 and 1923; all were proudly displayed at the entrance to its Geneva boutique.
Yet even as the world's fairs grew ever larger and more well established, Patek realized that, as a means of reaching new markets, their promise had already peaked. By the time of his death in 1877, the mass media was already disseminating information and advertising to a far wider market than even the largest exhibition they looked very pretty in the boutique, but


