



The Patravi EvoTec PowerReserve uses the same cushion shape as the DayDate, and adds a unique power reserve indication.

Evolution *Meets* Technology



Three years in development, the CFB A1000 calibre is the result of Carl F. Bucherer's quest both for identity and technical excellence. The first watch to use the new movement - the 2008 Patravi EvoTec - was deliberately, yet deceptively, simple in design - and with the 2010 Power Reserve addition to the series, the brand's high design standards remain unchanged, while its engineering takes another step forward.

James Gurney

Brand ambassadors rarely have much to say themselves about the brands they represent - everything useful having already been said through the choice of ambassador. So what are we to make of a brand whose roster includes Daniel Bernhardt (best known as Agent Johnston of the *Matrix* films), Boris Blank of the ultra avant-garde Swiss duo Yello (best album title - *You Gotta Say Yes To Another Excess*) and celebrated Mexican boot-maker, Pedro Muñoz (one of *Texas Monthly's* top 25 custom boot-makers apparently)? Not your average brand certainly, but there is a clear desire to establish a little left-field cool behind such choices, which is nicely matched in the brand that Carl F. Bucherer is becoming.

Bucherer is one of Switzerland's best-known watch retailers, as dependable a part of the Swiss watch business as the brands such as Rolex and Piaget that the stores carry. For years the company has also sold watches made under its own name, these watches being designed to reflect the dependability and tradition of the business - so far unremarkable and very definitely not left-field.

With the decision to set up Carl F. Bucherer as a stand-alone brand that the world might notice, the challenge was to find a way of creating interest without losing touch with the core values. So it is to CEO Thomas Morf's (and Bucherer's) real credit that desirability has been grafted so successfully onto the dependability

of the Bucherer reputation. His key decision was the realisation that Carl F. Bucherer's best route was to value technical competence over heritage and tradition and to make sure that the branding and product design reflected that priority.

A decade in the making

Unsurprisingly, this has not been an overnight transformation. Some ten plus years ago, the company began working with Techniques Horlogères Appliquées (THA) of Sainte-Croix in the Jura, beginning with the development of modules for common base calibres and moving in 2005 to the development of a new base movement. This led in turn to THA being acquired by Carl F. Bucherer in 2008 (when it became Carl F. Bucherer Technologies SA), the renamed company serving as R&D department and *manufacture* base for Carl F. Bucherer.

Alongside the name change CFB developed a new methodical approach to the development of components, movements and modules, with the main idea of simplifying processes and components wherever possible. It is hard to say quite how different 'Smart Simplicity' really is as a development model, but the mere fact of it having a name is eloquent of the direction Morf is looking to take the company. The first product of this new thinking is the CFB A1000 series base calibre that was first shown in 2008 and is one of the better conceived creations to emerge from the Jura in recent years.



The CFB A1000 caliber is a mechanical automatic movement wound by a bidirectional rotor running around its edge.

To have the rotor revolving around the edge of the movement combines the technical advantages of a centrally-mounted rotor with the optical virtues of a micro-rotor.



The CFB A1002 movement of the Patravi EvoTec Power Reserve.



Intelligent precision adjustment CDAS.



Both technically and aesthetically, the A1000 is a real achievement. The most notable element being the peripheral winding mass, which, while not being an entirely new idea, contributes both to the design and function of the movement. It would seem surprising that, given the prevalence of crystal casebacks since the mid-1990s, the idea of a rotor that leaves the full movement exposed has not been realised before. However, the history of self-winding watches has moved at a truly glacial pace since Harwood developed the first self-winding

wristwatch in the 1920s. The basic idea did not really gain general acceptance until the late 1940s and the first self-winding chronographs only appeared in 1969 - a development curve of near total flatness.

The main problem is in creating a system that can develop sufficient torque to wind the mainspring while simultaneously protecting the rest of the movement from the sheer weight being thrown around. There are dozens of patents and technical papers covering this ground from the geometry

of the oscillating mass to the design of the winding system - whether it should wind in both directions or not is a subject much debated by watchmakers.

One solution to the problem of a centrally mounted rotor taking up too much space and obscuring the mainplate has been the use of micro-rotors. These can work well but are comparatively expensive and time-consuming to realise and are usually now found only on avowedly high value calibres such as from Chopard or Patek Philippe (it's revealing that Chopard's new 'tractor' calibre has a normal central rotor).

By opting for a rotor that moves around the edge of the movement, Carl F. Bucherer had to work from a comparatively blank slate and so re-discover solutions to problems that had already been solved decades previously for centrally mounted and micro-rotors. But there were advantages too: apart from better visibility of the movement, the calibre requires less height and allows the construction of new modules on either side of the movement. One of the main hurdles to clear was in developing an efficient shock-absorption system, the eventual solution involves DLC-coated rollers (DLC being the ultra-hard carbon coating sometimes seen on watchcases) and ceramic ball bearings as part of a system that controls lateral movement of the rotor while providing continuous winding in either direction.

The next chapter

With a new balance adjustment system, claimed to be simpler to use and more robust than standard arrangements, the A1000 calibre could not have lived up more to the ambitions Thomas Morf has for the brand - it's technically sophisticated but essentially simple, well finished but modernist in style with its alternating surface treatments.

The first watch to use the new movement was the Patravi EvoTec (the second part of the name referring to the new design ethos referred to earlier). Deliberately simple if not quite minimalist, the new Patravi design is clean and geometric with a generous near 40mm-sized dial that allows for one of the largest date windows around (no small selling point itself) and a small seconds sub-dial without losing the geometric feel of the main design. The black and silver dial is surrounded by a rubber bezel that accentuates the curves of the case and is again in line with the quiet technical modernism that is Carl F. Bucherer's future.

This year sees the first addition to the series with a new type of power reserve indication. A curved dial opening between the 2 o'clock and 4 o'clock reveals a small red hand linked to the mainspring barrel by a differential mechanism. As the hand moves down the scale it reveals a red zone giving an extremely clear and quick indication of the state of wind. Altogether it makes for quite an enticing package whether you know your One Second from your Solid Pleasure or not. ☺

Far left: With the latest addition to the Patravi EvoTec BigDate range, Carl F. Bucherer is responding to the growing market of female buyers looking for serious technical pieces.

Centre and left: Examples of 2010's revamped Patravi EvoTec BigDate.

