

UBS × MONOCLE

How to stay ahead of your time
Thomas Steinemann
CEO, DuBois et fils

In the world’s horological heartland, having the title of Switzerland’s oldest watch factory is no small feat. But while DuBois et fils has always kept its exclusivity and focused on time-honoured Swiss manufacturing, today it is a company facing firmly towards the future and a pioneer of blockchain technology.

“In 2019, I visited a watchmaking couple in their eighties and, after three or four visits, I found out that they had 200,000 high-quality historical movements in their cellar,” says CEO Thomas Steinemann. “It was clear we needed to buy the stock and completely change our business model. All the big brands create their own movements – but we can’t compete.”



Switzerland was once home to more than 40 manufacturers that supplied movements to the major watch brands. Those suppliers no longer exist. But their movements have survived because they were made for working people so they had to be robust. DuBois et fils relaunched in 2020 with a first collection based on these historical movements.

“Using these old movements is sustainable and you find that each one has a special story,” says Steinemann. “Now, when you buy one of our watches, you also buy the blockchain access to it. Someone bought a watch as a gift for his two-month-old daughter. Every month he saves a photo on the blockchain and eventually it’ll be her 18th birthday present. It makes it more special. You can write your own history when you give our watch to one of your kids. We want to create something unique that will increase in value in the long term.”

Ask to see the company’s impressively preserved inventory from 1751 during a visit to its showroom at Hirzbodenweg 95, 4052 Basel

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