

WRISTWATCH ANNUAL
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Bozeman Watch Company

Montana Time

A Michigander founding a company in Montana for Swiss watches—this truly seems like a contradiction in terms. But, somehow, it works, making the Bozeman Watch Company one of just a handful in the United States producing high-end timepieces at a time when precision horological design and manufacture is little known as an American enterprise. When founder Christopher Wardle set out to create these Montana-style watches, he decided no other state of mind could be more sought-after than the rugged, yet refined, state of Montana. He also recognized that no expertise other than that found in Switzerland and Germany could be more sought-after in the world of horology. Thus, the Bozeman Watch Company set its sights on bringing the standards of global watchmaking excellence together with the spirit of the American West. With classic Swiss designs, American attitude, and Old World precision manufacturing, the Bozeman Watch Company is a unique whole created of many different parts.



The Bozeman Watch Company was founded a scant four years ago. Right from the beginning, Wardle wanted to make his company holistic in its concept, with distinct distribution and limited editions playing a huge role. Therefore, all of the watches issued until now—seven at last count—have been done so in limited editions of ten, twenty-five, fifty, or one hundred pieces. Obviously, with such low numbers, points of sale will also be automatically limited. So far, watches coming out of Bozeman, Montana, can only be purchased at the downtown Bozeman store, on the brand's website, and at select outlets such as hunting lodges that fit the concept—just going to show that searching out a limited edition watch is half the fun. The brand's debut timepiece was the Smokejumper Chronograph, a model dedicated to the brave men and women known as smokejumpers who risk their lives fighting forest fires that ravage the region's picturesque landscape with little more than picks and shovels. The relationship between the Bozeman Watch Company and these heroic figures is so close that the Smokejumper Chronograph has even become the official timepiece of the National Smokejumper Association. It is powered by an automatic ETA Valjoux movement that has been certified as a chronometer by Switzerland's official chronometer institute, the C.O.S.C. Housed in a stately 45 mm case water-resistant to 100 meters, the Smokejumper Chronograph comes with both a stainless steel bracelet and the choice of either a brown or a black strap hand-stitched by a saddle maker in Montana. The English bridle leather these straps are made from is actually a stack of three pieces for added durability with waxed edges like tack and saddle gear. The Bozeman Watch Company already sees some elements characteristic of the Rocky Mountain state flowing into its



rather classic watch designs, making them true American products. Look for even more interesting indigenous elements on new limited editions in the near future. Prices range between \$4,000 and \$7,000.

