



ZENITH marks the Grand Finale of the El Primero 50th Anniversary Celebration in Geneva

2019 has been a monumental year for the El Primero, the world's first high-frequency automatic chronograph. For its 50th anniversary, Zenith embarked on a yearlong celebration that took on different fronts. The star-led brand brought back iconic El Primero pieces through its Revival series, and set off on its "Grenier Club" world-tour where press, clients and friends of the brand joined the festivities in unexpected locations around the globe. Finally, over the course of several days and numerous high-profile events in the watchmaking capital of Geneva, the El Primero 50th Anniversary celebration came to a spectacular end.

With watch collectors from all over the world gathered in Geneva for the various auctions and horological happenings in town, Zenith had two unique interpretations of historical El Primero models up for grabs at two auctions, with both watches benefitting charitable causes.

At Phillips' "Geneva Watch Auction X" at La Reserve, the unique and only El Primero A386 ever to be made in a platinum case and lapis lazuli dial, a precious reinterpretation of the iconic A386, was sold after intense bidding for the sum of CHF 250'000. Proceeds from the sale of this unique commemorative piece will go to Zoe4Life, a Swiss non-profit organization, part of the Childhood Cancer International network.

On the other side of Geneva at the Hotel des Bergues, Christie's conducted the 2019 edition of the biennial Only Watch charity auction. For this cause, Zenith created a unique El Primero A386 Revival in steel with a special one-off dial, reinterpreting the emblematic tri-color chronograph registers with a touch of sky-blue - the official color of Only Watch 2019. The unique piece sold for CHF 75'000, with the entire sum benefitting the Association Monégasque.

Grenier Club - a global celebration

Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the El Primero, Zenith had set out on its Grenier Club world tour since the start of the year to celebrate the occasion. Each month, the Grenier Club event was held in a different city, where 50 local guests are invited to join the celebration in unique settings such as iconic landmarks and contemporary art museums and galleries, among others. Named after the attic where Charles Vermot hid the plans for the El Primero, the Grenier Club celebrates the past while toasting to the future of the revered calibre's ever-growing legacy. Joining some of the events was Michel Vermont, who passionately shared inspirational anecdotes about his father and the makers of the El Primero, who strived for innovation against all odds - much like Zenith today. Geneva was a symbolic final stop in the Grenier Club world tour, where both local and international guests celebrated the golden jubilee of the first high-frequency automatic chronograph calibre in Zenith's native Switzerland.



Charles Vermot - Venerating a Hero

A proper celebration of the El Primero simply wouldn't be complete without paying tribute to the man who has become synonymous with the venerable calibre: Charles Vermot.

Vermot was one of the original watchmakers who worked on the first batches of the El Primero movement when it was first introduced 50 years ago. You could call him a spiritual father of the venerated calibre. When the decision was taken to halt the production of the El Primero in 1975 during the advent of the quartz movement, Vermot took it upon himself to safeguard the El Primero for future generations, in the hope that one day Zenith would bring the exceptional movement back into production. Working in total secrecy, Charles Vermot had the ingenious idea to gather all the technical plans and tools necessary to produce each and every component of the El Primero movement and tuck them away in hidden walled-off section of the Zenith manufacture's attic. Like a time capsule waiting to be discovered, the attic was a living memory of the El Primero and the guardian of its future. A Decade later, Vermot's valiant act would serve as the first building block in bringing the El Primero back to life. Visitors of the Zenith manufacture can also step inside the immortalized attic and embark on a journey through time in the *Monde Étoilé* interactive tour.

A real-life superhero, Zenith chose to immortalize Vermot's courageous act with the ultimate tangible memorabilia of the El Primero 50th Anniversary. Calling upon the talents of Swiss comic book author Cosey, Zenith produced a series of vintage-styled comics that tell the tale of how Vermot's act of rebellion ended up saving the El Primero for future generations. The original drawings from the book will be on display at the manufacture, and a digital version will be available on the Zenith [website](#).

ZENITH: the future of Swiss watchmaking

With innovation as its guiding star, Zenith features exceptional in-house developed and manufactured movements in all its watches, such as the architectural DEFY Inventor watch with its unique, ultra-thin monolithic oscillator that replaces the 30+ components of a standard regulating organ, and the DEFY El Primero 21 with its high-frequency 1/100th of a second chronograph. Since its establishment in 1865, Zenith has consistently redefined the notions of precision and innovation, including the first serially produced automatic chronograph calibre "El Primero", beating at the high rate of 36,000 VpH. Always one step ahead, Zenith is writing a new chapter in its unique legacy by setting new standards of performance and inspired design. Zenith is here to shape the future of Swiss watchmaking, accompanying those who dare to challenge time itself and reach for the stars.