Subject: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Thojil on Thu, 16 May 2013 17:25:12 GMT
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Model name : Chrono-Timer
Type : Precision chronograph
Period/date : 1949
Gender : Male

Case Maker : Swiss, Gabus Frères
Case Material : 14k
Case Serial : 134591
Case Style no : na

Caliber : 450
Movement Maker : Gruen
Movement Serial: A737344

Bracelet : Leather

Other info :
Model corresponds to "import 260", Bruce Shawkey's book, page 193

File Attachments

1) Img_3566b.jpg, downloaded 3918 times


GRUEN
PRECISION
CHRONO-TIMER
XII
VI
TELEMETER
MILE

2) Img_3729b.jpg, downloaded 4033 times



3) Img_3730b.jpg, downloaded 3928 times



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Bazzab on Thu, 16 May 2013 18:35:46 GMT
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Very Nice Watch!!!
B

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Thu, 16 May 2013 23:19:55 GMT
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I go weak at the knees everytime I see this, has to be in my top five if not #1 on the want list.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by mikey on Fri, 17 May 2013 01:57:39 GMT
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I agree. That is one beautiful watch!

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Fri, 17 May 2013 04:33:43 GMT
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What Mike said.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sat, 01 Nov 2025 08:23:11 GMT
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It’s not the kind of watch you see every day... it’s really superb!

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Sat, 01 Nov 2025 16:13:27 GMT
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Passion wrote on Sat, 01 November 2025 08:23It’s not the kind of watch you see every day... it’s really superb!
Gruen's only in-house chronometer. I've been collecting parts to build one. Getting close.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Wed, 05 Nov 2025 12:46:11 GMT
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Hi Gary,
OK, the only internal chronometer at Gruen !
So, if I understand correctly, this rate is not a misunderstanding? -->
https://www.watchbroker24.eu/index.php?site=gabe2&start= &artID=100-935
Price much too high for me, I would keep it in my wildest dreams... ;-) or else, I have to sell my motorcycle !

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Wed, 05 Nov 2025 13:50:03 GMT
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That price is a little high, even for solid gold. They pop up every now an then, but if your patient, you can get one on the wrist for a 1/3 of the price.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by afire on Wed, 05 Nov 2025 14:52:51 GMT
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What Gary said. Asking prices are always high. But on the rare occasion when a Chrono-Timer shows up for auction, they tend to be relatively affordable.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Wed, 05 Nov 2025 18:43:42 GMT
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The stainless steel/Guildite editions though are garnering $1000 recently, so there is that. I sunk about $600 in the first one I have and less than $350 on the recent one that came disassembled. That one too was a movement loose and paired with a empty case.

A 14k version by my estimations should be about $1500 to $2k based on the gold content, at todays gold prices.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Thu, 06 Nov 2025 07:06:39 GMT
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Hi,

Gary, Afire and JackW, thank you for this valuable information.
And if I can still steal your time, what year was this chrono-timer made in what year? I have seen different models of cases, hands, dials... but don’t really see any date information apart from 1940 to 1955.
Now I have to go back to work ;-)

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Thu, 06 Nov 2025 07:11:14 GMT
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JackW wrote on Wed, 05 November 2025 19:43...Guildite editions...

Je voie souvent ce mot "guildite" dans les posts. Chez Gruen, qu'est ce que ce mot signifie ?
I often see the word "guildite" in posts. For Gruen, what does this word mean?

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Thu, 06 Nov 2025 14:33:00 GMT
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The chrono timer was made starting in 1947. They stopped making them shortly thereafter. Probably they couldn't compete with other chrono makers. Here is a good read.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Thu, 06 Nov 2025 19:42:18 GMT
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Gary wrote on Thu, 06 November 2025 07:33The chrono timer was made starting in 1947. They stopped making them shortly thereafter. Probably they couldn't compete with other chrono makers. Here is a good read.
Gruen published a series of parts catalogs that showed the movements. The cal 450 is shown in the catalog that is assumed to be from 1945. So it is possibly earlier than 1947. The first and only advertisement for the chrono-timer is from 1947. Scroll down the page and it is shown here at this link.

My personal opinion on why these were so short lived, as a production and sales item is related to the vertical clutch system to engage the chrono seconds. The design is pretty cool but having worked on a few of these now, the mechanism is susceptible to seizing should a watchmaker inadvertently lubricate the clutch. It should be dry. The lubrication will eventually gum up, especially the lubricants of the time in 1945-47 which were natural oils and greases (think whale). They degrade and become thicker. Even with synthetic oils, small amounts of dirt or even the high cohesion of oils will "lock" the clutch together and cause the chrono function to cease working and stopping the watch. My guess is that Gruen was immediately swamped by warranty service requests. Secondly, like what Gary suggested, there advent of high-quality column wheel chronos,

like the Valjoux 23 or cam shift chronos like the Venus 188 were hard to compete with for reliability. Also the 450 is small compared to these other chronograph movements. Styles were changing.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Thu, 06 Nov 2025 19:43:35 GMT
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Passion wrote on Thu, 06 November 2025 00:11JackW wrote on Wed, 05 November 2025 19:43...Guildite editions...

Je voie souvent ce mot "guildite" dans les posts. Chez Gruen, qu'est ce que ce mot signifie ?
I often see the word "guildite" in posts. For Gruen, what does this word mean?

Guildite is the trade name that Gruen used for stainless steel.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sat, 22 Nov 2025 17:10:47 GMT
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Gary and JackW,
I just reviewed your very specific comments. Thank you for all this information.

It’s really very interesting this story about the Chrono-Timer! If I understood correctly, the Guildite Chrono-Timer (stainless steel... ;-)) was manufactured last.
So, the Chrono-Timer, shouldn’t there be a lot of products in 2 years?
And if a Chrono-Timer is missing a part (a needle or a winder), is it complicated to find?

Laurent.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Sat, 22 Nov 2025 23:51:45 GMT
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Parts related to the chronograph function are far and few between. There is an eBay seller that has the more difficult parts to locate but also wants $$$/€€€ for them.

However, I’m a firm believer in watching out for each other. If I see something you need or have something, I’ll speak up.

Hopefully Gary finishes his soon. I did have a part he was seeking but don’t yet know if it worked for him.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sun, 23 Nov 2025 08:09:14 GMT
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Jack,

Thank you for this feedback.
I understood well that this Gruen "Chrono-Timer" is both:
- rare (few copies because produced for 2 or 3 years).
- can be reliable (when not in good hands).
- despite this, the parts can be found quite easily.

An avant-garde object during its release, with technology quickly outpaced by its competitors, quite rare, and of which 1 in 2 are very poorly maintained and therefore does not work...
It’s the kind of concept that attracts me, because it’s all that makes its beauty...

I will be curious to have Gary’s feedback ;-)

Happy Sunday.

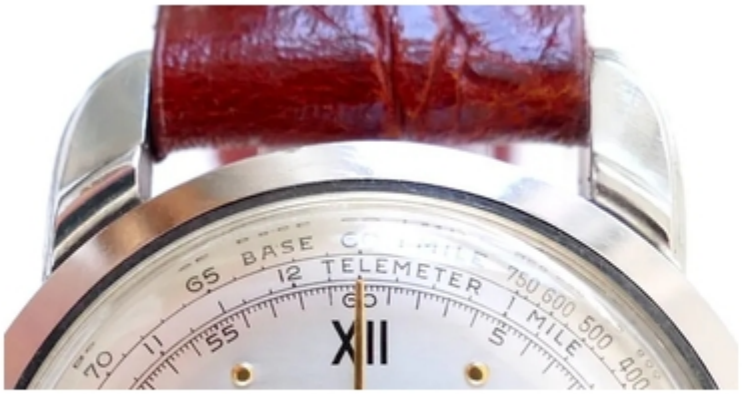
Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sat, 04 Jul 2026 07:49:02 GMT
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Hi everyone,

The Chrono-Timer is making eyes at me... So I’m trying to learn a bit more, and I could use your help.
Here is a photograph of the 3 styles of cases (different ears), in GOLD and STEEL.
My questions:
- between 1946 and 1949, between the 127000 and 139000 series, can we certainly put these 3 styles of cases in a chronological order of production? If so, can you give me your opinion on the order? (Example: style 2 then style 1 then style 3)
- or not, and claim that these 3 styles of cases were manufactured and sold during the 4 years without any chronological order, and that the client had the choice between these 3 styles of cases during these 4 years?

;-)

File Attachments
1) 01.jpg, downloaded 932 times



Style 1 : OR and STEEL



Style 2 : OR

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by MonKee on Sat, 04 Jul 2026 13:25:11 GMT
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Style three was a late introduction and was only produced at 135,000 area plus or minus. Which one to like is a personal preference. It was always an expensive watch so when it was introduced style one in steel was really the only affordable option. Also there were several different style of dials available and I don't believe anyone can accurately say when and in what order they were introduced.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Sat, 04 Jul 2026 14:56:19 GMT
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Quote:- can be reliable (when not in good hands).
- despite this, the parts can be found quite easily.
It is the exact opposite of these two point.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sat, 04 Jul 2026 15:57:58 GMT
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Hello,

Thank you for your answers. But I made a mistake... I forgot a fourth style of case! I updated the photograph with the 4 styles of cases.
Here, I'm just talking about the case styles, not the dial styles. (I duly noted and saw that there were several dial styles)

I did note that style 3 was late, and produced from 135000 numbers (more or less). And I think you’re right. On an Excel table, I listed 32 Gruen Chrono-Timer units with the case number and photos.
This style number 3 comes out 4 times with these numbers:
134 917
135 310
136 458
138 941
And as on the Chrono-Timer, the case number is engraved at the back of the background (visible from the outside), it was simple for me to make this Excel table.

And even with the case numbers (between 127000 and 144xxx), we really can’t have a "theory" of the order of introduction during the 3 or 4 years of production of the Chrono-Timer ?

File Attachments

1) 01.jpg, downloaded 852 times



Style 1 : OR and STEEL



Style 2 : OR



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sat, 04 Jul 2026 17:06:28 GMT
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J'ai une autre question, sur les Chrono-Timer.
J'ai remarqué qu'elles ont 2 types de fond.
La photographie de gauche, c'est bien un fond "vissé" ?
La photographie de droite, c'est bien un fond "clipsé" ?

I have another question, about the Chrono-Timer.
I noticed that they have two types of backgrounds.
Is the photograph on the left really a "screwed" background?
Is the photograph on the right really a "clipped" background?

File Attachments

1) 02.jpg, downloaded 810 times



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Sun, 05 Jul 2026 14:52:15 GMT
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Not having one of these in 14k gold, I can't say. But it looks to be that way: snap back, and not threaded.

Hope you get one to find out. Maybe Thojil might comment as he has one.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Sun, 05 Jul 2026 15:10:03 GMT
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JackG has one, I'll ask.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Sun, 05 Jul 2026 16:14:07 GMT
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Both, Jack's has a screw back.

File Attachments

1) gc_front.jpg, downloaded 780 times



2) gc_back.jpg, downloaded 843 times



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Sun, 05 Jul 2026 17:34:10 GMT
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I analyzed the exterior of 34 chrono-timer (with photographs).
Of these 34:
A - The 17 STEEL watches of "style 1" and the 8 GOLD watches of "style 2" = background with 6 notches (red arrow)
B - The 5 STEEL watches of "style 3" and the 4 GOLD watches of "style 4" = background without notches (blue arrow)

Gary,
The Gruen from JackG is a "style 2" GOLD = background with 6 notches.
And you say it’s a "screwed" background.

So, the bottoms with 6 notches are screwed in.
So, the 17 and 8 watches from line A above have screwed backs.

Jack,
I will send an email to Thojil asking him about his "style 4" model.
But when I look at his photograph, I see a "notch" (green arrow) at the bottom that would make me say it’s a "clipped" background.

File Attachments

1) 03.jpg, downloaded 837 times



2) 04.jpg, downloaded 837 times



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by rubeg on Sun, 05 Jul 2026 19:35:05 GMT
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All
I unscrewed the back of my gold chrono timer.
Would you like more pictures of dial, back or movement.
Jack G

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Mon, 06 Jul 2026 05:35:49 GMT
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Bonjour Jack G,
Je suis OK pour 4 photographies de votre Gruen Chrono-Timer, pour ensuite les mettre dans mon tableau Excel.
Si vous pouvez prendre les photographies comme ces 4.
Merci, Laurent.

Hello Jack G,
I am OK with 4 photographs of your Gruen Chrono-Timer, so I can then put them in my Excel table.
If you can take the photographs like these 4.
Thank you, Laurent.

File Attachments

1) 05.jpg, downloaded 734 times





Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Mon, 06 Jul 2026 05:56:24 GMT
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Pour les gens intéressés, j'ai fais ça Samedi matin ;-)
J'espère ne pas être intégré à Alcatraz...
https://we.tl/t-XK5DzyWAOmNsTaBg

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Wed, 08 Jul 2026 13:00:28 GMT
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Posting these for JackG's Chrono-Timer.

File Attachments

1) IMG_2277.jpg, downloaded 784 times



2) IMG_2273.jpg, downloaded 794 times



3) IMG_2275.jpg, downloaded 756 times



4) IMG_2276.jpg, downloaded 796 times



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Wed, 08 Jul 2026 16:49:44 GMT
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Bonjour Gary et Jack G,
Merci beaucoup pour les photographies, je vais les mettre dans mon tableau Excel.
C'est marrant, le cadran est en "Français" (gradué pour 30 pulsations).
;-)

Hello Gary and Jack G,
Thank you very much for the photographs, I will put them in my Excel table.
It’s funny, the dial is in "French" (gradué pour 30 pulsations).
;-)

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:33:52 GMT
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Passion wrote on Wed, 08 July 2026 10:49Bonjour Gary et Jack G,
>snip<
It’s funny, the dial is in "French" (gradué pour 30 pulsations).
;-)
That is an excellent example of the case style, but it is worth pointing out that the dial has been refinished. The tells include the font style on “Gruen” and the marking “Chronometer”.
Gruen’s original dials would be marked “ChronoTimer”.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Wed, 22 Jul 2026 16:59:52 GMT
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JackW wrote on Fri, 10 July 2026 16:33...the dial has been refinished...
Bonjour, merci pour ton expertise, Jack.
Hello, thank you for your expertise, Jack.
Laurent.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Wed, 22 Jul 2026 17:03:25 GMT
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JackW wrote on Sun, 05 July 2026 16:52...Maybe Thojil might comment as he has one.
Bonjour,
Thojil vient de me répondre : "celui qui présente des encoches est en effet un fond vissé, tandis que l’autre est un fond à emboîtement par friction.".
;-)
Hello,
Thojil has just replied to me : "the one with notches is indeed a screwed bottom, while the other is a friction-fit bottom."

;-)
Laurent.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by afire on Thu, 23 Jul 2026 14:44:45 GMT
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I had a steel one years ago. Cool watch, but too far from my regular style to hold onto. But worth experiencing.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Thu, 23 Jul 2026 17:50:59 GMT
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afire wrote on Thu, 23 July 2026 16:44I had a steel one years ago. Cool watch, but too far from my regular style to hold onto. But worth experiencing.
Bonjour Afire,
Si je comprends votre message, vous aviez une Chrono-Timer (et vous l'avez encore), mais elle ne vous plait moins (je pense ne pas me tromper que vous aimez les Gruen datée entre 1920 et 1940/45), donc vous ne la portez plus ou alors vous la portez rarement ?
Donc, cette Chrono-Timer pourrait faire un heureux ? Je parle au conditionnel.
Si cela est le cas, je ne vous cache pas que je serais intéressé que l'on en discute.
;-)

Hello Afire,
If I understand your message, you had a Chrono-Timer (and you still have it), but you don’t like it as much (I think I’m not mistaken that you like Gruen dated between 1920 and 1940/45), so you don’t wear it anymore or you rarely wear it?
So, could this Chrono-Timer make someone happy? I’m talking about the conditional tense.
If that’s the case, I won’t hide from you that I would be interested in discussing it.
;-)

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by afire on Fri, 24 Jul 2026 14:26:39 GMT
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No, I just had one for about a year and sold it. I do concentrate on 1920-1935 non-round watches but occasionally make an exception.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Mon, 28 Sep 2026 17:06:43 GMT
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Hello,

Good things come to those who wait, though not without a certain amount of risk.

This piece turned up at an auction in Paris. Just one photo (front view) with a very clear technical description.
I download the photograph and, zooming in, try to make out every detail as best I can.
After three days of analysis, my mind is made up in an instant : this Gruen Import 263 Chronotimer Guildite is perfect (on the outside).
The big day arrives. Confident about the quality of this piece, feverish, I tremble at the mere thought of how high the first bidders will go. I set myself a financial ceiling, but I know full well that this ceiling will be too low...
A Gruen in such flawless condition will only come along once every three years in Europe, so I mentally prepare myself to go over that ceiling.

It arrived at my home this morning, I can't believe my eyes.
This Gruen is superb: the case edges are sharp and the chronograph works perfectly. It looks as if it came straight out of the Biel factory.
Two possibilities :
- either the previous owner forgot it at the back of a drawer for 65 years.
- or it's an ultra-faithful copy and I've been had...

Laurent.

PS 1 : As I write these lines, I'm at 62 beats per minute ;-)
PS 2 : Gary, if I may ask, how far along are you with assembling your Gruen Chrono-Timer ?

File Attachments
1) 02.jpg, downloaded 315 times


GRADUATED FOR 30 PULSATIONS
12
3
6
GRUEN
PRECISION
CHRONOMETER

2) 03.jpg, downloaded 311 times


GRADUATED
12
3
6
GRUEN
PRECISION
CHRO -TIMER
SWITZERLAND

3) 04.jpg, downloaded 309 times



Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Mon, 28 Sep 2026 17:40:12 GMT
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OMG what a score for you. There is no faking that so, that should not be even a thought. What does the movement look like inside?

You do have the original sweep chrono seconds hand. Those are rare. Not sure why but I see replacement hands on a lot of these. FYI for anyone else, the cal 460SS sweep second hand has the longer post that will also fit onto the cal 450.

What is curious, I do not see a serial number on the outside of the case back. Do I see that correctly?

And do fess up on the cost. I've about $1000 into the two that I have. Maybe a bit more, and I thought those were bargains. Mine though are assembled from loose parts, so there is that.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Tue, 29 Sep 2026 05:44:46 GMT
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Hello Jack,

Thank you for reassuring me about the authenticity of this beautiful Gruen.
As for the movement, I won't open it until this winter. I don't have any tools yet, but that will come this winter: I've booked a short 5-hour introductory course with my watchmaker, so he can show me the "very broad basics" of watchmaking, as well as the list of tools I'll need to start opening and servicing my Gruens ;-)
Yes, you're seeing correctly: the case back simply reads "Gruen", with no serial number. There are no scratch marks suggesting the number was erased. Over the past 6 months, I've examined a lot of Chrono-Timers online, and they all have the serial number on the case back, except this one!
Jack, $1,000 for your two Chrono-Timers is a very good price, even though they were assembled from loose parts.
In Europe, I've been scrutinizing the market for a year (I built myself an automated search tool): Chrono-Timers are very, very rare, and you won't find a single one, not one, for less than €2,500 ($2,800).
In France, we really don't like talking about price, it's in our genes. It's not like where you are in the United States, where price isn't a taboo, quite the opposite I think. Since I'm starting to get to know you all a bit better (except the anonymous members), and as my partner tells me, "you never do things like everyone else", I'll confess the price: all in (VAT, taxes and shipping from Paris), I paid €2,304 ($2,617).
Looking back now, given how rare they are in Europe and the condition of this Chrono-Timer, I can reassure myself that I got a fair deal.

I can't even imagine what Thomas's gold Chrono-Timer would fetch if he ever decided to sell it in

Europe...

Laurent.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Gary on Tue, 29 Sep 2026 19:34:32 GMT
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Passion wrote on Mon, 28 September 2026 17:06PS 2 : Gary, if I may ask, how far along are you with assembling your Gruen Chrono-Timer ?
Hi Laurent,

I'm still after some parts. I've been lazy lately with my teachings and family taking over. I'm going to set aside a couple of weeks in November to take it on and get going again.

Thanks for asking! That put me into reminder mode.

Cheers,
Gary

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Wed, 30 Sep 2026 05:13:53 GMT
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Gary wrote on Tue, 29 September 2026 21:34 Thanks for asking! That put me into reminder mode.
;-)

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Jenneke on Wed, 30 Sep 2026 16:44:40 GMT
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Wow! That is a crisp looking watch. Congrats! Hope you will wear it with joy, such a good looking watch on the wrist. The value of a watch is what you want to pay for it. These are expensive watches and not available on every corner.

And good to hear you get some watchmaker lessons. Have to warn you, that is a rabbit hole on

---

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by Passion on Wed, 30 Sep 2026 17:03:51 GMT
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Jenneke,
Between collecting Gruens and following your advice, I'm already deep down the rabbit hole.
The watchmaking lessons are just my way of reaching the bottom !
;-)

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by JackW on Wed, 30 Sep 2026 17:37:50 GMT
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Congrats again on such a fine acquisition. You are right, price is somewhat taboo. You should rest assured that you are getting a fine watch. I hope you will share more of it. The lack of the case serial number is rather unusual. Although it isn't unheard of. Enjoy the heck out of the watch. My Chrono-Timers (and my Curvex Royal) are the only watches that seem to garner compliments on a regular basis from random people.

Working on watches is a much deeper rabbit hole then it seems at first. I think I can say with confidence that I have spent far more on tooling and parts then I have on watches. Beware!

Also, welcome to the club.

Subject: Re: Gruen "Chrono-Timer"
Posted by ytony2876 on Thu, 01 Oct 2026 14:47:18 GMT
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Hi Laurent,
Huge congratulations on this incredible piece. Looking at the condition, it really is top-notch—the sharp case edges and clear details are remarkable. Finding a Gruen Chronotimer in such flawless condition is truly rare. Enjoy it! :lol: