Subject: Gruen Verithin V4
Posted by advauctionsvcs on Mon, 20 Apr 2015 21:52:25 GMT
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Model name : Unknown
Type :Verithin
Period/date : 1917-1918
Gender :Gents

Case Maker :
Case Material :
Case Serial :
Case Style no :

Caliber :V4
Movement Maker :
Movement Serial:

Bracelet :

Hello, everyone!

I'm seeking help from a higher authority (you guys) on dating and identifying a pocket watch I found in a client's home today. The face of the watch has Roman numerals for the numbers and 'Gruen Precision' at the top. Opening the first flap on the case reveals 'Gruen 14K Cincinnati' with the number 221651. Opening the second part of the case reveals the same except there is an 'S' beneath the number. The movement has the number 477054 on it, 17 Jewels, Verithin, and, oddly enough, the number '51' stamped into the outer casing that the movement sits in. I have pored over everything I can find and am taking a wild guess that the watch was made around 1910-1912. Outside of that (and I'm obviously not positive about that), I'm coming up with nothing. Can you folks shed some insight on this? Thanks!

File Attachments

1) IMG_20150420_171105415.jpg, downloaded 4219 times


GRUEN PRECISION

2) IMG_20150420_171159994.jpg, downloaded 4149 times


GRUEN
14K
CINCINNATI
2221651

3) IMG_20150420_171317528.jpg, downloaded 4209 times


17 JEWELS
477054
GRUEN WATCH Co
VERITHIN

Subject: Re: Need some help with a Gruen pocket watch
Posted by Barney Green on Tue, 21 Apr 2015 06:26:03 GMT
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You are definitely not far away with your 1910 to 1912 guess on this very nice Gruen. I am definitely not the expert in Gruen's pocket watchesbut to me this looks like a V3 caliber movement from the 1910s. Can't see the escapement on the photo clear enough if it has the typical moustache form. Solid 14k in house made case, the '51' is just the ending of the case serial number so that the parts can not be mismatched during assembly or at a watchmaker's desk. I'd date it around 1915...

Subject: Re: Need some help with a Gruen pocket watch
Posted by Thojil on Tue, 21 Apr 2015 11:58:35 GMT
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Very nice watch you have there. Gruen introduced the 1st generation Veri-Thin movements already in 1903. These were replaced by the "V" caliber series in 1910 and were produced until about 1938. Yours has a Gruen produced solid gold case and was supplied as a complete watch to the customer. At the time this was still a novelty as most manufacturers just supplied the movement and the customer would chose a generic case to put it in at the jeweler.

The "V" series were available in various quality levels.

- VE-21j "Extra Precision"
- V1-21j; V2-19j; V3-17j "Precision"
- V1.5-21j; V2.5-19j; V4-17j; V5-15j "Regular Adjusted"

Your movement is a V4 17j, which was Gruen's best selling movement in the range. It is not a V3 as these movements had a different ratchet & click spring design and also had "Precision Chronometer Balance" engraved on the barrel bridge. The following description of the V4 is taken from the 1916 Gruen Blue Book

"Center jewel in red gold setting, adjusted to five positions, temperatures and isochronism. It has every known improvement, such as double roller, visible steel escapement, patent regulator, time adjusting screws, brequet hairspring, compensating balance, safety sliding click, finest hardened materials"

About dating your movement I would add 2-3 years, so 1917-1918. In my serial number database I have a few serial numbers between 470k and 480k that have cases with date inscriptions of 1917/1918. The same time you have to be careful dating this way as it is not very reliable. So Barney could still be right...

For my information, can you confirm if the inscription on inner dust cover says "Verithin Model 14K" over the serial number?

Subject: Re: Need some help with a Gruen pocket watch
Posted by advauctionsvcs on Tue, 21 Apr 2015 12:16:41 GMT
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For a 100 year old watch, my guess on the date wasn't too far off for a semi-novice It does say on the inside dust cover "Verithin Model 14K" over the serial number. Below the serial number is an 'S'. Any idea if that's significant? I'm assuming the entire watch case is 14K gold since it's inscribed as such. It was a pleasant surprise to see the insides as clean as they were. No obvious pieces missing. I've had a couple of pocket watches here and there that were downright ugly once you pulled the back off. This one looked about as clean as it was leaving the shop. I also liked the pattern of the chain, too. What would this have retailed for back in the day? Thank you both for your assistance on this.

Subject: Re: Need some help with a Gruen pocket watch
Posted by Barney Green on Tue, 21 Apr 2015 12:28:21 GMT
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Very good input from Thojil. This was my first attempt dating a pocket watch, so I was slightly off in almost all regards. Did not have a picture of a V4 at work nor did I have my master book with me. Apologies for not being exact...

Subject: Re: Need some help with a Gruen pocket watch
Posted by afire on Tue, 21 Apr 2015 15:32:01 GMT
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advauctionsvcs wrote on Tue, 21 April 2015 07:16What would this have retailed for back in the day?
Looking at the 1918 catalog, I can't make a positive ID. There are two candidates. One is plate three on page 30. I don't know what a "Very-Verithin" is, or how to tell one from a regular Verithin movement, but I think this is the best match case-wise. It's described as "bascine" which essentially means seamless. Jumping forward to page 2 on the price list, if this movement is possibly a VV4, then the price would have been $95. Another possibility is plate 12 on page 35. It's described as "semi-bascine" which I believe is because it's not seamless looking, but rather the center section sticks out a little. But this model did have a regular Verithin V4 as an option. If that's what it is, then page four of the price list shows a price of $110.

Subject: Re: Need some help with a Gruen pocket watch
Posted by Thojil on Tue, 21 Apr 2015 17:05:31 GMT
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afire wrote on Tue, 21 April 2015 17:32Looking at the 1918 catalog, I can't make a positive ID. There are two candidates. One is plate three on page 30. I don't know what a "Very-Verithin" is, or how to tell one from a regular Verithin movement, but I think this is the best match case-wise.

It's described as "bascine" which essentially means seamless. Jumping forward to page 2 on the price list, if this movement is possibly a VV4, then the price would have been $95. Another possibility is plate 12 on page 35. It's described as "semi-bascine" which I believe is because it's not seamless looking, but rather the center section sticks out a little. But this model did have a regular Verithin V4 as an option. If that's what it is, then page four of the price list shows a price of $110.

The "Very-Verithin" was only a case style that was even sleeker than the regular Verithin cases. Although Gruen refers to a special "VV4" movement for these cases, implying that it would be different from a "V4", there is actually no evidence it ever existed other than in this 1918 Price List. I have seen hundreds of V4 movements and have yet to see one marked "VV". Also you will not find a "VV" caliber in any of the Parts Catalogs.

Your case is not a "Very-Verithin" case as these were marked as such in the inner dust cover.

I said that Gruen was supplying complete watches however the customer could choose from different case styles and dials. So giving a more exact ID may proof difficult. I'll go through my sources as well tonight.

File Attachments

1) Gruen VeriThin V4 Louis XIV 2.5.jpg, downloaded 3656 times

