

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Icons of watchmaking history no.4: Cartier Santos



**This week, horological guru Gisbert L. Brunner considers the Cartier 'Santos', one of the first wristwatches and a watch truly born out of necessity.**

It was a pioneer of flight, Brazilian born, but Paris-domiciled for most of his life Alberto Santos-Dumont who, in 1904, asked his great friend the jeweller Louis Cartier for a watch that could be consulted without taking either hand off the controls of his aeroplane. The result, while not exactly THE modern wristwatch, was a design classic in its own right. In fact, the Brazilian was wearing this watch when he completed his memorable 220-metre flight in November 1906.



With its characteristic square design, with rounded corners and occasional rivets or screws, the Santos was the first artistic *variation* of the wristwatch, hitherto a classic circle or rectangle. It lives on today, with a modern interpretation being the luxurious Santos 100.

**Next week: The Chronoswiss Regulator**

Icons of watchmaking history -

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*Text: [Gisbert L. Brunner](#)*

*Photo: Cartier*

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