

## WHY THE EXCITEMENT?

*By Jack Freedman – October 2017*

Although the Swiss are known the world over for fine precision luxury mechanical timepieces, it was the Americans that brought noteworthy horological innovations in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Companies like Elgin, Hamilton, Howard, Illinois, and Waltham were at the forefront of manufacturing standardized precision parts and quality made movements assembled in the U.S.A.

Indeed, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Florentine Aristo Jones took a watchmaking risk when he left prosperous Boston bringing along American horological innovations to the industrially under-equipped town of Schaffhausen, Switzerland. There he founded, in 1868, the International Watch Company -- now simply known by its initials IWC. With original American know how, IWC blossomed over the last century and a half into a very respectable luxury watch brand owned by the Richemont Group.

Thus, bringing fresh new ideas and innovations to “horological equipment” will not be the first time around that products made in the U.S.A. have found an edge over similar type Swiss or German machines known in the watch industry.

As an independent watchmaker for 40 years I have owned and operated many different machines for cleaning watch movements, from manual models to fully automatic and ultrasonic models.

In my repair shop, I have had the L&R manual, L&R Varimatic, Zenith manual, Zenith-Seiko 101 automatic-ultrasonic with five jars (made in Japan), and also the Bulova Watchmaster. Over the last four years I've used the Greiner ACS900 automatic four jar machine with the first jar having ultrasonic. This was considered the best Swiss made machine of its time and is still being used by many major watch companies.

### **New American made Freedom watch cleaning machine**

I thought I would share my own personal excitement about the new FREEDOM machine - a product that any watchmaker would be proud to have in his workshop especially at a price that is far below of those competing Swiss and German machines on the market today.

You see, I waited two years for the Freedom machine to be produced and available because I had faith in the announced product based on simplicity of readily available stock materials, state-of-the-art digital components, and a minimum of parts. No other machine imported from overseas that I'm aware of matched the benefits of the Freedom machine.



The two model FREEDOM cleaning machines, are both automatic and fully ultrasonic in all four or five jars. Made and assembled here in the U.S., the design and production is the brainchild of a watchmaker-engineer, John Baer, in Lititz, Pennsylvania, where the town is known for its horological expertise far away from any bustling metropolis.

With a hands on approach, John and his company, Lititz Precision Products analyzed the needs of the watchmaker and set about to design, manufacture, and bring to market an affordable machine which incorporates all the cleaning and drying features any watchmakers shop will appreciate for its simplicity yet most effective results.

The Freedom machine is produced with American components containing fewer moving parts, direct drive motors and no belts, basic sensors instead of fancy encoders. The bottom “index table” operates on a Geneva Mechanism which is precise and simple with only two moving parts.

The fully automatic machine features programmable cleaning cycles with optional ultrasonic for each jar and a programmable dryer time. It’s user friendly and very simple to run.

I am excited about this machine because, over the years, I’ve had so many other cleaning machines that, among other things, needed repairs due to complex internal parts consisting of belts, gears, and a range of interconnected parts that were so dependent on one another. Above all, repairs were costly and couldn’t be done on my own but through appointed service technicians which also meant loss of time and steep shipping costs.

Then, finally in early 2017, the American-made Freedom machine came to market with none of all the overlapping components found in the Swiss and German cleaning machines and, once I began operating it several months ago, I could not believe the ease of use and the fantastic cleaning and drying results.

I think any repair shop would be impressed with the Freedom cleaning machine. The “American Spirit” is live and well and has shown the watch industry its creative approach in engineering and able to capture real excitement with it.

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