

Optically

For more than 40 years, the French company Pouilloux has been manufacturing high-quality "Vuarnet" sunglasses for the most demanding of customers. The blanks for them are supplied by Schott Desag AG.

"It's a Vuarnet day today" – is a phrase often heard in American athletic circles on especially bright days. This is highly unusual, considering that American brands have dominated this market segment for years.

The popularity of the Vuarnet sunglasses started with a news program seen by Joseph Hatchiguan



In 1960 the French national ski team wore sunglasses from Pouilloux. Later the company created the "Vuarnet" brand after Olympic gold medalist Jean Vuarnet. Today the high quality sunglasses are known the world over.

in a movie theatre. In it, Juan Vuarnet was interviewed upon winning a gold medal in the Winter Olympic Games of 1960 held in Squaw Valley (California). In the interview, Vuarnet wore the glasses that the Pouilloux company had provided to the entire French team. So Roger Pouilloux and Hatchiguan decided to approach Olympic star Vuarnet in order to

create a new brand that would profit from the athlete's increasing popularity.

The glasses were equipped with a new mineral glass whose outstanding characteristics immediately captured the enthusiasm of athletes and soon thereafter of the public as well.

Top design and highly efficient glasses

For the pros, "Vuarnet" soon became the most natural thing to wear. The sunglasses soon became a national sensation in their home country, but it was only until 1984 that the Vuarnet sunglasses found an international audience when they were chosen as official partners of the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The key to the product's meteoric success and long-lasting market presence has been an uncompromising commitment to quality, both in the high performance of the glasses but also in the frames. The Schott Desag plant in Grünenplan, Germany manufactures the blanks exclusively for the Pouilloux company in green, brown, yellow and yellow-green colors. Subsequently, they are coated using Schott Desag technology, processed further and then mounted in acetate, metal or nylon frames. The mineral glasses

provide excellent protection against the sun, have a higher scratch resistance than plastic and outstanding optical qualities: Eight different types of glass, among them the "Skylynx" and "Unilyn", are able to meet the most extreme quality standards of transparency and protection. These features determine the price, which isn't exactly low, but which reflects the quality. About 80 percent of the sunglasses are sold by opticians, who are perfectly suited to explain Vuarnet's numerous advantages to demanding customers. Pouilloux markets to specific applications such as car driving, water sports, and everyday city life. While doing so, the protective EN (European Norm) standards from 0 to 4 are always applied. Pouilloux also supplies its product with corrective glasses made by the company's own Parisian plant. This expansion to the product range took place in close cooperation between Pouilloux, Schott Desag and Schott France. In the meantime, the partnership is over ten years old.

Professional expertise and continuous quality have provided the foundation for Pouilloux's success in building up an impressive customer base. Some business relationships go back twenty years. This proves that "Vuarnet" has been able to withstand short-lived fads and even managed to increase market share by having a sixth sense of what customers want. After all, the heroes of the sixties are ancient history in the eyes of today's youths. In the 40 years on the market, Vuarnet has created it's own identity. The dark glasses are manufactured by the Pouilloux

Schott Desag AG:

Spectacle lens blank specialist

- ▶ Manufacture of spectacle lenses since 1861
- ▶ Sunglasses in customer-specific colors
- ▶ Prescription lenses with refractive indices from 1.5 to 1.9
- ▶ Photochromic glass, self-tinting in sunlight
- ▶ Mold glass for plastic spectacle lens manufacture
- ▶ Glass blanks for bifocal spectacle lens manufacture



e f f e c t i v e

The height of fashion: "Vuarnet" sunglasses with the leopard skin look.

subsidiaries

Comitec and Sovis. The head of Comitec, Jean-Pierre Marie, is an advocate of the use of mineral glass for sun protection. "The argument of increased weight is no problem. What are 1 or 1.5 grams of added weight when the advantages are so significant? Today one can produce pre-stressed mineral glasses, making the product significantly more break resistant. In addition, contrary to prevailing opinion – the manufacture of sunglasses is by no means less complex than that of prescription glasses."

The perfect coating has priority

The Comitec plant in Meaux has a manufacturing capacity of 1 million glasses per year and supplies Pouilloux with all the glass needed for the Vuarnet sunglasses (except for some special series) and also mounts the glasses in special frames.

Achieving the perfect uniformity of the coatings applied to the glass is a constant goal. To achieve this, there are two half- and one fully automated production lines, where the glasses are pre-cut, ground, washed and polished. Afterwards, they are washed again and then dried. After a manual quality control of the surface, the glasses are automatically cut and ground to shape for their specified frames. Every one is engraved with the "Vuarnet" logo before hardening. In order to prevent any kind of dirt or damage, the sunglasses are washed and dried with ultrasound several times throughout the process. Finally, thin layers of dye and non-reflective coatings are applied. For an optimum fit between glass and

frame, Comitec is directly connected with Pouilloux in Paris via computer.

The company currently sells over 600,000 sunglasses annually, half of them outside of France. Looking into the future, the company launched the "Baby Vuarnet" two years ago, a mini collection especially tailored to the customers of tomorrow ■

Quality for a price

Optical mineral glasses account for more than half of the manufacturing costs of a pair of sunglasses. Nonetheless, an increasing number of informed consumers are buying expensive sunglasses to find the protection they need against the harmful effects of UV-A and UV-B rays.