
Chapal 1832: Prêt-à-courir

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You won't find Chapal's designs on the catwalks of Milan, or at the New York Fashion Week. They appear instead at such esteemed venues as Le Mans and Goodwood. Indeed, the new Chapal showroom in the heart of Paris could soon become a place of pilgrimage for gentleman drivers.

When Léonard Chapal and his cousin Marien Cougny opened a small tannery in the Creuse region, close to the city of Limoges, in the year 1832, none would have predicted its route to success. It later produced flying jackets for the French and US Air Forces and then, from the early 1950s, began to dedicate itself to more automobile-inspired designs. This change of direction was down to Jean Bardinon, who married into the Chapal family.



Many of the early pieces are still manufactured today, by hand, in their original form. These include helmets, gloves, race overalls and shoes, with leather that still comes from the original tannery near Limoges. In recent years, however, a modern line of shirts, jeans and accessories has been added to the range.



The new showroom lies on the Rue de Rivoli, near the Place de la Concorde - it's in a classical Parisian city dwelling with high ceilings and plenty of ornate stucco. A visit to the Jean François Bardinon showrooms is a worthwhile part of a trip to Paris. As well as the Chapal collection, works of art from the private collection of Jean François Bardinon are on view.



For further information see www.chapal.fr.

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