

# Couesnon & Cie.

## Paris, France

- 1827 A. G. Guichard establishes company outside Paris.
- 1835 Guichard is joined by brother-in-law Pierre Gautrot.
- 1845 Gautrot is now the proprietor of the business.
- 1881 The Triebert company is purchased by Gautrot.
- 1882 Gautrot, Durant et Cie. becomes Couesnon, Gautrot et Cie. under the directorship of Amedee August Couesnon (kwee-non), the son-in-law of Gautrot.
- 1888 Now Couesnon et Cie.; rue d'Angouleme 94, Paris.
- 1896 Workforce of 200 at factory in Chateau Thierry.
- 1911 Workforce of 1,000 at 8 factories, the largest maker in the world at the time. Owner A. Couesnon visits NYC (*MTR*).
- 1912 Catalog shows early trumpet with shepherd's crook bell (photo 3).
- 1915 A catalog states that they recently were awarded a contract to supply the French army with brass instruments.
- 1927 Now down to workforce of 200.
- 1937 The office moves to rue Lafayette 105.
- 1960 A catalog shows new lower price "Lafayette" model brass.
- 1978 The contract with US importer Gretsch ends (Donaldson).
- 1979 The main factory at Chateau Thierry is destroyed by an arson fire. All the archives were destroyed (PGM Couesnon).
- 1980s Former worker Ginette Planson starts a musical instrument accessories business called PGM (Planson & daughters Sophie Glace & Isabella Moret).
- 1999 PGM buys the Couesnon name in liquidation and maintains a small factory in Chateau Theirry (PGM).
- 2014 Ginette Planson is the CEO of PGM Couesnon (PGM).

Information from *The New Langwill Index* unless noted. Photos from Horn-u-copia.net unless noted.

### Dating Couesnon instruments:

1. Most instruments from the late 1800s into the 1950s had a two-digit date in a pineapple on the bell (bottom photo).
2. The address changed from rue d'Angouleme to Lafayette around 1937.



3. Serial numbers are difficult to pin down so it's safer to date them by the date in the pineapple or by comparing the bell inscription style.

4. Like most companies, the bell inscription goes from elaborate to simple over time.

Couesnon Logos:

Photo 1: 1893

Photo 2: 1915 American Perf.

Photo 3: 1922

Photo 4: 1927 Monopole model

Photo 5: 1945

Photo 6: 1947 now with the C around the O

Photo 7: 1956 (bottom right)

Photo 8 below: c.1970, by now just a crudely stamped name



Photo 9 below c.1980 snail logo





Couesnon Trumpets:

Photo 1: as seen in 1912 catalog

Photo 2: American Perfection model as seen in 1915 Sherman, Clay & Co. catalog, western US dealers for Couesnon.

Photo 3: 1924 American Perfection model

Photo 4: 1924 Monopole model

Photo 5: 1945 in C

Photo 6: c.1950

Photo 7: 1950

Photo 8: 1951

Photo 9: 1960 model PX2125, large bore

Photo 10: 1961

Photo 11: #46257 resembles 1960/61 catalog photos

Photo 12: Monopole model 7480, c.1970 catalog, ML bore

Photo 13: #83281 resembles c.1970 Monopole except for missing 1st valve slide trigger (below)



Photo 14: Deluxe model 7474, c.1970 catalog, ML bore (below)

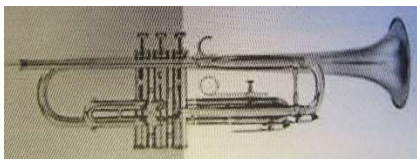
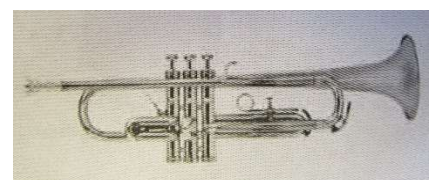
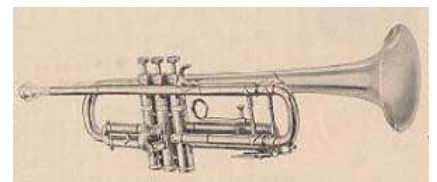
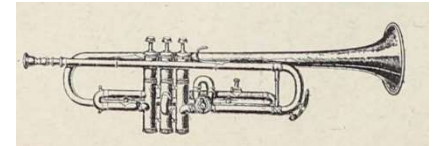
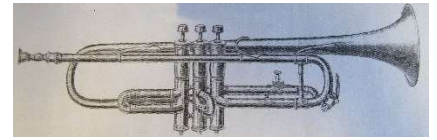


Photo 15: Renault model, looks like 1960s except front water key



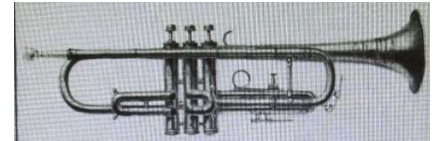
Photo 16: 1965 piccolo, 4 valves (below)



Factory & owner Jean Couesnon in 1927



In 1927 the sole US agent was Simson & Frey of NYC. Their ad shows four new US trumpet models; the Classic, Champion, Virtuoso, & Imperator. Photo 2 is example in ad which matches the American Perfection model from 1924 on the last page.



The earliest mention I have found of the “Monopole” model is from an ad in 1910.

### **Couesnon and the F. Besson company.**

1951 Besson/B&H purchase the almost bankrupt F. Besson. A new company is formed by Geoffrey Hawkes (1896-1961), using his Paris publishing company Editions Hawkes, and Couesnon SA, as a subsidiary of Editions Hawkes. They allocate shares at 60% EH and 40% Couesnon, with Emil Stoecklin, of Couesnon, the director. The board includes a member from Besson Inc in Texas (Besson shareholder minutes).

F. Besson trumpets from this period now have a third water key, which is said to be a Couesnon part. Instruments are said to have been made with parts supplied by Couesnon and assembled at the Editions Hawkes building at 16 Rue de Faubourg, Saint Denis, Paris.

F. Besson #95460 c.1950 (author's collection)

