

EssilorLuxottica mourns passing of Bernard Maitenaz, inventor of the first Varilux progressive lens

Charenton-le-Pont, France (February 22, 2021) – EssilorLuxottica is deeply saddened to announce that Bernard Maitenaz, the inventor of the Varilux progressive lens that improved the lives of millions of presbyopes globally and redefined an entire industry, has passed away in Paris, at the age of 94.

At this difficult time, Leonardo Del Vecchio, Hubert Sagnières, Francesco Milleri, Paul du Saillant and the entire EssilorLuxottica family's thoughts are with Bernard Maitenaz's family.

Bernard Maitenaz's pioneering work revolutionized the eyecare industry and transformed people's lives: to date, more than 700 million Varilux lenses have been sold since 1959. His passion for optics, unwavering faith in its future and valuable contributions have made him one of the most iconic figures in the optical industry.

Bernard was one of the founders of Essilor Group in 1972. At the helm of the company between 1981 and 1991, he oversaw a period of major international growth, which turned Essilor into the world's leading lens manufacturer. His commitment to Essilor continued well beyond his retirement, as Honorary Chairman of the Essilor Board of Directors, and as founding member of the Valoptec shareholders association.

Before progressive lenses, presbyopia was generally corrected with bifocal lenses, an invention from Benjamin Franklin in the 18th century. Frustrated with his father's bifocals, and determined to improve his father's life by improving his sight, Bernard, who was then a 33-year-old engineer at La Société des Lunetiers in 1959, took on the task of creating a lens that would provide presbyopes with comfortable vision at any distance.

Bernard Maitenaz graduated with degrees in engineering from both Arts et Métiers in 1946 and Ecole Supérieure d'Optique in 1947.

EssilorLuxottica is a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of ophthalmic lenses, frames and sunglasses. Formed in 2018, its mission is to help people around the world to see more, be more and live life to its fullest by addressing their evolving vision needs and personal style aspirations. The Company brings together the complementary expertise of two industry pioneers, one in advanced lens technology and the other in the craftsmanship of iconic eyewear, to set new industry standards for vision care and the consumer experience around it. Influential eyewear brands including Ray-Ban and Oakley, lens technology brands including Varilux® and Transitions®, and world-class retail brands including Sunglass Hut and LensCrafters are part of the EssilorLuxottica family. In 2019, EssilorLuxottica had approximately 150,000 employees and consolidated revenues of Euro 17.4 billion. The EssilorLuxottica share trades on the Euronext Paris market and is included in the Euro Stoxx 50 and CAC 40 indices. Codes and symbols: ISIN: FR0000121667; Reuters: ESLX.PA; Bloomberg: EL:FP.

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