



# TIMELESS WONDERS

How Robert Barreto Is Changing The Face of Time

By: Gina Samarotto

**R**obert Barreto is not, it seems, a man who finds contentment in routine. His resume reads like a novel with stints in several industries including banking and business development. He is currently the president and CEO of the South Carolina-based GBS Building Supply. In his “spare time”, Barreto has founded Famiglia Vaglio – a watch company changing –both literally and figuratively – the face of luxury watches.

A lifelong aficionado of luxury timepieces, Barreto owned dozens of upscale watches over the years including a limited edition Longine’s purchased in the 90’s following a lofty promotion to Vice President. “It was the first time I spent a significant amount of money on a watch,” Barreto explains, “but certainly not the last.” His timepiece hobby soon became a passion, and by 2012 a now retired Barreto turned his attentions to mastering the mechanics of crafting timepieces himself. Shortly afterwards, he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease – a progressive disorder of the nervous system. As the first tremors of the disease affected Barreto and his

ability to physically craft the watches was abruptly interrupted, he refocused once again and founded Famiglia Vaglio.

“Without a doubt the biggest challenge in creating Famiglia Vaglio was finding both a design partner and someone in Switzerland who could manufacture the watches.” He found his design partner and within a few hours, the first designs were on paper. He went on to find a watchmaker in Geneva able to bring his designs to life and the rest, as they say, is history.

Famiglia Vaglio’s inaugural collection includes *Eterno* – a handsome timepiece crafted with a stainless, 40-millimeter case and sapphire bezel. The limited release watch also sports a leather strap, double butterfly buckle and is water resistant. Limited to just 500 pieces, *Eterno*’s elegant good looks has piqued the interest of collectors and firmly placed Barreto as a watchmaker to be – well, watched. Also in the inaugural collection is *Pilota*. As the name would suggest, the *Pilota* brings to mind romantic images of race car drivers and elegant sportsmen. Rated at 5 atmospheres with iridescent hands

and an inner register, *Pilota*’s graphic detailing lends a distinctive aesthetic that is at once bold and subtle. Both pieces are surprisingly well priced, with the *Eterno* coming in at under \$500 and *Pilota* at just \$195. Even more remarkable is the fact that the success of the watches isn’t limited to benefitting Barreto. Rather, portions of the proceeds are earmarked to benefit the American Cancer Society and the Parkinson’s Foundation. Famiglia Vaglio will also support the Greenville Area Parkinson Society, a local nonprofit that offers support, education, and advocacy to those South Carolinians battling the condition. In the coming months, Barreto plans to continue leading Famiglia Vaglio and other pursuits, including a real estate development company he launched with his son several years ago. “I plan to keep moving forward despite Parkinson’s,” Barreto says. “Quitting is not an option.” ✈

*For more information on the watches of Famiglia Vaglio, please visit [www.vagliowatches.com](http://www.vagliowatches.com) and for further information on the notable work of the Parkinson’s Foundation, please visit [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org).*