



SOLARIMPULSE FOUNDATION

NOTE TO THE PRESS

BERTRAND PICCARD CELEBRATES THE 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ROUND- THE-WORLD BALLOON FLIGHT WITH BREITLING ORBITER 3

Dear Members of the Press,

20 years ago, **on March 21st, 1999 at 6:00 GMT**, Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones successfully landed in the Egyptian desert, after traveling 45'755km in 19 days, 21 hours and 55 minutes, thus **achieving the longest flight in the history of aviation** for both distance and duration. The balloonists took off from Chateau-d'Oex, Switzerland, on March 1st, 1999.

The historic achievement for science, technology and mankind

Circumnavigating the globe in a balloon was considered as the final great adventure of the 20th century. Several billionaires such as Richard Branson and Steve Fossett had made unsuccessful attempts. In total, 10 teams tried 21 times to reach this last Grail. Bertrand Piccard himself failed twice in 1997 and 1998 before attempting the third flight with Brian Jones.

Some key facts about the round-the-world flight:

- **Duration of the flight:** 19 days 21 hours 55 minutes
- **Maximum altitude reached:** 11'755 meters
- **Maximum speed attained:** 240 Km/h
- **Distance covered:** 45'755 kilometers
- **Ratified distance:** 40,814 kilometers
- **Number of countries crossed:** 26 countries

Did you know that?

The public could follow Bertrand and Brian's trip live on Breitling Orbiter's website. It was a first in the history of the internet! At the occasion of the 20th Anniversary, we re-published [the original website](#).

There was a third passenger onboard! Indeed, on the 5th day of the flight, the pilots noticed a stow away: a mosquito that probably got in the balloon when they took off in Château d'Oex. Read the full story [here](#).

After successfully achieving the round-the-world, Bertrand declared that he felt that, all along this adventure, they were guided by an "invisible hand" helping them to catch the jet stream in Mexico after being deviated from their initial route and then to reach the African continent with only a very small amount of propane.

Tell the story: available content for media

If you would like to communicate on this special event, you will find more information on the following links:

- **Multimedia material** (Archives Pictures, video footage and video interview, Bertrand Piccard's bio, etc.) here: <https://solarimpulse.com/media>
- **Article** on Solar Impulse Foundation's website here: <https://solarimpulse.com/news/view/relive-the-adventure>
- **Breitling Orbiter 3 website** here: <https://breitling-orbiter.solarimpulse.com/index.html>

And on our Social Media Accounts:

Solar Impulse Foundation: solarimpulse.com



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Bertrand Piccard – Initiator and Chairman of the Solar Impulse Foundation: bertrandpiccard.com



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