

ORBITER ANNIVERSARIES

BY JAN TEGLER

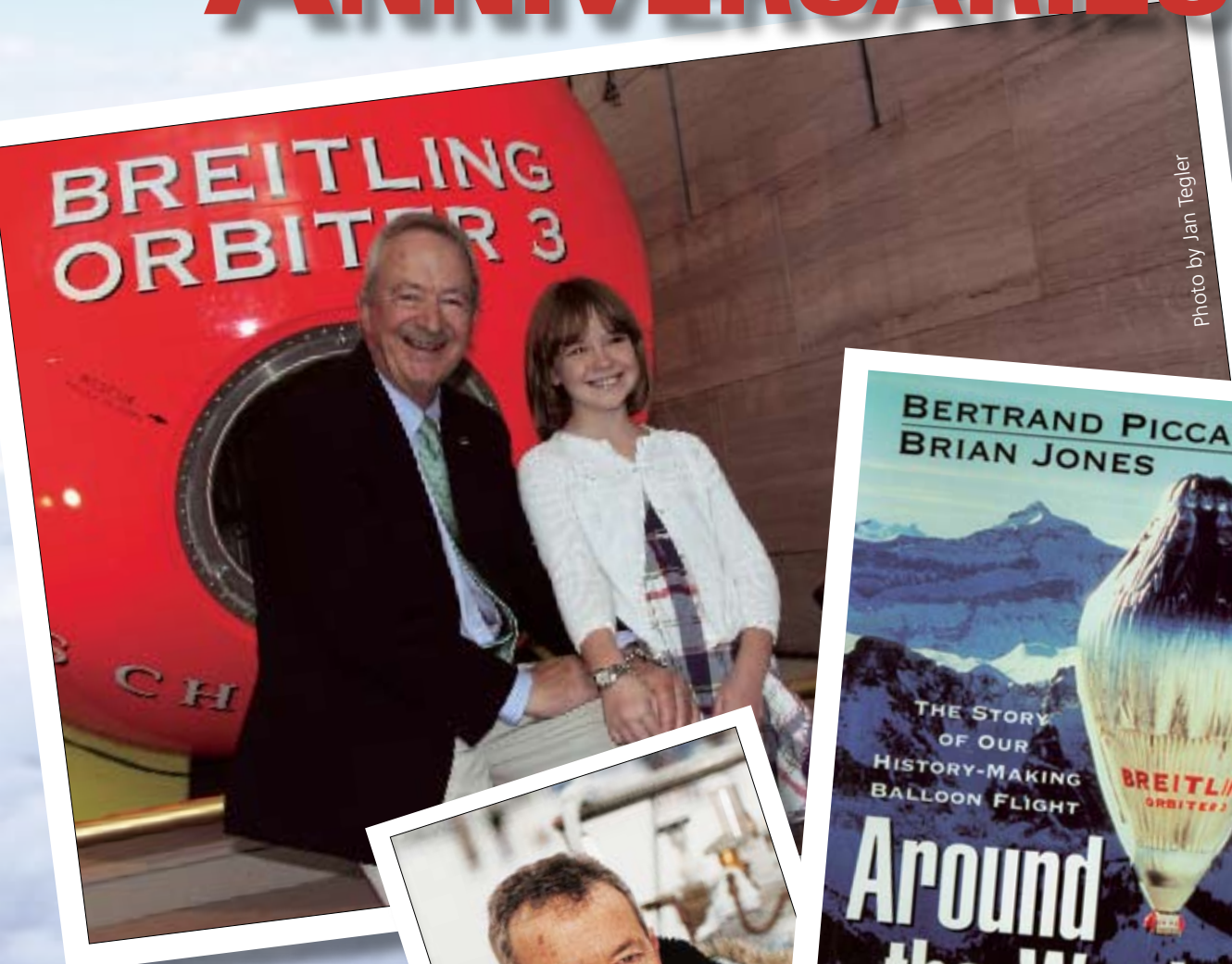
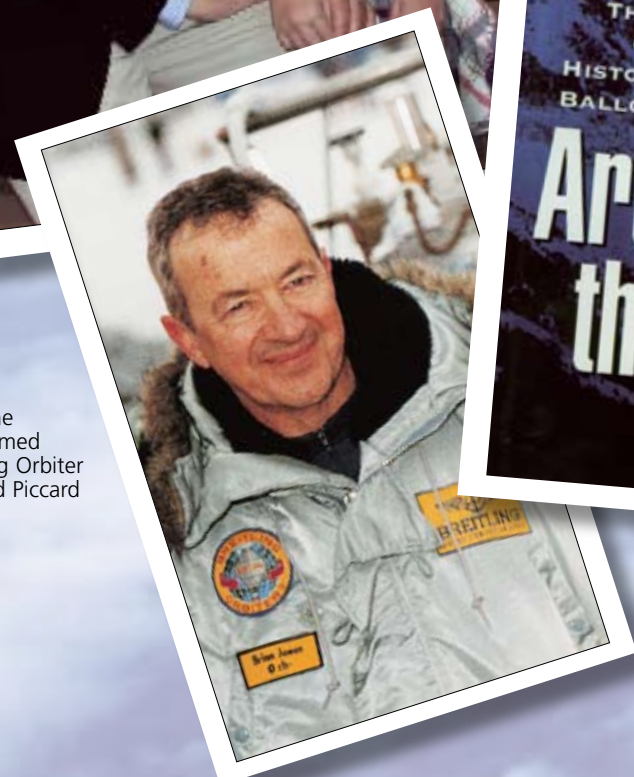
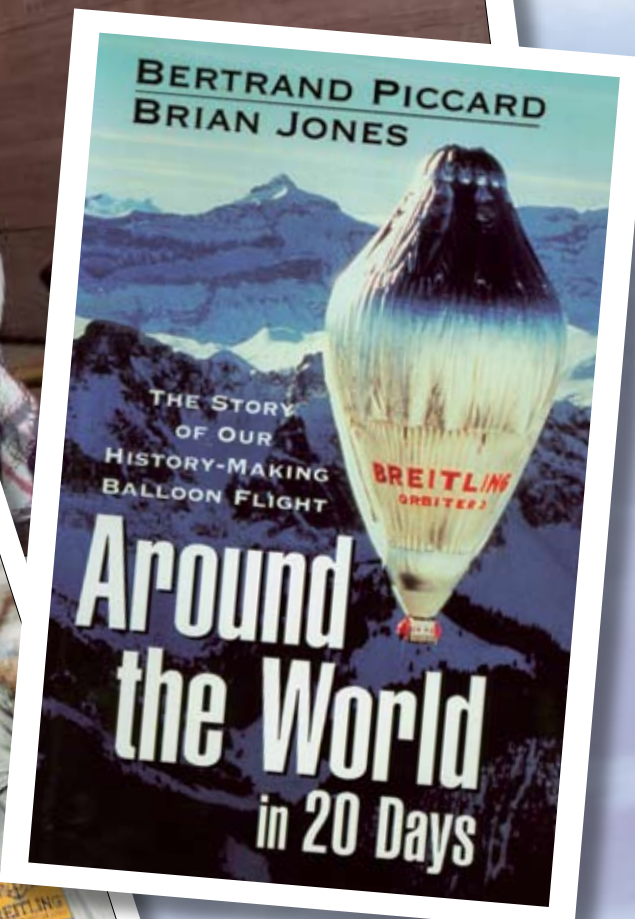


Photo by Jan Tegler



Brian Jones meets Breitling, the ten-year-old Maryland girl named for the record-setting Breitling Orbiter piloted by Jones and Bertrand Piccard



Photo by Jan Tegler



Above: Jones at the NASM with the Orbiter 3
Left: Brian Jones (left) and Bertrand Piccard during the construction of the Breitling Orbiter 3 capsule, seen through the back hatch.

Breitling the watch brand and Breitling the ten-year-old girl celebrate an **aviation milestone** at the **National Air and Space Museum**

A few seconds after 06:00 Zulu on Sunday, March 21, 1999, Aeronauts Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones made history when they touched down on a high sandy plateau in the Egyptian desert. Twenty days had passed since their takeoff from Château d'Oex, Switzerland, in Breitling Orbiter 3, a craft designed specially to attempt the first-ever non-stop around-the-world flight in a balloon. After 477.47 hours, 25,361 miles, several close-calls and a daring route, the record was theirs.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of this record-setting flight, Jones, his wife Joanna joined a delegation from Breitling in October at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air & Space Museum (NASM) in Washington, D.C.

Before Breitling Orbiter 3's neon-red Gondola and an enthusiastic crowd in the Milestones of Flight Gallery, Jones reflected on the accomplishment.

"It still seems surreal even after ten years," he said. "It's hard to be-

lieve that it's my name on the side of the capsule. Although I remember the flight vividly, I still can't quite come to terms with the fact that I was one of the first two guys to ever fly around the world non-stop in a balloon. I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to pilot the biggest balloon ever built and that I was able to get it down without hurting myself."

Breitling was instrumental in the effort, having backed the program through two earlier failed attempts by Bertrand Piccard in Breitling Orbiter

The Orbiter journey benefits the Winds of Hope foundation, which helps children afflicted with diseases associated with poverty and malnutrition. Below, Breitling and her family pose with her parents, Jones and the Orbiter.



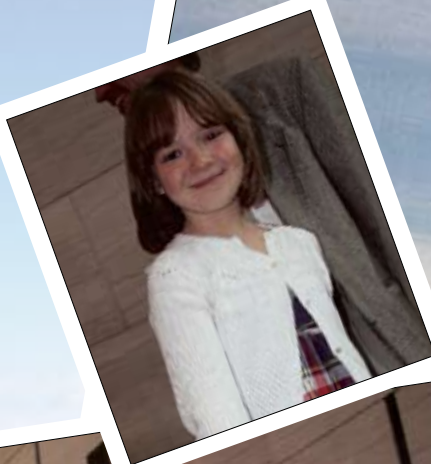
1 and 2. Jones, the United Kingdom's chief balloon flying instructor, joined the endeavor as a flight controller on Breitling Orbiter 2, helped design and manage the Orbiter 3 program, then was pressed into service as copilot.

"Breitling was brilliant," he explained. "In addition to backing the project, they stood back and let us get on with it."

To learn more about the history-making flight visit www.breitling-orbiter.ch or www.orbiterballoon.com

A Breitling birth

As Jones and Piccard were wrestling with fatigue, stress and a bout of oxygen deprivation as their flight reached a critical stage, nearly 2,000 miles north at approximately the



Breitling Snyder receives a steel version of this Breitling Windrider Starliner from Jones at the recent anniversary celebration of the adventure.

same longitude, a baby girl was born to Howard and Sharon Snyder.

The Annapolis, Maryland-based couple had been following the exploits of Jones and Piccard for two weeks. They read in the newspaper the morning after their daughter's birth that Orbiter 3 had passed over their heads the night before.

Inspired, Howard and his wife named the girl Breitling. Three days later when the aeronauts landed near Mut, Egypt, the Snyders (who coincidentally had visited the remote locale one year earlier) emailed their

congratulations. Later that year, Jones and Piccard met the Snyders and baby Breitling at the dedication of the Breitling Orbiter 3 exhibit at the NASM.

Now ten-years old, Breitling Snyder and her family were on hand for the tenth anniversary fete. Jones was delighted to see the girl whose name was inspired by the Breitling balloon's record-setting odyssey. It was the first time in a decade the two had been together and Jones and Breitling's Lisa Roman presented Breitling with a Breitling watch of her own, a Ladies' Windrider Starliner. ☺

