



DE BETHUNE

L'ART HORLOGER AU XXI^e SIÈCLE

DB28XP

De Bethune Celebrates the 10th Anniversary of the DB28.

Geneva, April 23rd 2020





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2020 : De Bethune Celebrates the 10th Anniversary of the DB28.

Drawing on the quintessence of the DB28's DNA,
De Bethune gives birth to three watches, all linked by an enduring
bond.

At once completely different and naturally complementary, together
they tell the story of 10 years of intense work and research, of a
mechanical and aesthetic quest.

Opening a New Chapter in Substance: Ultra-Thin by De Bethune.

When the first DB28 was launched in 2010, De Bethune's idea was to present a timepiece with an identity all its own and a resolutely futuristic vision of the art of watchmaking. The design of the timepiece embodies the code of the Maison. The distinctive case shape, the crown at 12 o'clock inspired by pocket watches. Just some of the hallmarks of the contemporary aestheticism specific to De Bethune. It is on this timepiece that De Bethune's unique and innovative – and patented – floating lugs, designed also to significantly improve comfort, demonstrated their self-evident purpose. Since then, the DB28 has continued to express the past, present and future of watchmaking culture through its various iterations.

In highlighting this design, which has become iconic over the years, De Bethune celebrates the DB28's 10th anniversary by introducing a set of three watches in 2020. All three timepieces, all true to the DNA of the DB28, are interpretations of the same theme, independent of each other yet linked by their history, the work that went into them, the brand cues they reflect. Each one a creation in its own right, yet all share a kinship, like siblings.

One has to go back to the DB Digitale and the Dream Watch 1 to understand the source of inspiration of the DB28. As we often talk about DNA, clearly, the DB28 is part of the same genealogy. They all stem from the same roots, and boldly mark a determination to contribute to the history of watchmaking.

Ultra-Thin DB28XP – Quintessentially DB28

To mark this important anniversary, De Bethune opens a fresh chapter in exploring a new universe: the realm of the ultra-thin.

Ultra-thin as a self-evident evolution. The DB28XP is an ideal of beauty, of elegance that expresses purity in its most absolute version. As the first opus of a family that enters a new decade and encompasses all the work done on the DB28, the DB28XP is not about amplification. On the contrary, it's about distilling the essence.

Throughout the quest of designing an ultra-thin watch, De Bethune was driven as much by the technical challenge as the aesthetic challenge, by the complexity of 'finesse'. An adventure in which absolute rigour maintains the balance between design aesthetics and engineering constraints.



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Beyond precision and ingenuity, exploring the ultra-thin space opens up a new form of creative freedom, a new domain of expression. Putting a finer point to it, perhaps, it's not about doing "less". On the contrary, it's about pushing the limits even further, thinking differently and solving seemingly insurmountable problems.

DB28XP brings the dream that much closer to reality, and today Denis Flageollet sees his years of research culminating in a magnificent timepiece that combines everything he has always hoped to express horologically. When we hear him tell the story of this watch, we sense that he has achieved the symbiosis he so intensely wanted to achieve between the case, the components, the movement and the finishing – all of which resonate with each other in a spirit of great simplicity. Everything in this watch engages you to discover the art of De Bethune and its vision of watchmaking for tomorrow.

Monochromatic by design, the DB28XP is first and foremost a reference to the very first DB28.

It's about all the levels at which one experiences a timepiece, its layers, reliefs, the light playing with shadows and reflections. Cut from titanium, the watch reveals an architectural fusion of space, time and light that lingers long after the first glance.

A multitude of different shapes – hemispherical, concave, spherical, a sequence of microlight, satin, polished and blocked finishes... A continuous interplay of light and shadow reminiscent of the principles behind the hieroglyphics of ancient Egyptian civilisation. The singularity of the whole lies in the arresting fact that Denis Flageollet has achieved exactly the opposite of what is usually practised in the world of ultra-thin watches and high watchmaking: it is precisely through the multitude of forms within the space taken up by the ultra-thin design that its refinement is further accentuated. Here, polished bridges and satin-finished bevels not only heighten the visual experience, but allow for a completely new interpretation.

The dial is entirely made of Microlight, which shakes off the dust of the conventional and offers a modern take on traditional guilloché technique. On this generous flat surface, the new technique takes on its full meaning and reinforces the structure. By playing with light and shadow, it adds depth and offers a more architectural and dynamic result. The watch as whole becomes more contemporary.

The delta-shaped main plate – a De Bethune hallmark – is finished to perfectly reflect ambient light. The metal surface is patiently polished until it becomes a true mirror, a process that takes up to three hours. Ever so slowly and gradually the moment approaches when matter settles and atoms fall into place. That moment, that knowing you are just about to go too far with the boxwood grindstone and diamond paste. That split-second between a deep, flawless mirror finish and something less than perfect. All this is the result of the interaction between the brain, the eye and the hand. It's a question of know-how.



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For telling time, no contrasting indexes, but little spheres polished like small satellites. They orbit a larger body, planet Earth, in the spirit of the solar system. A tone-on-tone pattern surrounds the central part of the elliptical dial, subtly revealing the movement's wheels.

Finally, as a discreet De Bethune signature, the blued titanium inserts in the hands at the centre.

All of De Bethune's timekeeping savoir faire

The hand-wound movement features De Bethune's balance wheel, visible through the dial thanks to an opening at 6 o'clock. The result of continuously exploring the boundaries of physics and mathematics to improve timepiece operation, it benefits from the latest advances. Its diameter is not too large, either. Made of titanium, it is equipped with small white gold weights placed on the outside to give remarkable qualities of inertia, reliability and regulating ability.

Then there is balance spring. At De Bethune, this minute, extremely fine spring, considered to be the soul of the mechanical watch, maintains its true centre of gravity with a flat terminal curve affixed to the outside of the balance-spring. Differences in the thickness of the blade add to the almost perfect precision of its concentric development. Among the many advantages: lower height, better adjustment of concentricity, finer adjustment of the racquet, no need for pins. The curve's shape even acts as a shock absorber in case of impact. Finally, the material's internal structure remains intact since it has been neither stressed nor bent. It is through these numerous tried and tested developments, which are constantly revisited and further improved, that De Bethune has succeeded in increasing the power reserve by 20 percent, bringing it to a total of 6 days.

Equally visible – and geometrically positioned in relation to the calibre's plate – is the exclusive triple shock absorption system designed to protect the whole assembly. Not only was De Bethune the first to design a bridge held on both sides, symmetrically, to ensure the balance is kept perfectly in position. The Maison also added two shock absorbers at each end to supplement the shock absorber of the pendulum itself. Hence the name “triple pare-chute” or triple shock absorber, which effectively absorbs and dampens violent shocks with springs instead of screws mounted on perfectly polished axes.

A completely redesigned case

Another challenge was to preserve the functionality and wear comfort of De Bethune's famous floating lugs. Adapting this hallmark to a much thinner case was also a circle whose squaring Denis Flageollet particularly relished. As much a technical challenge as an aesthetic one, it concretises the complexity of the “ultra-thinness” to be mastered. This in itself was also an adventure in which absolute rigour was the connective tissue between form and functionality.



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The case band has been completely redesigned, with a more pronounced curvature, flowing with the lines of the wrist and lugs – whose bullets incidentally have also entirely redesigned. The plate's Microlight finish is echoed along the sides of the case band, rendered all the more meticulously in the absence of simple geometric forms.

The DB28XP is regarded as a timepiece that sublimates the cues of the DB28, a true watershed born from the meeting of the Maison's know-how with a resolutely futuristic vision for an ultra-thin watch.

DB28XP Starry Sky

A watch that offers a firmament to behold, one in which the infinite blue unfolds. A nocturnal window to the far reaches and depths of space, the quest for perfection and beauty never truly leaves Denis Flageollet. The designer and crafter, Master Watchmaker, signs this of this exceptional timepiece of pure style, where the dramatic arc of tension in the lines meets the finesse of the case, with the hallmarks of the contemporary expression of the art of watchmaking by De Bethune.

Classic by inspiration with its round, ultra-thin shape, its crown at 12 o'clock and a hunter case back borrowed from pocket watches, the DB28 Starry Sky comes in an ultra-lightweight, mirror-polished titanium. Its redesigned floating lugs only emphasise the modern, even futuristic character. Like an obsession, as a quest to represent the most beautiful sky, to capture its emotional power, and preserve it accurately so it can be worn on the wrist: DB28 XP Starry Sky offers a gaze into the infinite that has become a recurring theme throughout the Maison's creations.

As a way of marking the DB28's 10th anniversary, and inspired by DB28 Skybridge, which featured a curved sky, De Bethune raises the stakes of complexity even further by creating a blue Microlight firmament. Another first. The dial's surface of peaks and valleys refracts light in yet more dimensions, offering a unique spectacle. Free and unconstrained, the mastery of blued titanium translates into a multitude of microgrooves that create a mesmerising optical effect.

Into the deep blue expanse a multitude of small white gold pins driven through one by one with great care and accuracy recreating the actual magic of the stars on an actual night. Glittering sparkles give the night-time heavens an endless depth. A magical experience, made all the more special by the fact that the firmament depicted is not random. The customer selects the date and hour and location, and De Bethune draws the sky map of on the dial.

True to the Maison's brand cues, DB28XP Starry Sky features the hour circle in silver, the minutes in Arabic numerals, the discreet De Bethune signature at 12 o'clock, and rose gold hands designed especially for this edition.



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DB28XP Tourbillon

Finest high watchmaking traditions, celebrated and subtly reinterpreted in a contemporary masterpiece: DB28XP Tourbillon marries ancestral knowledge with the latest technical and scientific advances. A timepiece nourished by a generations-old culture which De Bethune is proud to share and perpetuate in a resolutely avant-garde spirit.

With this third interpretation of the DB28 theme, De Bethune rethinks the watchmaking architecture at its core and explores new codes. DB28XP Tourbillon is directly inspired by the famous dial of the DB28 Digitale.

Offering hour, minute and seconds indications in 30", DB28XP Tourbillon features an elegant and minimalist white dial with silver reflections rendered in a hand-engraved "barley grain" guilloché pattern, highlighted by a blued hour circle.

The tourbillon positioned at 6 o'clock is a titanium creation that beats at a frequency of 36,000 vibrations per hour. It features an extraordinarily lightweight cage (0.18 gr., the lightest ever) that rotates on itself every thirty seconds and comprises 63 components (the lightest of which weighs less than 0.0001 g). Like a flying insect, a microscale exoskeleton keeps it all together.

Why so small, so light, so fast?

Today, a watch worn on the wrist is subjected to more action than may be safely compensated for. Position are abrupt and sometimes chaotic. The kinetic forces inflicted on a mechanical watchmaking movement should give pause. Just as Breguet had invented the tourbillon to meet the constraints of marine watches, De Bethune designed a tourbillon for the new dynamics of wristwatches. The laws of physics are clear: To compensate for the violence of wrist movements, the tourbillon cage must be as light as possible, operate at maximum frequency and speed of rotation at minimum weight and inertia. Only then can it fulfil its function in a watch for today.

On the case back, as a nod to the Aiguille d'Or – the highest distinction of the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève – awarded to the first DB28: The position of the planets is that in the evening sky over Geneva when the prestigious prize was presented on November 19th, 2011.

These are classic references which, in their layout and execution, reinforce the novel modern character of the timepiece. Faithful to the De Bethune spirit and soul, DB28XP Tourbillon ably perpetuates the company's heritage: Daring aesthetics, exceptional mechanics.

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About De Bethune

Founded in 2002, Manufacture De Bethune is an independent watchmaker that develops and produces all its own timepieces. While its production remains extremely modest in terms of volume, De Bethune displays peerless inventiveness and is distinguished by the highest level of quality and innovation within the extremely exclusive sphere of Swiss Haute Horlogerie.

Since its founding, De Bethune has developed no less than 26 calibres, presented 30 or so world firsts, filed a number of patents and launched around 150 one-of-a-kind models. Its timepieces have won awards in major international competitions.

Through its creations, De Bethune is perpetuating the work of the great 18th century master watchmakers in their quest for perfect time measurement backed by a sense of supreme aesthetic beauty. Leveraging cutting-edge scientific and technological discoveries, its efforts are devoted to inventing unique, innovative and high-performance solutions.

Not doing more, but doing better; drawing inspiration from the past so as to perpetually reinvent it and create bridges with other fields of knowledge: such are the principles guiding De Bethune in developing horological mechanisms and expressing artistic creativity.

Testifying to this quest for perfection and this tireless pursuit of beauty, the pure style, taut lines and slenderness of the cases embody a contemporary interpretation of the watchmaking art according to De Bethune.

Shaping 21st century watchmaking while safeguarding the finest traditions, firmly rooted in history and resolutely looking to the future, De Bethune pursues an outstanding approach effectively combining art and science.