



**DE BETHUNE**

L'ART HORLOGER AU XXI<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE

**DB28 Steel Wheels  
Sapphire Tourbillon**





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**Under the sign of mechanical exclusivity,  
De Bethune presents the “DB28 Steel Wheels Sapphire Tourbillon.”**

**The alliance of sapphire transparency, integrated into the movement,  
with the famous De Bethune tourbillon, the lightest ever made.**

*August 2020: On the occasion of the Geneva Watch Days,  
De Bethune presents the iconic DB28 Steel Wheels now for the first time equipped with a tourbillon.  
The movement's delta bridge and two barrel covers are made of sapphire crystal.*

*Faithful to the DNA of the ‘Maison’ nestled in Sainte Croix in the Swiss Jura mountains, the DB28 Steel  
Wheels Sapphire Tourbillon ably perpetuates the heritage of its predecessors: perfect balance,  
contemporary and bold aesthetics at the service of exceptional mechanics.*

*A limited edition of only 10 pieces.*

#### **2020: Year of celebration of the DB28's 10th anniversary.**

When the first DB28 was launched in 2010, De Bethune's idea was to present a timepiece with an identity of its own and a resolutely futuristic vision of the art of watchmaking. The design naturally follows through in the spirit of the *Manufacture's* creations. The distinctive shape of the case and the crown at 12 o'clock, inspired by pocket watches, are characteristic features of the contemporary aestheticism specific to De Bethune. It is on this timepiece that the patent for De Bethune's unique, innovative floating lugs, designed to significantly improve comfort, acquired its full meaning. Since then, the DB28 – named Best Watch of the Year and awarded the *Aiguille d'Or* prize at the *Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève* (GPHG) in 2011 – has never ceased to express past, present and future watchmaking culture through different variants.

Following through on a series of contemporary iterations, from *Skybridge* to the *Kind-of-Blue*, by way of the more recent *DB28XP*, *DB28XP Starry Sky* and *DB28XP Tourbillon*, De Bethune has time and again found a new way to reveal new facets of this design, already instantly recognizable by its sleek and taut lines.

#### **January 2018: Birth of the DB28 Steel Wheels**

The DB28 Steel Wheels came to be in 2018, under the sign of transparency and light, with the idea of opening the dial to reveal the contemporary architecture of its movement. Recognizable by its delta-shaped bridge – a De Bethune hallmark – and its moon at 6 o'clock, the DB28 Steel Wheels fascinates with a multitude of different forms – hemispherical, concave, spherical – for an architecturally dynamic result. It is all about levels of perception, layers and reliefs, light playing with shadows and reflections. Cut from titanium, light on the wrist, this watch reveals a contemporary, architectural fusion of space, time and light.



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## **August 2020: Creation of the DB28 Steel Wheels Sapphire Tourbillon**

We must go back to the wellspring of inspiration that nourishes the creativity of Denis Flageollet, Founder and Master Watchmaker of De Bethune: the passion to celebrate the Great Watchmaking of the Age of Enlightenment, and subtly reinterpret it in contemporary masterpieces infused with ancestral knowledge and at the same time the latest technical and scientific advances.

Most often used in the production of watch cases, sapphire crystal takes on a new role for De Bethune. Here, it finds a new vocation in the form of the signature delta-shaped bridge and the cover for each of the two barrels. Blue for the bridge, clear for the barrel covers, these elements are integrated into the movement, letting light in to play and offer new reflections – and allow the eyes to literally plunge into the mechanism.

The transparency of these sapphire crystal components not only magnifies the movement, but also offers a different kind of lighting, new brilliance and shimmering, that highlights the taut lines, the architecture and the different levels of the caliber for an intriguing sense of depth.

### **Each sapphire crystal component is encircled in polished titanium. A contemporary reinterpretation of stained glass**

Always in the spirit of taking things further, as far as possible, Denis Flageollet designed the sapphire glass components, cutting them by laser with utmost precision so they fit in perfectly with the forms, rises, angles, the teeth – the bridge as well as the barrel covers – all perfectly adjusted like lace of sapphire crystal.

To this is added a ring of polished titanium to circle each barrel cover. The sight of the delta bridge and two barrel covers in sapphire crystal is something never seen before, along with the cut of the glass, underscored on its periphery by the polished metallic grey line, accentuating a resolutely contemporary aesthetic.

The thicknesses of the sapphire crystal vary according to the components. The sapphire of the bridge is 1 mm thick to ensure functional rigidity, whilst the sapphire of the barrel covers is 0.3 mm thick. These glass components in no way compromise robustness or, of course, reliability when worn – solid, perfect resistant to small everyday shocks is assured.

### **Handcrafted hands by De Bethune**

De Bethune has always crafted its watch hands in-house, by hand, in the workshop in l'Auberson. The *DB28 Steel Wheels Sapphire Tourbillon* thus comes with a particularly finely worked hour hand. It consists of 4 distinct elements: the barrel made of steel for technical reasons, a titanium insert, an inner component of matt titanium, and a polished titanium outer component. Each component is worked differently. The result is unique.

At the back, an understated movement. The power reserve indication can be read with a hand-blued steel hand, also made, as is the custom, by hand in De Bethune's workshop.



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### **The tourbillon according to De Bethune: Why so small, so light, so fast?**

In the vast array of complications and functions, of horological disciplines in which De Bethune has become a virtuoso, the tourbillon often played a leading role. The DB28 Steel Wheels took a step further towards sophistication and supreme refinement with its moon, and today this gives way to a tourbillon featuring an extraordinarily lightweight cage (0.18 grams, the lightest ever created). Rotating on itself every thirty seconds, it comprises a total of 63 components (the lightest of which weighs less than 0.0001 grams!).

Nowadays, a wristwatch is subjected to more action than may be safely and sufficiently compensated for. Changes in position are often abrupt and sometimes chaotic. Indeed, the kinetic forces inflicted on a mechanical watchmaking movement under normal wear conditions might seem quite staggering. 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 unequivocal: To compensate for the sheer force of wrist movements, the tourbillon cage must be as light as possible and operate at maximum frequency and speed of rotation, all with weight and inertia at absolute minimums. Only then can it fulfil its function in a watch made for today.

The tourbillon is a titanium and silicon creation that beats at a frequency of 36,000 vibrations per hour. It features an extraordinarily lightweight cage (0.18 g, 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. It is thus, so small, so light, so fast, that De Bethune's tourbillon simply fulfils its function more ably for today's watches.

The futuristic shape of the tourbillon bridge holds the tourbillon perfectly in position, symmetrically, from both sides.

### **Highly refined finishes, the quintessence of fine craftsmanship**

The *Métiers d'Art* – artisan crafts – as understood and lived by De Bethune are a vibrant tribute to what is uniquely human. Among the various hand-made decorations specific to De Bethune's movements, the mirror-polishing of the titanium pieces offers an astonishing play with light. The surfaces of the components are finished to perfectly reflect ambient light. The metal surface is patiently polished until it becomes a true mirror.

It can take many days of polishing individual components to achieve this result. Ever so gradually the moment approaches when matter settles and atoms fall into place. That moment, that 'knowing' that one is 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 mind, the eye and the hand. Beyond know-how, it's a question of artisanship. It takes a burning desire, an unencumbered impetus to push the boundaries of excellence in all areas in this manner.



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**And unparalleled comfort thanks to its floating lugs, kept to an intermediate size on this watch.**

The DB28 Steel Wheelss Sapphire Tourbillon features a polished grade 5 titanium case, mounted on the new floating lugs unveiled this year. Entirely redesigned, harmonized and adapted to the spirit of the watch, they are tipped by the famous 'bullets,' more prominent here, reminiscent of the spirit of the first De Bethune collections.

The finishing touch: an alligator strap with a titanium buckle, which also contributes to the practicality and everyday wearability of this very special timepiece.