



DE BETHUNE

L'ART HORLOGER AU XXI^e SIÈCLE

DB28xs Starry Seas





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Under embargo till May 25, 2pm CET

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The very fragile beauty of a watch

De Bethune invents random guilloché: a world's first.

Placing innovation at the heart of the process. Integrating creativity. Pushing innovation. Thinking outside the box. Not repeating but inventing; thinking ingeniously while improving precision, reliability, readability and comfort: the DB28xs Starry Seas is not just an aesthetically smaller watch. It is one that starts a new chapter for De Bethune. A model that will go down in the history of the brand, as it represents a further step in the initiation story that Denis Flageollet – Master Watchmaker and Founder of the Manufacture De Bethune – has been telling for the past 20 years.

While the DB28 is an emblematic De Bethune watch, this new version is all the more remarkable for the particular meaning it enshrines. Featuring a significantly smaller diameter than previous models (39 mm), while retaining De Bethune's unique and characteristic design, the DB28xs Starry Seas is a miniature miracle – in terms of the technology required to complete the project, but above all because of De Bethune's virtuosity in transposing the spirit of the Enlightenment into the world of 21st century wristwatches, by reformulating exceptional fine craftsmanship and offering an unprecedented aesthetic creation.

There is no question of identically reproducing the past, but rather of engaging in a quest to stir new emotions when faced with exceptional objects. The intentions of Denis Flageollet, Master Watchmaker and Founder of de Bethune are pure: he looks at tradition from an innovative standpoint and works to make the contemporary mechanical watch a wristworn cultural embodiment of time measurement.

For a beautiful object to be born somewhere, mastery must have reached a certain degree of maturity

While the DB28xs Starry Seas was born of an extraordinary acrobatic feat that involved bringing the majestic sense of grandeur conveyed by the great Age of Enlightenment clocks with their scientific instruments to the wrist, its fascinating micro-mechanics along with refined aesthetics of a small watch also offer a glimpse into the deepest recesses of the creative mind behind it.

Beneath the deceptively simple appearance of mere miniaturisation, the singular nature of this watch and its design extends far beyond its smaller size and its mode of operation.

"It is the culture and understanding of techniques and objects that enable the birth of such a project. For the creation of the DB28xs Starry Seas, the creative process that impelled me evokes the Japanese spirit of Wabi-Sabi, a Japanese concept that is virtually an art form and aims to bring individuals, objects and the environment into harmony."



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An intuitive appearance of pure, harmonious beauty

A veritable life philosophy in Japan, Wabi-Sabi blends two aesthetic and spiritual principles historically very present in the national culture. Referring to the fullness experienced when contemplating nature, the expression *wabi* means solitude and simplicity, with a touch of melancholy.

Sabi, which is more concerned with the traces of past time, refers to the sensation felt when perceiving the work of time or of man on something.

Inspired by the Wabi-Sabi concept, Denis Flageollet nurtures an appreciation for a quiet life away from urban hustle and bustle along with a sense of tranquillity, contemplation of something that becomes beautiful as it ages. *"While design is constantly experimenting, it appears that, despite the development of industrial technology, this subtle link between humankind and Nature traditionally expressed in art, literature and craftsmanship remains alive and well."*

Wabi-Sabi is comparable to the Greek ideals of beauty and perfection propagated in Western civilisation. In the Japanese archipelago, this principle lying at the heart of many artistic fields, such as design and garden art, also evokes simplicity and frugality – which are making a strong comeback after the consumerist boom and the economic bubble. Witness the success of books on degrowth.

The very fragile beauty of the world

All in all, Denis Flageollet clearly knows how to stand still for a while... as a means of going further.

The absolutism of his work, the quest for perfection in imperfection have guided him over the last 20 years – without him even realising it – from a culture turned towards science and the rigorous aesthetics of the Age of Enlightenment to a philosophy dedicated to discovering the very fragile beauty of the world. Calm and serenity, the search for purity, tranquillity, an ode to traditional art while embracing new technologies, the DB28xs Starry Seas is the aesthetic conjugation of the beauty of simple and modest things.

Three principles of the Wabi-Sabi concept emanate naturally from the DB28xs Starry Seas:

- With its random *guilloché* pattern (which is a world's first) creating a dial featuring a blued titanium wave reflecting a starry sky, the DB28xs Starry Seas offers us one of the three principles of Wabi-Sabi: the **beauty of imperfect things** that are impermanent and incomplete.
- Through its small size and the sobriety of its silver-toned chapter-ring and movement, the second principle of Wabi-Sabi pervading it is the **beauty of modest and simple things**. Or at least apparently simple, for in the ultra-technical world of miniaturisation, this watch is a technical feat notably involving the extreme miniaturisation of the DB28's patented 'floating lugs' system.
- Finally, the result is a different, singular watch embodying the third definition of Wabi-Sabi: **the beauty of atypical things**.

Between art and science

For the geniuses of the Age of Enlightenment, their aim was to create scientific instruments whose beauty emanated from their function, their mechanical sobriety and their simplicity. Powerful figures than transformed



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them into veritable *objets d'art*, calling on the best artisans of their time, including cabinetmakers, bronze-makers and enamellists such as Boulle, Caffieri and Coteau.

The success of the DB28xs Starry Seas demonstrates that Denis Flageollet's teams are totally imbued with the De Bethune spirit stemming from this culture. The concept of perpetual evolution informs their work and hence their constant questioning of existing techniques, relying on the mastery of both ancestral expertise and new technologies. This incessant movement is the keystone of the Manufacture, which constantly cultivates this state of mind.

"There is no point in working unless you wish to progress, and the only way to do that is to continually challenge your assumptions. To constantly go back to the drawing board and rethink the work in hand, helping it evolve by modifying an element, a process, a technique and sometimes making tiny, often imperceptible improvements", comments Denis Flageollet.

A lighter DB28 more resistant to impacts and acceleration

For centuries, watchmakers isolated mechanisms from external influences by placing them in towers, on tables and on gimbals. Improved accuracy was soon accompanied by a desire to wear these timepieces. While it was necessary to adapt this chronometric precision to a wide range of extreme wearing conditions, resistance to shocks, accelerations and magnetic fields are very contemporary issues that require specialised research that also relates to the smaller size of this watch.

Calibre DB2005 has been adapted to this miniaturisation without losing its chronometric quality. Better still, the increased lightness of the watch endows it with better efficiency in case of impacts and acceleration.

Aesthetically speaking, while the colour blue was not chosen solely for its visual attributes, on the one hand its symbolic reference to skies and seas as well as to its entire universe of wisdom and serenity echoes the Wabi-Sabi concept that guided its creation; and on the other hand, its presence among De Bethune mechanisms has genuine technical legitimacy. It was in fact during an initial attempt to resolve technical problems of stability and chronometry when developing the new De Bethune balances that Denis Flageollet created a new, unprecedented oscillator, combining the soft white metallic shade of palladium with the vibrant blue of titanium.

Since then, the inherently natural blue colour has become one of the brand's signatures, as its shimmering reflections on different materials and their finishes enables an infinite and refined play on nuances.

The overarching purpose is to continue the work of the great 18th century master horologists in their quest for perfect timekeeping coupled with an absolute sense of aesthetics. Using the most modern scientific and technological discoveries, the endeavours of the De Bethune teams converge to invent unique, innovative and high-performance solutions.

The principle has remained the same for more than 20 years: creating timepieces respecting watchmaking traditions while incorporating the mechanical, technical and aesthetic innovations of our time.

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