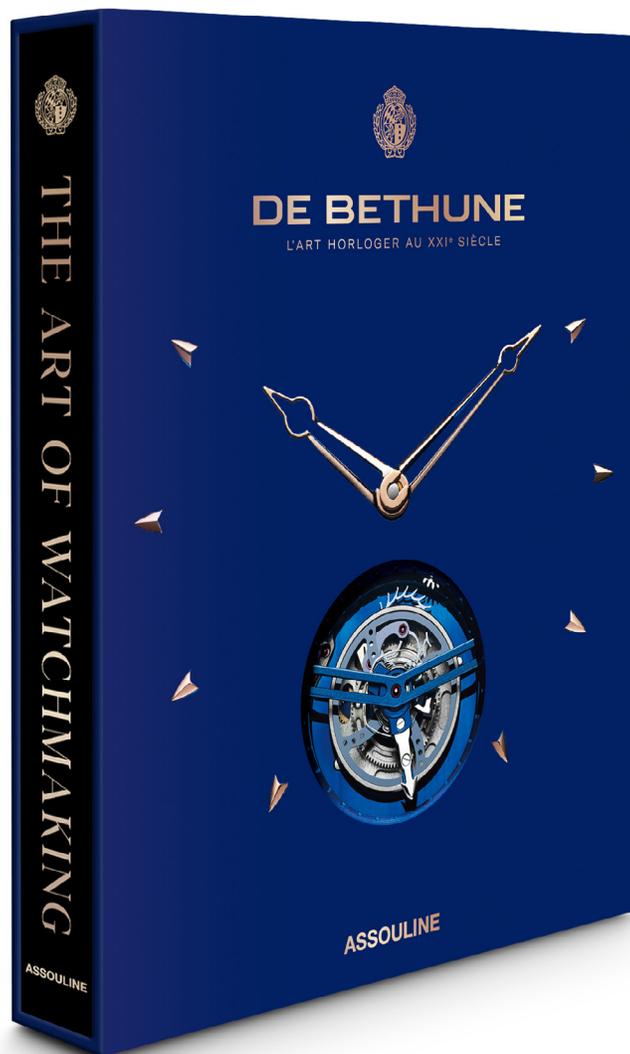


ASSOULINE

SPRING 2023 | LEGENDS COLLECTION

DE BETHUNE: THE ART OF WATCHMAKING

Text by Arthur Touchot



“A watch is a fragment of culture on the wrist.”

—Denis Flageollet, co-founder and master watchmaker

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Twenty years ago, the haute horological world welcomed De Bethune. Showcasing the technical ingenuity of master watchmaker and co-founder Denis Flageollet, De Bethune immediately established itself as an outlier with a unique ability to blur the lines between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design, mining history to create a brand both impossibly modern and technically advanced.

Flageollet's objective has always been the glorious and elusive goal of chronometric perfection and no watch brand has been as disruptive as De Bethune. In just twenty years, the company has unveiled thirty in-house movements in the most surprising way, by emphasizing mechanical simplicity and concentrating on the fundamentals of traditional watchmaking. Following this principle, De Bethune has built a collection of pieces with extendable designs capable of evolving over time through innovation and the brand's research into emerging materials.

To maintain that level of excellence, the annual production of De Bethune has remained extremely low, ranging between 150 and 250 watches per year at an average (with price ranges between \$45,000 and \$300,000)—making it one of the rarest and most exclusive watch brands in the world. By keeping the size of its collection stable, the Swiss-based company has the space to craft the most sophisticated and innovative watches possible and preserve an extraordinarily intimate link with its customers.

Now celebrating its twentieth anniversary, De Bethune is not only widely recognized, but indeed considered emblematic of the renaissance of independent watchmaking in the twenty-first century. With a text by Arthur Touchot, a foreword by Wei Koh, founder of *Revolution* magazine and Grail Watch, as well as special contributions from De Bethune CEO Pierre Jacques and a cross section of watch industry notables and passionate collectors; Jean Arnault¹, Aurel Bacs², Swizz Beatz³, Jean-Claude Biver⁴, Ben Clymer⁵, Victoria Gomelsky⁶, Danny Govberg⁷, Tim Mosso⁸, Luc Pettavino⁹, Michèle Rothen¹⁰, Mohammed Seddiqi¹¹, Michael Strahan¹², Michael Tay¹³, Kari Voutilainen¹⁴ and Suzanne Wong¹⁵, *De Bethune: The Art of Watchmaking* invites readers to experience every single facet of this cult atelier, from founding to the future, manufacture to movements.

When asked what watch collectors in the next century will take from this golden age of timekeeping, you can say with certainty that they will recognize Denis Flageollet as one of the greatest horological minds of all time. To own a De Bethune watch is to have a stewardship of an object with enduring totemic and historical significance.

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One of the world's leading experts in collectible watches, Arthur Touchot is a former journalist who specialized in the luxury market. Having earned a master's degree in journalism at Northwestern University, Touchot combined his love of watches and words by becoming a regular contributor to *The New York Times* and the *Financial Times* at the start of his career, later becoming senior European editor at *Hodinkee*. In 2017, Touchot joined Phillips to lead the global content and digital marketing strategy of the auction house's watch department, where he has been involved in bringing some of the world's rarest timepieces to auction. Touchot is also an Academy member of the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève (GPHG) and a documentary filmmaker whose work includes *A Moment in Time* (2020), about the renaissance of luxury watchmaking since the turn of the century.

Text by Arthur Touchot

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¹Jean Arnault, Director of Watches, Louis Vuitton.

²Aurel Bacs, Senior consultant, Phillips in Association with Bacs & Russo.

³Swizz Beatz, Music producer.

⁴Jean-Claude Biver, Chairman, JC Biver.

⁵Ben Clymer, Founder, Hodinkee.

⁶Victoria Gomelsky, Journalist.

⁷Danny Govberg, Executive Chairman, WatchBox.

⁸Tim Mosso, Watch Specialist, WatchBox.

⁹Luc Pettavino, Founder, Only Watch.

¹⁰Michèle Rothen, Engraver.

¹¹Mohammed Seddiqi, Chief Commercial Officer, Seddiqi Holding.

¹²Michael Strahan, Super Bowl Champion, Entrepreneur, and Host of *Good Morning America*.

¹³Michael Tay, Group Managing Director, The Hour Glass.

¹⁴Kari Voutilainen, Watchmaker, Voutilainen and CEO, Urban Jurgenson.

¹⁵Suzanne Wong, Editor in chief, WorldTempus.

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1 Denis Flageollet working in his atelier.

© Ulysse Camus



2 Denis Flageollet handcrafting a Dream Watch case in his forge.

© Kyle Ferino



3 Denis Flageollet working on the Dream Watch 6 Table Clock DB x @byJorgHysek.

© Ulysse Camus



4 Pierre Jacques, CEO of De Bethune.

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5 Detail of the assembly of a De Bethune escapement wheel.

© Ulysse Camus



6 Schematic of De Bethune's automatic DB2324 caliber of the DB25 Perpetual Calendar.

Courtesy of De Bethune



7 The DB29 Maxichrono Tourbillon.

Diode SA
© Denis Hayoun



8 The caseback of the DB29 Maxichrono Tourbillon.

Diode SA
© Denis Hayoun

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- 9** The DB21 Maxichrono Réédition has all five hands mounted on a single central axis with just one push button to operate the chronograph functions, a real technical feat.

Diode SA
© Denis Hayoun



- 10** Dream Watch 5 Tourbillon 'Season 1'.

© Paige Thatcher



- 11** Swizz Beatz, the American music producer, rapper and record executive, wearing the Dream Watch 5 Tourbillon "Season 1."

© Kyle Ferino

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About Assouline:

Founded in Paris in 1994 by Prosper and Martine Assouline, Assouline is the first luxury brand on culture. It began with the desire to create a new, contemporary style of book, using the couple's experienced eye for visually rich stories and compelling narratives.

Guided by their passion for knowledge, culture and travel, the Assoulines have since expanded their vision to 1,700 titles in three main collections, along with special editions and unique library accessories—a grand oeuvre of inspiring creations. Throughout the last quarter of a century, the brand has established a network of international boutiques in prominent locations across the globe. Assouline has also inaugurated a curated library service, working closely with clients to visualize, design, and develop bespoke, one-of-a-kind libraries.

With a distinguished team of creative talents—which includes the founders' son Alexandre—the brand continues to reinvent the notion of true luxury. Assouline's roster of collaborators includes some of the world's most respected brands, artists, photographers, writers and designers.

Assouline continues to exude an unparalleled signature style and elegant savoir faire, which has globally redefined modern publishing.

About De Bethune:

De Bethune is an independent Swiss watch manufacturer located in L'Auberson. Up there, in the pastures of the Swiss Jura mountains, nearly 40 people – the watchmakers, engineers, designers, micro-mechanics, polishers and decorators following the lead and impetus of Denis Flageollet, founder of the brand and Master Watchmaker – focus on the research and development and realization of technical and aesthetic innovations in the spirit of the great master watchmakers of the 18th century. Tourbillons, perpetual calendars, chronometers, deadbeat seconds, spherical moons, bridges, wheels, anchors, balance wheels, pinions, balance springs and screws, but also the cases, dials, floating lugs, hands... Each component is thought-out and manufactured one by one, with particular attention given to even the smallest detail, including the decoration with the famous 'Côtes De Bethune' and microlight engraving that have become hallmarks.

De Bethune designs, develops and manufactures all of its timepieces in-house. Since its foundation, De Bethune has developed no fewer than 30 calibers, unveiled some thirty world premieres, registered numerous patents, and produced 150 one-offs for the most discerning collectors. All over the world, De Bethune timepieces have won the highest distinctions, including the Aiguille d'Or of the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève for the Watch of the Year. Today, Denis Flageollet and Pierre Jacques, the company's CEO, jointly shape the brand's destiny. A pure style, taut lines and slim cases are part of the inimitable signature of De Bethune's bold creations.

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