DE BETHUNE

L'ART HORLOGER AU XXIe SIÈCLE

DB Kind of Grande Complication

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UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL APRIL 8th 12pm CET

DB Kind of Grande Complication

Representing the quintessence of De Bethune-style Haute Horlogerie, the DB Kind of Grande Complication is a veritable compendium of the core technical and aesthetic attributes that have been invented and built up over 22 years of innovation, research and creativity within the Manufacture.

Encapsulating the memory and culture of De Bethune in an exceptional timepiece that illustrates the technical and artistic expertise and excellence cultivated in its L'Auberson workshops was the challenge taken up by Denis Flageollet and his high-flying team.

The DB Kind of Grande Complication is the culmination of a young watchmaker's dream, as he gazed in wonder at double-sided grand complication models and already anticipated creating such a timepiece. After many years of design and development at De Bethune, Denis Flageollet has at last brought it to life by drawing on all the resources and philosophy of the Manufacture, which perpetuates the innovative spirit of the great classical watchmaking achievements characterising the Age of Enlightenment.

DB Kind of Grande Complication, a compendium of De Bethune techniques and innovation

The choice of a reversible double-sided case was entirely natural, since it not only unites a large number of complications, but also allows provides scope for free-spirited aesthetic expression through the dual display of the various functions.
The case is also interesting in that it incorporates a rotation system (a novel feature introduced in 2021) mounted on floating lugs which – by means of an ingenious micro-mechanism – enable the case to pivot around its central axis in a smooth, accurate swivelling movement. More than 60 components – 50 of which relate to the water-resistant part and are therefore perfectly rustproof – are involved in positioning the dial on either side. A cam-operated indexing system ensures perfect alignment of the case with the floating lugs that follow the curves of the wrist.

The rounded design of its classically inspired case with its crown at 12 o'clock on the contemporary side (6 o'clock on the traditional side) conceals the technical challenges of a double case complexified by a multiple display of several functions and the combination within a single calibre of eight different horological complications: perpetual calendar, spherical moon-phase indication, retrograde age of the Moon and leap years, ultra-light tourbillon in blued titanium, jumping seconds, power reserve as well as the double display of hours and minutes.
Integrating each of the 751 components involved in its exterior and movement required much more thought than assembling the various complications separately. Rethinking the calibre as a functional whole so that each complication interacts in perfect harmony is a technical feat that would be inconceivable without total technical mastery of all the innovations and patents involved in the Manufacture's 32 calibres.

DB Kind of Grande Complication, reaffirming a powerful contemporary aesthetic

A contemporary side displays the refined structure of Calibre DB2529, the end of the power reserve and the age of the Moon by means of a retrograde silver-toned indicator that facilitates accurate updating of the lunar day. It highlights the contrast between the hectic 36,000 vph pace of the De Bethune 30" tourbillon – one of the fastest and lightest on the market – and the ample, subdued beat of the slender mirror-polished steel hand marking off the seconds. This contrast is orchestrated at 6 o'clock by 63 components – essentially made of titanium and weighing a total of just 0.18 g (the lightest of them weighs less than 0.0001 grams and the heaviest 0.0276 g) – and by a central jumping seconds mechanism composed of two gold wheels driven by a double pallet-lever with four pallets, setting a noble cadence for the passing of time.
An aesthetic symbol of the brand, the mirror-polished deltoid bridge supports the asymmetry of the gear trains featuring subtle decorations pushed to extremes on even the slimmest components. Each one, through its function and finishing, contributes to the calibre's understated aesthetic and technical silence.

Another classically restrained side features a dial with a perpetual calendar enhanced by a three-dimensional moon-phase display as well as by the Manufacture's signature starry sky.
Light is resolutely at the heart of the Maison's creative process and reflected here in the blued mirror-polished titanium of the dial, revealing through multiple shimmering effects the different tones endowing the De Bethune Blue with its unique character. The hand-decorated sky is hand-fitted with small white gold pins depicting the stars and adorned with Milky Way patterns produced by laser-beam micro-milling and gilded with 24-carat gold leaf.

Much like our observation of the sky, the moon phases can be read off at 3 o'clock by means of a homogeneous sphere spinning on its axis and composed of two perfectly balanced half-spheres in flame-blued steel and mirror-polished palladium. The reproduction of the different movements of this heavenly body is supported by a high-precision mechanism that takes a full 112 years to accumulate a one-day deviation.
Faced with the volume required by such a sphere within the limited space of the watch, the technical solution introduced in 2004 was to gently bend the hands downwards to ensure they could glide smoothly over the Moon, a curved shape that would become one of the brand's typical distinctive features.

Like the leap-year indicator aligned at 3 o'clock, the subtle play of superimposed blues in the counter rings and apertures, along with the gilded juxtaposition of the day, month and date displays, blend seamlessly into the sky and the Milky Way without ever losing their legibility.

The extremely fine opaline silvering of the hours and minutes ring, the soft lines borrowed from the hunter-type case, the graphic design of the numerals, the style of the hands and the starry sky are all cultural references to 18th century fine watchmaking, the age of the great regulators and marine chronometers.

Producing such a Grand Complication model is fraught with perilous technical challenges, as each stage is crucial to the great ordeal of final assembly. Above and beyond technical knowledge and solid experience in the realm of Haute Horlogerie, this exercise requires values surpassing those of an ordinary workbench. According to Denis Flageollet, Master Watchmaker and founder of De Bethune, "My watchmakers are like top-level athletes. To ensure that they don't fail in the final stretch and run the risk of compromising the integrity of the timepiece, they demonstrate extraordinary, imperturbable mental strength, along with extreme concentration and almost motionless posture."

In the manner of a master sculpture or classical music concerto, the DB Kind of Grande Complication is a true composition. It captures the essence of the Maison and conveys through its very presence a universal emotion and energy that stems from the multiple attributes it harbours: the innovative purpose of the "Horlofaber", a legacy of traditional expertise, along with in-depth watchmaking and artistic culture expressed through a powerful contemporary aesthetic. It is the ultimate embodiment of the De Bethune spirit.

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