

LOUIS VUITTON X DE BETHUNE LVDB-03 LOUIS VARIUS PROJECT



When ideas and expertise collide, true magic merges

Louis Vuitton and De Bethune join forces to present the third chapter in Louis Vuitton's ongoing journey through independent watchmaking, the LVDB-03 Louis Varius Project.

Created in close collaboration with Master Watchmaker Denis Flageollet, co-founder of De Bethune, the Louis Varius Project brings together two feats: a rare modern interpretation of the Sympathique, an 18th-century marvel, and a unique version of De Bethune's iconic DB25 GMT Starry Varius.

"In these collaborations, we give the watchmaker the freedom to define their own vision of time—and their own vision of Louis Vuitton. We bring an outside perspective, which allows us to support independent watchmakers, and in turn, they bring their own fresh perspective on Louis Vuitton. It's a dynamic that brings a lot of creativity and new ideas to both sides."
— Jean Arnault

The project marks a new high point in the House's collaboration series—a platform for visionary partnerships and a cornerstone of the Louis Vuitton Watch Prize for Independent Creatives, enabling the establishment of a dedicated mentorship program for the prize winner, fostering the next generation of watchmaking excellence.





Denis Flageollet stands among contemporary horology's most revered and discreet figures. Throughout his illustrious career, he has embraced only a select few collaborations, each one guided by his unwavering commitment to precision chronometry and the advancement of material science.

Opportunities to work alongside him are rare moments that occur only when vision, values, and timing align. It was under these exceptional circumstances that, in 2021, Jean Arnault, Director of Watches at Louis Vuitton, reached out to Denis Flageollet, driven by a deep admiration for his work and a shared fascination with the golden age of French horology.

"The first time I heard about Denis Flageollet I must admit, it left me very perplexed. It's only after visiting De Bethune and seeing the extraordinary rigour and imagination behind every decision – did I begin to understand who he truly is: a modern-day Leonardo da Vinci" – Jean Arnault

"We talked a lot about watchmaking and found common ground in the pieces we appreciate. I realised we spoke the same language and shared a strong sense of responsibility towards the craft, and its preservation." – Denis Flageollet

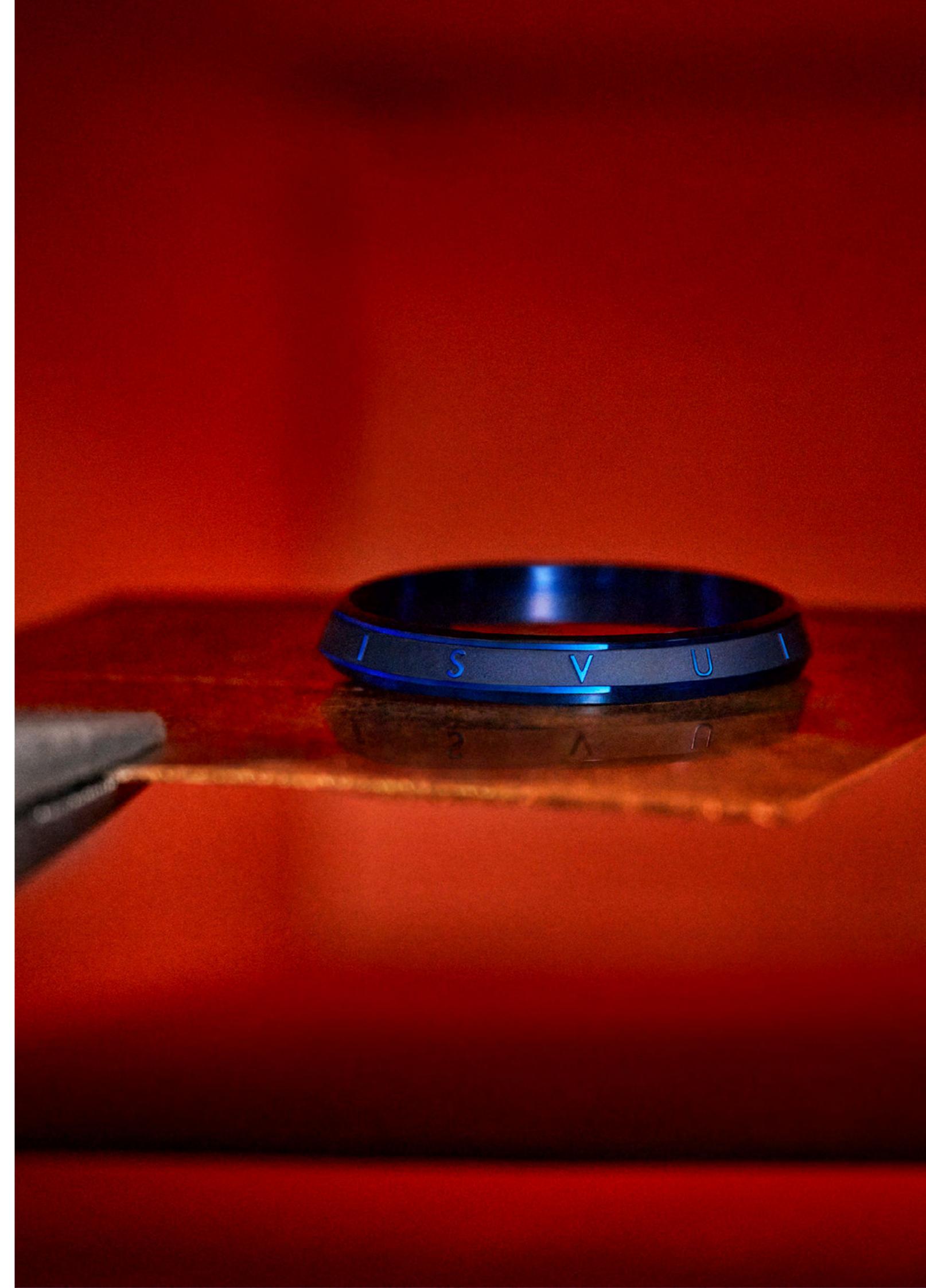
Their conversations drifted naturally to the forefathers of horology, and eventually, to the enigmatic Sympathique mechanism. What began as an exchange of ideas slowly evolved into a quiet ambition: to reimagine one of horology's most audacious creations, but through a contemporary lens.

This "philosophical, technical, and deeply personal" alignment would eventually take shape with an invitation to join the committee of experts of the Louis Vuitton Watch Prize in 2022 and the launch of the secret project code name "Phase 3" with the development over the past five years of the LVDB-03 Louis Varius Project.

The Tambour case dressed in De Bethune Blue

The LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius is housed in Louis Vuitton's signature Tambour Taiko case. Crafted in polished titanium, the case is blued using De Bethune's proprietary thermal oxidation process, achieving a deep, vibrant colour—an emblematic material treatment of the independent manufacture. The surface comes alive with shifting reflections, creating a dynamic interplay of light that underscores the union of Louis Vuitton's distinctive silhouette and De Bethune's technical savoir-faire.

Encircling the dial, the Tambour bezel features the twelve *Louis Vuitton letters*, sandblasted into the surface and polished individually, offering a subtle yet unmistakable signature. This graphic clarity is echoed in the hand-finished crown, which bears Louis Vuitton's iconic Monogram Flower and combines polished, sandblasted, and satin-brushed finishes. Beyond its visual identity, the crown serves as a point of connection with the Sympathique system, reinforcing the watch's functional dialogue with the "Sympathique" clock.





The blued-titanium case is contrasted by platinum lugs, whose brilliance heightens the depth of the blue while emphasising the architectural form of the watch. Each lug is hand-polished, with laser bead-blasted interiors that introduce a discreet textural contrast—an expression of meticulous attention to detail at every angle.

Turning the watch over reveals an open case back, offering an unobstructed view of the DB2507LV calibre. A tasteful nod to the collaboration, "Louis cruises with Denis" is engraved on the movement, alongside the individual limited-edition number, from 01 of 12 to 12 of 12—an intimate signature marking the exclusivity of the project.



The Movement: calibrated to the Art of Travel

At the heart of the wristwatch lies De Bethune's Calibre DB2507LV, a manual-winding movement offering a five-day power reserve. Meticulously crafted and assembled in the De Bethune workshops in Sainte-Croix, the movement combines advanced engineering with traditional savoir-faire. Conceived for travel, the movement displays hours and minutes, a second time zone (GMT), a day/night indication, and a jumping date—functions tailored to the needs of the modern voyager and aligned with Louis Vuitton's enduring Art of Travel. This sophisticated calibre is further enriched by a unique *Sympathique* function, enabling the watch to be automatically rewound and reset if placed within its companion clock.

It is regulated by a blued-titanium balance wheel, manually poised with white-gold inserts and paired with a balance spring featuring a flat terminal curve, ensuring both stability and precision. A silicon escape wheel and De Bethune's proprietary triple pare-chute shock-absorption system further enhance chronometric performance.







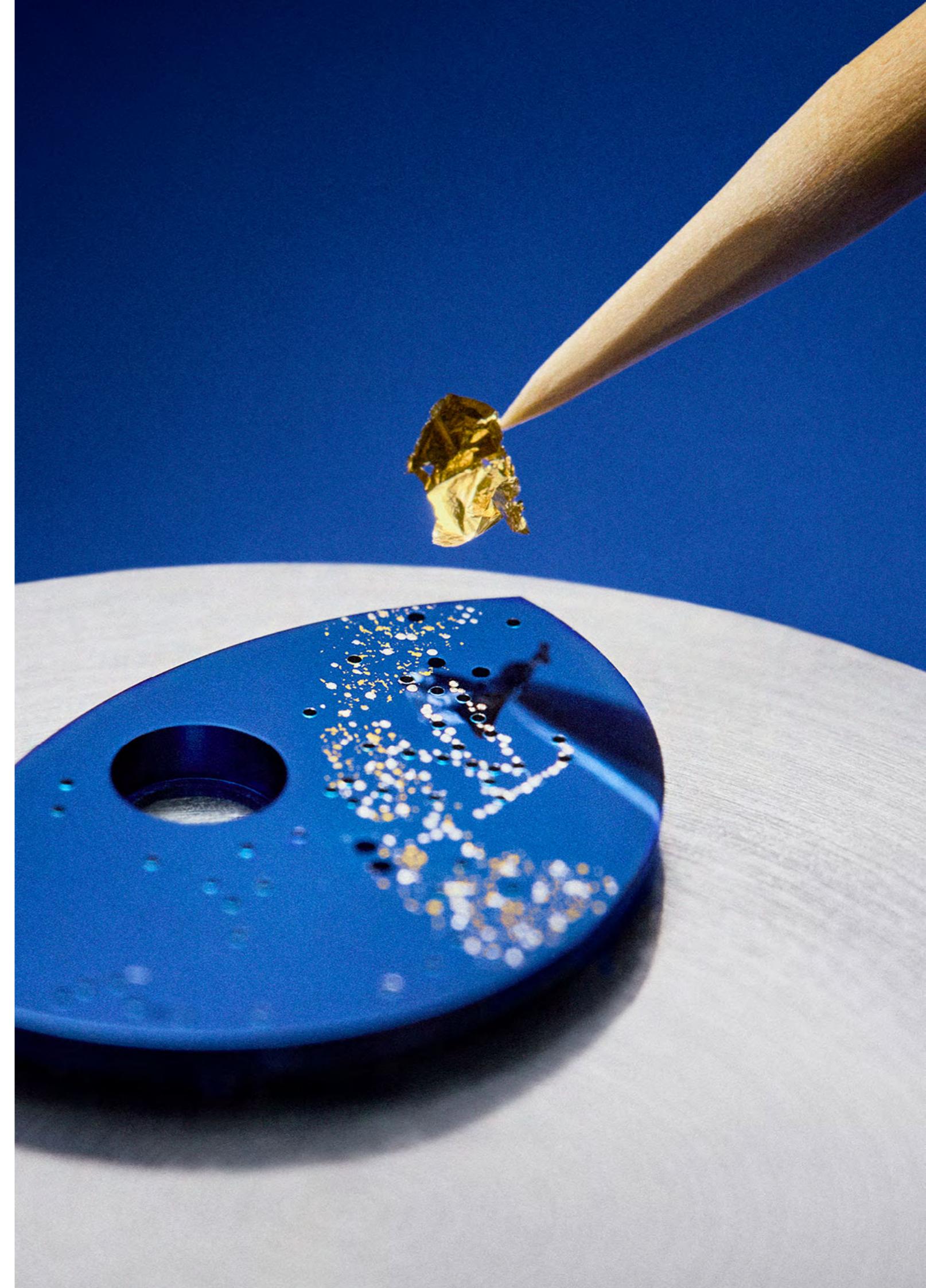
The movement's architecture is elevated by ultra refined hand-finishing throughout. A hand-polished titanium deltoid bridge and a hand-finished, polished balance bridge frame the mechanism, while the surfaces are adorned with Microlight Côtes de Bethune—a contemporary reinvention of traditional Côtes de Genève, distinguished by its nuanced patterns and engraving angles that subtly capture and reflect light at the heart of the calibre.

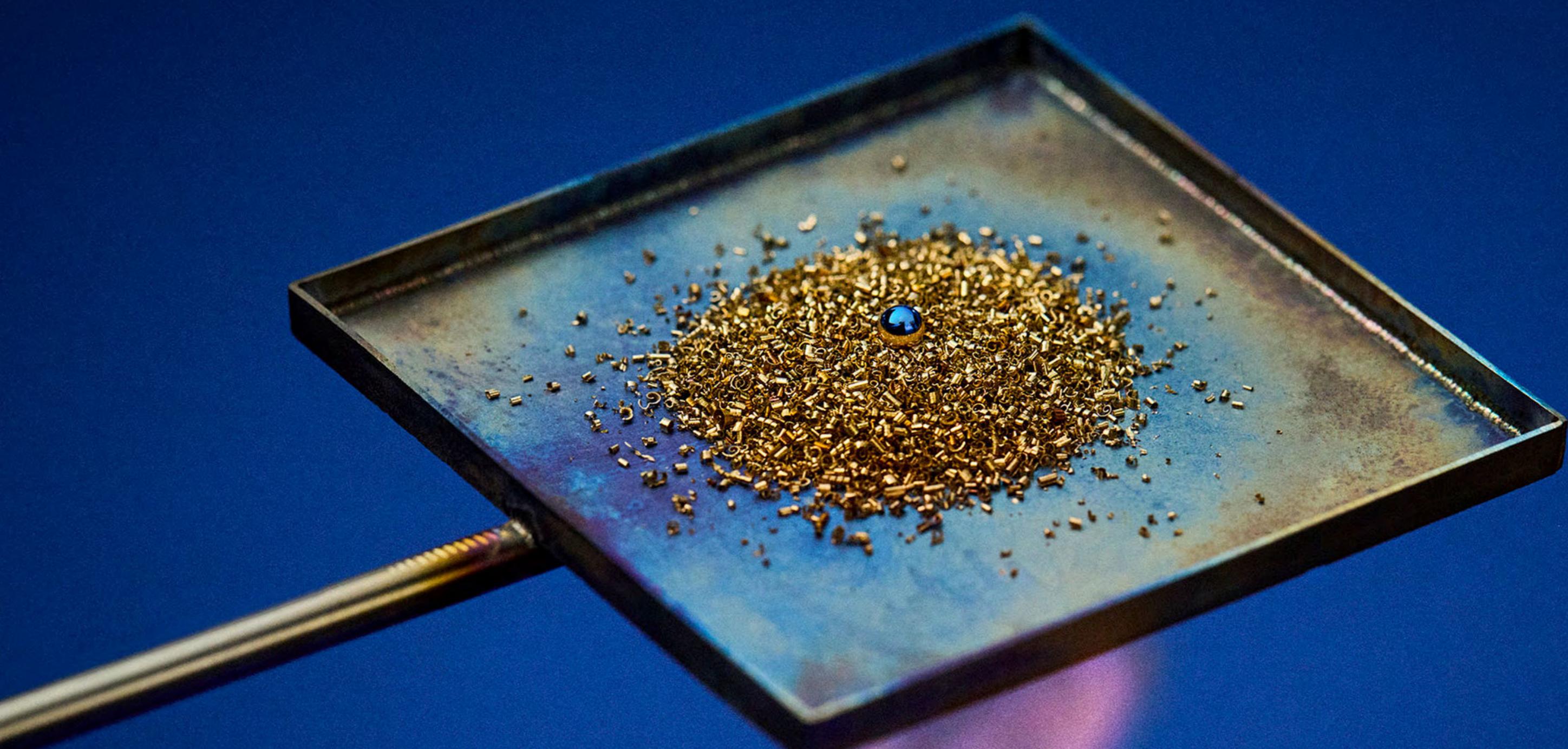
At the conclusion of the manufacturing process, each LVDB-03 GMT Louis Vuitton undergoes its final and most exacting quality control, personally overseen by Master Watchmaker Denis Flageollet.

The Dial: where Cosmos meets Savoir-Faire

The dial reflects a shared vision shaped by exploration, precision, and the infinite. Drawing on Denis Flageollet's enduring dialogue with nature and the cosmos, De Bethune's signature celestial language—its Milky Way motif—is reinterpreted for Louis Vuitton.

At its centre, a unique map of stars discreetly aligns to reveal the letters "LV," integrated into the constellation as a defining signature of the collaboration. The celestial surface is produced using an exclusive artisanal process developed at the De Bethune Manufacture. White-gold pins are individually set by hand into micro-perforations of varying sizes, creating depth and luminosity across the dial. The composition is further enriched by the hand-application of fine gold leaf by a decorative artisan at the De Bethune workshops.

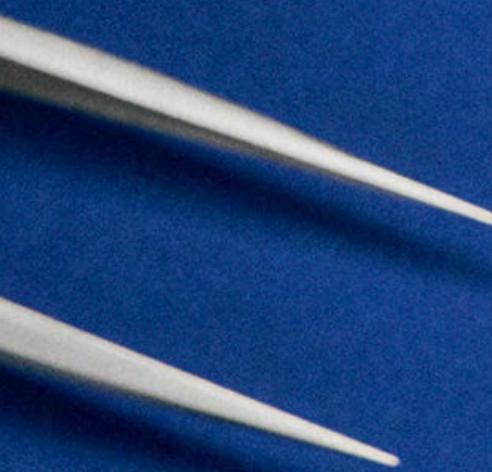






Surrounding the dial, a spherical day-and-night indicator completes two full rotations every 24 hours, offering a continuous and intuitive reading of time across zones. Based on De Bethune's patented spherical moon-phase construction, the indicator is crafted in 5N rose gold (indicating the day) and flame-blued steel (indicating the night), its deep blue hue achieved using a traditional alcohol lamp.

Polished indexes and Tambour-style numerals reinforce Louis Vuitton's design codes, while the opaline dial surface enhances legibility and plays with light in subtle ways. Faceted hands—particularly challenging to execute—echo the deep blue tones of both the dial and the case, completing a composition in which two visions of watchmaking converge, born of the inspired encounter between Denis Flageollet and Matthieu Hegi, Artistic Director of La Fabrique du Temps Louis Vuitton.



The Strap and Buckle: imagined for audacious travelers

The LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius wristwatch is offered with two interchangeable straps, each expressing a distinct facet of the collaboration. A blue fabric strap with grey edging introduces a contemporary, technical character, contrasted by a black leather lining that ensures comfort and durability on the wrist. In parallel, an extra-soft cognac alligator strap—fully lined in alligator leather and finished with tone-on-tone stitching—embodies a more classic expression of refinement, highlighting the artisanal savoir-faire shared by both Houses.

Both straps are secured by a polished blued titanium pin buckle, whose deep hue echoes the case's thermal treatment. The polished titanium tongue is engraved with the double Louis Vuitton / De Bethune signature, a discreet yet powerful emblem of the unique encounter between the two Houses.







**The LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Varius:
a one-of-a-kind reinterpretation of a Watchmaking Icon**

First conceived by Abraham-Louis Breguet in 1795 as a way to automatically synchronise a portable pocket watch with a more precise master clock, the Sympathique is a marvel of horology.

The clock's mechanism enabled owners to wind their pocket watch overnight and retrieve it fully reset in the morning. While only five such clocks were made during Abraham-Louis Breguet's lifetime, the idea was further refined by his own son and has fascinated generations of watchmakers—not heirs in name, but descendants of A.-L. Breguet's vision—ever since.

It's a clock that has long fascinated Denis Flageollet, who—two centuries after A.-L. Breguet—was among the first to successfully revisit the concept. In the early 1990s, he played a pivotal role in creating a modern interpretation for Breguet's eponymous brand, transforming the original pocket watch into a tourbillon wristwatch with a constant-force remontoir for greater precision, while introducing a series of technical refinements without compromising the spirit of its founder.

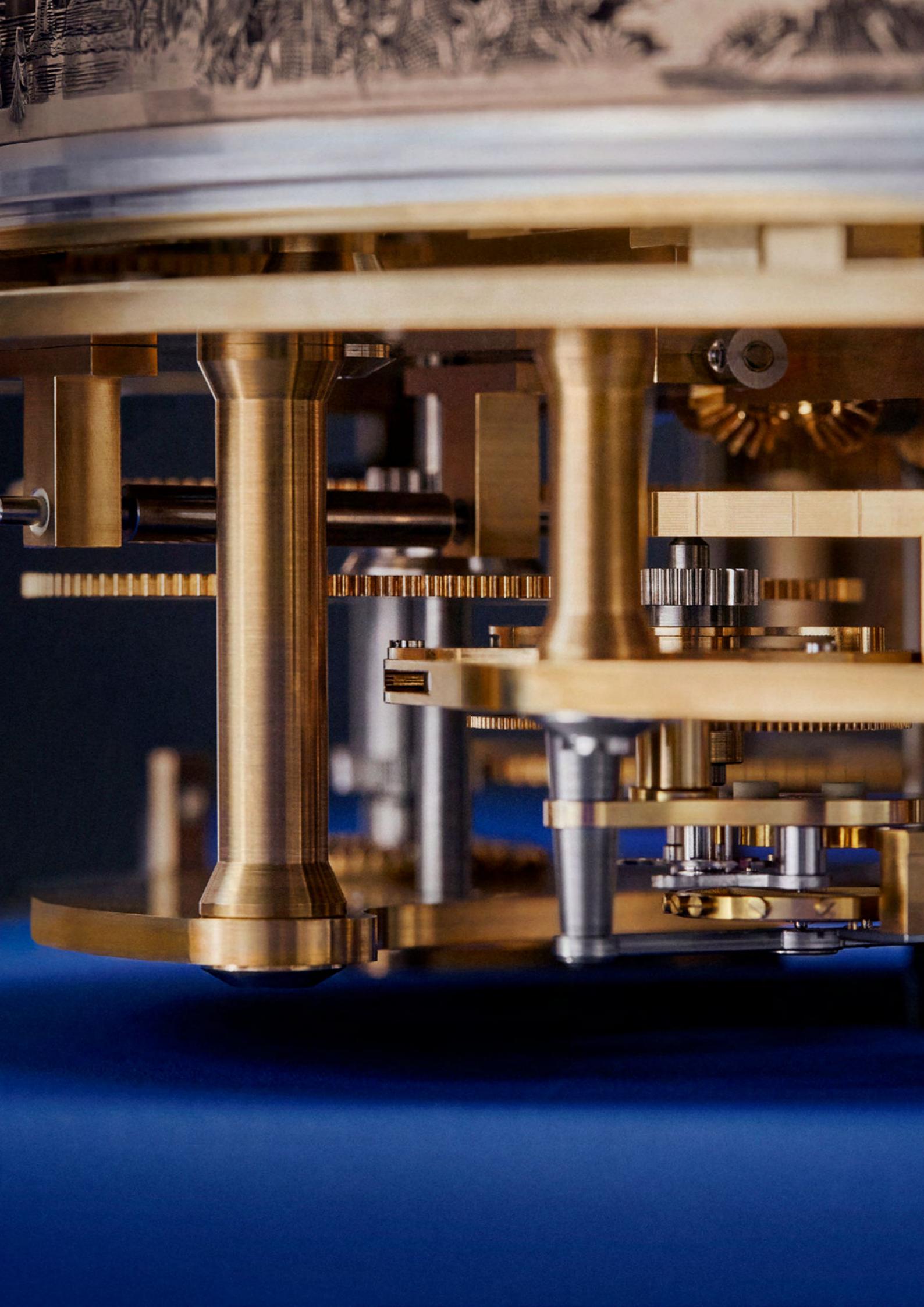
More than thirty years later, Louis Vuitton and De Bethune have embraced the challenge of reimagining this historic clock, approaching it as an exercise in continuity as much as innovation.

"This project is about dialogue—between people, between ideas, between centuries of watchmaking tradition. To revisit the "Sympathique" is to revisit watchmaking's rich history, while writing a new chapter for the future." — Jean Arnault

At the heart of the LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Varius is a key-wound movement manufactured entirely by De Bethune. Comprising 763 components and equipped with two large barrels and a remontoir d'égalité, the in-house calibre delivers outstanding stability and autonomy. Beating at 18,000 vibrations per hour (2.5 Hz), it offers an impressive 11-day power reserve.

The design of the LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Varius draws directly from the iconic codes of Louis Vuitton's Tambour line. The minute track, inspired by the Tambour's signature bezel, replaces the traditional "Louis Vuitton" lettering with twelve-hour indexes, reinforcing the timekeeping function while preserving the model's distinctive identity. Completing the display, two triangular hands emerge from the central "Milky Way" dial to indicate the hours and the minutes.

Anchored to a titanium base that is decorated with a marquetry of blued meteorite, the LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Varius is secured by a tilt lock in its fixed cradle. The clock can be set in multiple orientations, a reference to the adjustable presentation of historical marine chronometers. In its reference position, mirroring a marine chronometer, the clock measures 310 mm in width, 266 mm in depth, and 260 mm in height. When inclined, its maximum height extends to 313 mm, offering versatility in display. While Denis Flageollet has not produced a traditional marine chronometer, the LVDB-03 SYMPATHIQUE LOUIS VARIUS reflects that heritage through its considered architecture and display.







The docking interface—the key to the *Sympathique* function—is discreetly concealed beneath a domed, engraved cover on the upper tier of the clock. Crafted in rose gold, the dome is adorned with the constellation of Hercules, a subtle reference to the astrological sign of Louis Vuitton's founder.

When placed in its cradle, the LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius engages the clock through its crown. Over the course of 10 hours, the system automatically winds the watch and every two hours, a dedicated mechanism housed at the back of the timepiece resets its display to match the master clock, bringing the two into synchrony.

This reinterpretation of the *Sympathique* represents the most advanced mechanical synchronization mechanism. It builds not only on Denis Flageollet's earlier work but on De Bethune's 23 years of innovation across regulating organs and energy transfer systems.

Notably, the LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius can be rewound in as little as one night, when the watch is regularly paired with the clock. Innovations extend to the clock itself: unlike previous *Sympathique* iterations, the LVDB-03 *Sympathique* Louis Varius allows the watch to dock without removing its bracelet or performing any preparatory steps. The user needs only unbuckle the strap and place the watch directly into the receptacle. It is a seamless, intuitive gesture.



**The LVDB03 GMT Louis Varius Wristwatch:
a unique creation, born of shared vision**

The LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius wristwatch is the first *Sympathique* wristwatch designed specifically to journey far from its host. In earlier examples, the portable watch was intended to be worn briefly—either in the pocket or on a wrist—and then returned to the *Sympathique* clock for winding. This model reinterprets that relationship. Thanks to an extended five-day power reserve and travel-oriented complications, the GMT Louis Varius offers greater freedom as a watch designed to remain with the wearer over longer journeys. Created jointly by De Bethune and La Fabrique du Temps Louis Vuitton, the watch combines the expertise of two great manufacturers. Its design builds on De Bethune's DB25 GMT Starry Varius, while incorporating core elements of Louis Vuitton's high-end watchmaking collection.





A Herculean Undertaking

The LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Vuitton represents an engineering feat of rare ambition. Comprising just two complete sets—each consisting of one monumental clock and an accompanying wristwatch—along with ten additional wristwatches sold separately, the production scale is extremely limited. Yet behind each set is an enormous collaborative ecosystem in Saint-Croix—stretching from the “Institut de la Mécanique d’Art” to the De Bethune manufacture.

“From the very beginning, it seemed obvious to me to create a set centred around travel for this project. So, I imagined using our GMT model along with a charming clock inspired by the spirit of the gimbal system used in marine chronometers, which cancels out the motion of the waves during sea voyages.”
— Denis Flageollet

To execute one of the clock’s most poetic components, Denis Flageollet turned to François Schuiten, the acclaimed Belgian illustrator known for his imaginative, speculative worlds. A long-time collaborator of Denis Flageollet, François Schuiten has also worked with Louis Vuitton in the past, notably providing the illustrations for *Mars* by Sylvain Tesson for the House Travel Book collection. A recent exhibition of François Schuiten’s work—an evocative exploration of time—ultimately led to his invitation to join the project.

**A unique vision of the art of travel by Louis Vuitton,
as imagined by François Schuiten**

Drawing inspiration from early 19th-century dioramas, François Schuiten has created three landscapes featuring immersive scenes of exploration—including a steam train barrelling.

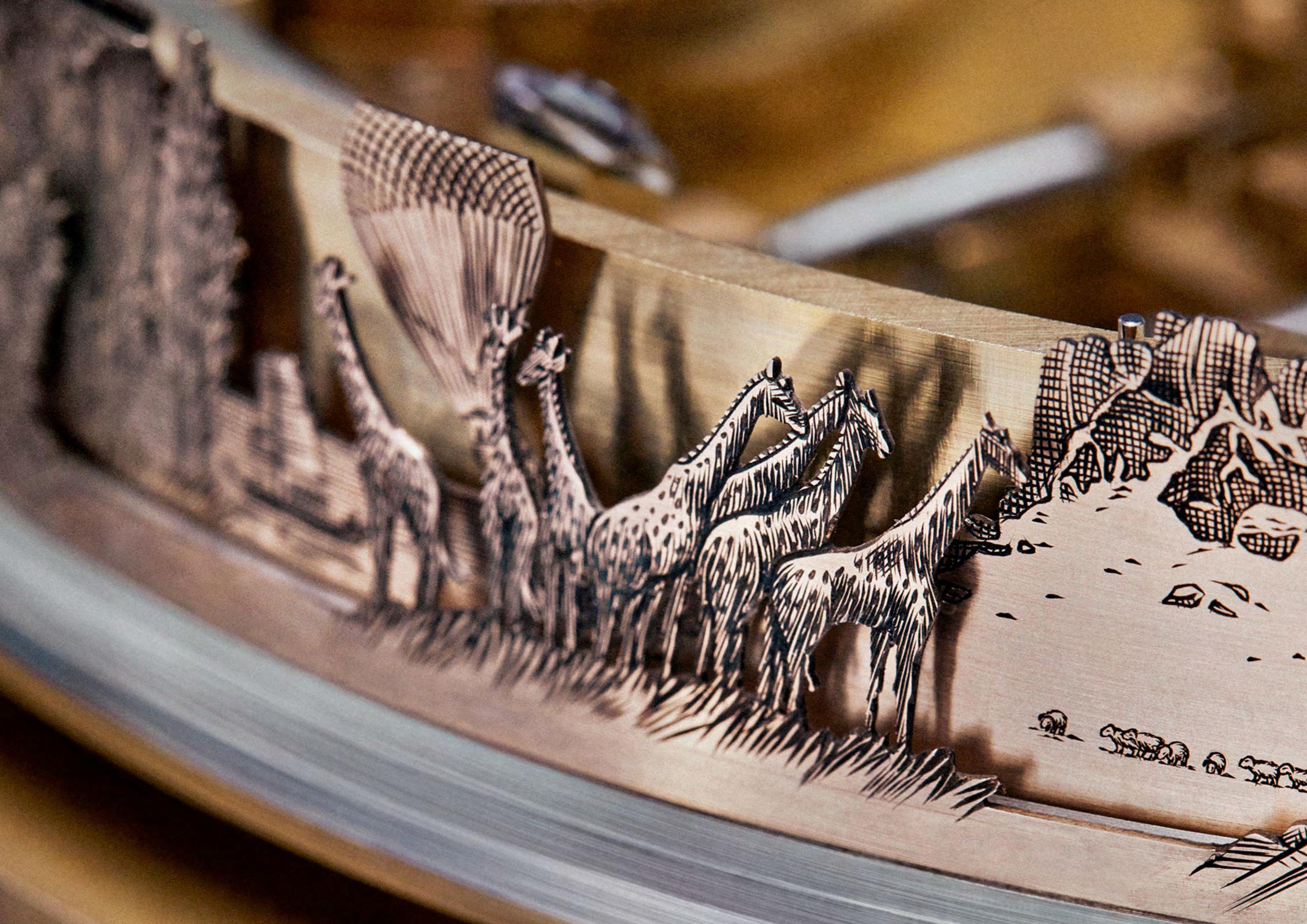
across a viaduct, hot air balloons floating above the African savanna, and sherpas ascending steep mountains. These miniature worlds encircle the mechanism and rotate slowly. The result is a perpetually evolving dreamscape suggesting that time is not linear but circular—cyclical, surreal, and sublime. Each moment of the day tells a unique story.





To fashion these intricate illustrations on three separate 5N rose gold rings, Denis Flageollet enlisted master engraver Michèle Rothen. Her task was monumental: over one meter of hand-engraved surface, with each line pulled from François Schuiten's original pen drawings. Using a traditional burin and chisel, Michèle Rothen sculpted the entire panorama by hand, with results that rival the decorative clocks of the Late Renaissance.

"This project, which embodies the spirit of travel so dear to Louis Vuitton, brings together the horological masterpieces of the Renaissance through its sculpted tambour forms, the precision of line by François, nicknamed the watchmaker of dreams, the exceptional craftsmanship of Michèle, Jean's passion for the scientific research of the Enlightenment, and my love for onboard chronometry." – Denis Flageollet



The trunks: time travels in Louis Vuitton

Two distinct types of exceptional trunks have been meticulously crafted for the LVDB-03 Louis Varius Project. First, a trunk inspired by the emblematic Louis Vuitton Trophy Trunks has been designed and crafted to house the LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Varius clock. This unique titanium trunk represents the apex of rarity, making it among the most exclusive objects ever produced by Louis Vuitton Asnières ateliers.

Second, for the LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius wristwatches, a dedicated titanium High Watchmaking trunk has been crafted in the same standard. These individual watch trunks echo the exceptional materials and savoir-faire of the larger "Trophy Trunk", ensuring consistent craftsmanship across the entire collection. Furthermore, within each of these individual High Watchmaking trunks, a custom leather travel pouch is included, specifically designed for the LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius, offering an additional layer of protection and elegance for the audacious traveller.

Conceived and crafted by the House's master artisans in Asnières, the bespoke Louis Vuitton trunks are custom-built in polished titanium, a material chosen for both its rarity and the technical challenge it presents. Titanium corner protectors heat-blued by De Bethune and developed exclusively for this project, articulate their structures, while palladium lozines—echoed in the lock—punctuate the exteriors with measured restraint.

Inside, the trunks reveal a precisely organised interior in Alcantara® and grey leather, with dedicated compartments for the Sympathique clock or wristwatch, and their respective accessories.

At the intersection of past and future, the LVDB-03 Louis Varius Project redefines one of horology's most ingenious endeavours and delivers an enduring statement on innovation, imagination, and celebrate the Art of Travel.







LVDB-03 GMT Louis Varius
WATI11

Case

- Tambour Taiko-shaped case in blued titanium, lugs and crown in platinum, adjuster in titanium: 53 components
- Hand-polished and blued case, sandblasted blued bezel with polished letters, hollowed lugs with mirror-polished & sandblasted finishes
- Diameter: 45 mm / Thickness: 14.05 mm
- Between lugs: 21 mm
- Water resistance: 3 ATM (30 meters) - the watch is splash-resistant but should not be immersed
- Domed sapphire crystal with colorless anti-reflective coating

Dial

- 12-hour disc (local time)
- Second time zone disc (24-hour format), day/night indication by 18K rose gold and blued steel sphere
- Central dial in blued titanium, Louis Vuitton constellation with 18K white gold pins and golden leaves, sun in 18K rose gold
- Diamond-cut brass blue PVD hour and minute hands, diamond-cut brass blue PVD date hand with silvered arrow

Movement

- Manual-winding mechanical movement (caliber DB2507LV) manufactured by De Bethune with double self-regulating barrel, titanium balance wheel, « De Bethune » balance spring with flat terminal curve, silicon escape wheel, triple shock-absorbing system (De Bethune patents)
- 5-day power reserve
- Functions: hours, minutes, second time zone (GMT), sympathique function, day/night indicator, jumping date
- 404 components, 40 jewels
- Rhodium-plated brass main plate and bridges, polished titanium barrel bridge cover with côtes De Bethune microlight decoration, and polished titanium mainplate cover
- Manufactured wheels in gilded brass or steel
- Diameter: 30 mm / Thickness: 10.35 mm
- Frequency: 28,800 vibrations per hour, titanium balance with 18K white gold inserts

Straps & Buckle

- Two straps:
 - Fabric strap: blue fabric with grey edging on top, black leather lining
 - Exo strap: extra-soft cognac alligator with alligator lining, tone on tone stitching
- Polished and blued titanium buckle, polished titanium tongue with double Louis Vuitton/De Bethune signature

Trunk & Travel case

- High watchmaking Monogram trunk in titanium, corners in blued polished titanium
- Watch case in grey calf leather, medallion in blued polished titanium with white gold pins and gold leaf milky way forming the Louis Vuitton constellation



LVDB-03 Sympathique Louis Varius
Q1TA10

Case

- Titanium case, titanium base with meteorite marquetry. The meteorite is polished and flame-blued
- Adjustable orientation: in its reference position, mirroring a marine chronometer, the clock measures 310 mm in width, 266 mm in depth, and 260 mm in height. When inclined, its maximum height extends to 310 mm, offering versatility in display
- Weight: Approximately 10KG
- The clock is not water resistant

Dial

- Anti-reflective glass
- Multi-part center dial: blued & polished titanium with starry sky decoration in golden leaves
- Hand-polished and curved hands
- Blued titanium Tambour shaped indexes
- 5N gold decoration dome with hand-engraved Hercule constellation by Michèle Rothen

Movement

- Manual-winding mechanical movement (caliber DB5006) manufactured by De Bethune with self-compensating balance spring with lever escapement, double barrel and constant force escapement
- Movement manually wound by a key. Situated between 10 and 11 o'clock, a winding square is developed to receive the key. The winding is counter-clockwise. The time setting is clockwise
- Winding key in titanium
- 763 components, 12 jewels
- 11-day power reserve - 18,000 vibrations per hour (2.5 Hz)
- Functions: hours, minutes, rotating disc animation, "sympathique" function
- « Sympathique » function (winding and setting a mechanical watch): watch resetting system every two hours, ability to reset with a +/- 7 minutes difference from the clock, continuous watch winding system when the watch is placed on the clock, full winding of the watch in approximately 9 to 12 hours
- Constant unidirectional rotation of two gold-engraved discs by Michèle Rothen
- Diameter: 213.8 mm
- Thickness: 88.3 mm

About Louis Vuitton

Since 1854, Louis Vuitton has brought unique designs to the world, combining innovation with style, always aiming for the finest quality and preserving biodiversity.

Today, the House remains faithful to the spirit of its founder, Louis Vuitton, who invented a genuine "Art of Travel" through luggage, bags and accessories which were as creative as they were elegant and practical.

Since then, audacity has shaped the story of Louis Vuitton. Faithful to its heritage, Louis Vuitton has opened its doors to architects, artists and designers across the years, all the while developing disciplines such as ready-to-wear, shoes, accessories, watches, jewellery and fragrance. These carefully created products are testament to Louis Vuitton's commitment to fine craftsmanship.

About De Bethune

Founded in 2002, Manufacture De Bethune is an independent watchmaker that develops and produces everything in house.

Since its founding, De Bethune has developed no less than 30 calibres, presented 30 or so world firsts, filed several 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 instead 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.

Photographers:

Still life visuals: Ulysse Frechelin & Ulysse Camus

Savoir-faire visuals: Piotr Stoklosa & Ulysse Camus

**LOUIS VUITTON
DE BETHUNE**

For further information:

louisvuitton.com