

CHRISTOPHE CLARET

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An exceptional demonstration of the know-how of the Christophe Claret movement manufacturer, the DualTow watch released in 2009 set the crowning touch to twenty years of passion and innovation in the service of the most prestigious brands. Created as an anniversary model – in a range of 68 different and thus unique models – this single-pusher planetary-gear chronograph with striking mechanism and tourbillon was to experience a swift change of destiny. By revealing his watchmaking talents to the public at large, Christophe Claret was unexpectedly propelled to the centre of the watch industry stage. Hailed by collectors and connoisseurs the world over who recognised his distinctive “signature”, this model generated a desire for more, which is the driving force behind any new creations. “Some of them already owned watches equipped with a Claret movement without realising it”, explains the watchmaker. “The DualTow enabled them to discover my work.”

Now firmly in the spotlight and acknowledged as a creator of complete watches and not only watch movements, Christophe Claret simultaneously triggered a phenomenon with which virtuosos are well acquainted but which he had not anticipated: the hope to see him “play it again”. Faced with the eager anticipation expressed by his admirers, the decision to officially establish the Christophe Claret brand was the obvious next step. The DualTow thus switched status from “anniversary creation” to founding model.

Like a builder pursuing a single-minded mission, firmly establishing its name among the ranks of fine watchmaking brands, Christophe Claret is now presenting its second collection, named Adagio. A classic model giving pride of place to watchmaking traditions in terms of both its mechanism and its exterior, this exceptional watch is equipped with Calibre SLB88, naturally created entirely in house and composed of 455 parts. The Adagio features central hour and minute hands, small seconds at 9 o'clock in a window or subdial, depending on the versions; along with a large date at 6 o'clock and a dual time-zone (hours and minutes) display complete with day/night indication in a subdial at 2 o'clock.

In tribute to his Manufacture's first calibre introduced over 20 years ago, Christophe Claret wanted to equip this timepiece with a minute repeater, a particularly intricate fine watchmaking complication that has become one of the great specialities of the Manufacture. Striking the hours, quarters and minutes on demand, the “cathedral gongs” of the striking mechanism are fitted with a patented device preventing them from knocking against each other when they vibrate under the hammer blows. The equally patented large date display features an unprecedented construction. This 34 mm-diameter movement is adorned with finely decorated bridges and endowed with a 48-hour power reserve. The crown is also equipped with a security system: when the mainspring is fully wound, a mechanism disconnects the winding stem so as to avoid any potential damage due to excessive tension.

Such a mechanical gem naturally deserved the perfect stage-setting. Available in three colours – rose gold, white gold or platinum – the 44 mm case is water-resistant to 30 metres. It is fitted with two pushers at 2 and 4 o'clock to adjust the large date and dual time-zone displays, as well as a slide-piece controlling the striking mechanism at 9 o'clock. Meanwhile, the dial comes in a choice of three versions. The first highlights the ancestral art of guilloché-work or engine-turning on gold – white gold in this particular case – elegantly enhanced by the blue hour, minute, seconds, and dual time-zone hands. The second is adorned with gemstones such as black onyx, ruby, jade, opal or lapis lazuli. And finally, the third features a rhodiumed anthracite gold base punctuated by stamped dials, creating a three-dimensional effect. All models are supplied with an alligator leather strap and issued in limited edition of eight per dial and case version.

This newly unveiled timepiece heralds others still to come, and Christophe Claret is promising a major surprise that will be revealed from March 24th to 31st at the brand's P905 booth in the Palace Hall of the Baselworld 2011 World Watch and Jewellery Show.

An historical reminder

Christophe Claret hails from Lyon and studied watchmaking in Geneva before beginning his career by restoring antique watches. At the Basel Show in 1987, the owner of a major Swiss watch company requested that Mr. Claret develop an exclusive minute repeater movement. To meet this order, he founded a company in 1989 along with two other talented watchmakers, Giulio Papi and Dominique Renaud. In 1992, however, Christophe Claret felt the need to be independent and bought up his partners' shares, renaming the company Christophe Claret SA.

The following decade brought growing recognition and a number of high-end customers. In 1999, he acquired an historical manor house named the Soleil d'Or and located on the heights above Le Locle. This marked the start of a new era: within just two years, his client roster grew dramatically and his workforce rocketed from 17 to 62. The Manufacture Christophe Claret soon needed more space and a first 500 sq.m. annex was built in 2002, followed by another of the same size in 2004. Equipped with a large array of state-of-the-art machinery, the company currently employs 90 people and makes almost all its movement components, as well as many exterior watch parts.

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Technical Specifications:

SLB88 MOVEMENT:

Diameter: 34 mm
 Number of parts: 455
 Number of jewels: 46
 Power reserve: approx. 48 hours
 Functions:

The Adagio watch with hour, quarter and minute repeater, large date and GMT indicates:

- Central hours and minutes, seconds at 9 o'clock in a dial or through a window
- The large date at 6 o'clock
- The time in a second time-zone with day/night indication in a subdial at 2 o'clock and strikes on demand (cathedral chime)
- Hours (low-pitched tone)
- Quarter-hours (alternating low- and high-pitched tones)
- Minutes (high-pitched tone)

EXTERIOR:

Case: available in 18K white gold, rose gold or platinum
 Diameter: 44 mm
 Water resistance of the case: 30 m (3 ATM)
 Dial: 3 versions: hand-guilloché; gemstone (lapis lazuli, black onyx, ruby, jade, opal..); or rhodiumed anthracite gold.
 Strap: alligator leather
 Number of watches: limited edition of eight per dial and case version