



CHRISTOPHE CLARET

# Blackjack

## The Bets are Down!

**In 2009, Christophe Claret decided to mark 20 years of service to the most prestigious brands by making his first watch bearing the Christophe Claret brand name, the DualTow. He continued with the Adagio and is now introducing the brand's third model, a fascinating creation. The Blackjack is a real miniature casino with no less than three games: dice, roulette and cards. A luxury toy for those still in touch with their inner child, it opens up a whole new area of expression for Fine Watchmaking that until now has been virtually unknown: playful, interactive watches. It is this world that Christophe Claret and the experienced team in charge of the brand intend to explore, to the great delight of those with a passion for extraordinary watchmaking.**

Never has an emerging brand offered such proof of its expertise! Following the success of the DualTow – the premiere Christophe Claret timepiece introduced for the Anniversary of the Manufacture in 2009 – and the unbelievable reception given to the Adagio – the second model presented in Geneva in January 2011 – , Christophe Claret plays another card with its third creation, the Blackjack. A real miniature casino, it matches grand complications with the world of gaming, in the process creating a new watchmaking paradigm: the interactive watch. The DualTow already offered a fabulous 3D effect; with the Blackjack, Christophe Claret has propelled informed enthusiasts into the fourth dimension! In addition to transparency, relief, and the passage of time, here he adds the sensory effects of blackjack, roulette and dice. An unprecedented upmarket toy for aficionados, expressing a kind of watchmaking that has cast off its inhibitions.

### **Interactive Fine Watchmaking**

The secret of the Christophe Claret brand's knowhow lies in the master watchmaker's extensive experience. For over 20 years, the Christophe Claret company has been designing, developing and producing fine watch movements for the most prestigious brands. Of course, the founder will continue this activity, but now at the head of a company renamed La Manufacture Claret for enhanced clarity. "My vault is full of watchmaking projects that are only waiting to materialise," says the inventor. The Christophe Claret brand itself is gathering an experienced and dynamic team dedicated entirely to its strategy's success: to go where no one has ever ventured before, into the territory of playful and complex Fine Watchmaking.

This first revelation, the Blackjack, is undeniably a winner! Connoisseurs of fine mechanics are thoroughly impressed, and certainly not by vain promises. If they are speechless, it is in the face of Christophe Claret's acknowledged inventiveness in offering them no less than three casino games. To start there is Dice. This game features a pair of miniature dice, 1.5 mm on each side – and incidentally, perfectly legible – which are located in a cage at the 4 o'clock position on the side of the case and, visible through a sapphire crystal, offering the oldest game of chance. When shaken in their tiny capsule, the dice can be used by one or more players, for a game of craps, for example.

### **“No more bets!”**

Next, roulette: on the back of the watch the winding rotor, which is visible through a glareproofed sapphire crystal, serves as the roulette wheel. Once set in motion by one or two undulatory movements, the wheel turns for a few moments before stopping. “Place your bets! The bets are down! No more bets!” Here there is no ball, however, but an arrow inlaid into the winding rotor that stops at one of the 37 numbers (from 0 to 36) applied to an internal flange. “Eight, black, even and low!” Your lucky number? If it were, a special key would have been used to place it opposite a green emerald set into the back – a rather extraordinary custom feature for those who believe in their lucky number. Superstition has its reasons that Reason cannot know...

But these games are only a playful warm-up for the king of all card games, Blackjack. Blackjack appeared in France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century under the name of “21,” and consists of drawing cards to equal or to come as close as possible to 21 points. If the player goes over 21, he “busts” (loses). Across the table, the dealer follows the same rules. The winner takes the stakes. Introduced later in the United States, “21” did not initially see much success there. To make the game more attractive, bonuses were invented. For example, the black jack paid 10 to 1! Today, the bonus has disappeared, but the name remains.

The dealer deals one card face up to the player; then draws a card, face up; then deals a second card face up to the player. The player then decides to either ask for a third card (“hit”) or stop (“stand”). He can ask for as many cards as he likes before stopping, but of course he risks going over 21. Once the player's cards have been dealt, the dealer plays, using one simple codified rule: “Dealer must draw on 16 and stand on 17.” Of course, the dealer also runs the risk of going over 21.

### **A casino watch**

Until now, no one has ever had the idea and the ability to adapt this complex Blackjack card game to an automaton watch. On the lower part of the dial, between 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock, the player's four cards appear in windows. Two are visible, the other two hidden by shutters. On the upper part of the dial are three additional windows for the dealer's cards, one of which is visible, the other two also hidden by shutters.

Playing could not be easier! A pushpiece at 9 o'clock arms a spring that triggers, all at once, the seven discs on which the cards are printed. Made of solid gold to impart the ideal weight and inertia, these discs each rest on a double set of ceramic ball bearings. After a few seconds, they are randomly stopped by a jumper-spring. The extremely delicate symbols and numbers on each card are made with successive transfers, requiring that they be fired in a dedicated oven once for each colour.

### **A bell rings with each hit**

At this stage of the game, three cards are face up: two of the player's cards and one of the dealer's. The next step is delightful. If the player is going to hit, he presses the pushpiece at 8 o'clock, engraved with the word "player." One of the shutters then opens, revealing his card, and at the same time, in a supremely refined touch, a bell rings to indicate "hit." Each time a shutter opens, whether for the player or the dealer, the note will sound. The striking mechanism's hammer and bell are visible through a side window at 2 o'clock.

When the player's turn is over, the dealer can take a turn, always following the strict rule "Dealer must draw on 16 and stand on 17" – a rule which is even written out on a small plaque affixed to the dial in one version of the Blackjack! The dealer operates the pushpiece marked "dealer" at 10 o'clock to open one of the two shutters. Now all that remains is to count up the points and determine the winner. The dealer has some 216 different card combinations; the player no less than 4096; for a total of 884,736 ways to win or lose.

Such a complex automaton watch was bound to house an exceptional movement. This Manufacture Calibre BLJ08 is a self-winding COSC chronometer-certified movement comprising 501 parts and two barrels ensuring a power reserve of about 72 hours. In addition to the casino games and chime, it displays hours and minutes. To ensure extreme accuracy, it operates at a frequency of 4 hertz, or 28,800 vibrations per hour.

### **A promising future**

The titanium or titanium/gold crown, which is at 3 o'clock between the two side windows, is topped with a ceramic or ruby cabochon engraved with Christophe Claret's new logo. The dial is in black onyx or titanium and grey sapphire, depending on the version, with a plaque decorated in casino-themed motifs (card games, Las Vegas or Joker) serving as a setting for the black PVD/ruby or gold/ceramic hands. The black alligator strap is attached by a two-screw system developed by Christophe Claret's teams, which avoids damage to the case during handling. The case is watertight to 3 atmospheres of pressure (30-metre depth), and is also available in several versions: white gold and grade 5 black PVD titanium; pink gold and grade 5 black PVD titanium; platinum and grade 5 black PVD titanium; grade 5 black PVD titanium, or grade 5 grey titanium. Each version will be limited to a maximum of 21 pieces.

Reserved for a clientele of sophisticated enthusiasts and collectors, the Blackjack heralds a promising future. Building on its independence, the watchmaking developer intends to surprise us again by offering other four-dimensional watches in the future. Far from being anecdotal, this concept opens up a whole new world of expression that so far is practically unexplored. In this world, Fine Watchmaking will not be content to be passively admired; rather, it will offer as-yet unknown sensations and emotions that will be actively evoked by playful and exceptional mechanics. Christophe Claret watches promise to be real “toys for boys”!

### **About Christophe Claret**

A native of the Lyons area of France, Christophe Claret studied watchmaking in Geneva before beginning a career as an antique watch restorer. At the 1987 Basel show, the owner of a large Swiss watchmaking company asked him to develop an exclusive movement for a minute repeater. To fulfil this order, in 1989 Christophe Claret founded a company with two other talented watchmakers, Giulio Papi and Dominique Renaud. In 1991, driven by his need for independence, he bought out his associates' shares and founded the company that bears his name, in La Chaux-de-Fonds. He spent the next decade gaining recognition and developing a high-end clientele.

In 1999, motivated by his excellent reputation, he acquired an old manor house perched on the heights of Le Locle. It was the beginning of a new era: in just years, the number of clients exploded and his staff grew from 17 employees to 62. Short on space, Christophe Claret completed the Manufacture's first addition of 500 m<sup>2</sup> built in 2002, a space which he doubled again in 2008. Equipped with a substantial state-of-the-art equipment base, his Manufacture now produces virtually all of the components in his movements in addition to all of the case elements. In 2009, the 20th anniversary of his company, Christophe Claret introduced the DualTow, an extraordinary mechanical showcase of his skill. This first complete watch led to a second, the Adagio, and now a third – the Blackjack.

# Technical Specifications

## **Movement**

Mechanical self-winding movement, Calibre BLJ08, twin barrel, 501 components, 40 jewels and 7 double sets of ceramic ball bearings, frequency 28,800 v/h (4 Hz), power reserve of about 72 hours

## **Functions**

Hour, minute, three games: blackjack with bell, roulette and dice

## **Case**

White gold and grade 5 black PVD titanium; pink gold and grade 5 black PVD titanium; platinum and grade 5 black PVD titanium; grade 5 black PVD titanium, or grade 5 grey titanium. Diameter: 45 mm

Two side windows, one revealing the striking mechanism hammer and bell, the other a pair of dice

Titanium or titanium/gold crowns

Watertight to 3 atm

## **Dial**

Titanium and grey sapphire with a plaque decorated with casino-related motifs (card games, Las Vegas or Joker), or black onyx

Black PVD/ruby or gold/ceramic hands

Front:

- three “dealer” windows, two of which are activated by a button pushpiece at 10 o’clock with bell
- four “player” windows, three of which are activated by a button pushpiece at 8 o’clock with bell

Back: 3D roulette wheel that rotates as the watch rotor moves

## **Strap**

Black alligator with a two-screw attachment system that avoids damaging the case

## **Limited Edition**

Each version will be limited to a maximum of 21 pieces

## **Suggested retail price in Swiss Francs**

CHF. 178,000 to CHF. 210,000 (Swiss francs) depending on version and case material