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CHRISTOPHE CLARET

BY ELIZABETH DOERR



Christophe Claret



CHRISTOPHE CLARET

By the time this French watchmaker had founded Christophe Claret SA in Switzerland in 1989, he had already established himself as a behind-the-scenes maker of quality repeaters.

It was only with the advent of the spectacular Dual Tow chronograph, though, that Claret branded a timepiece with his own name, in essence stepping out from behind the horological scenes to go from supplier to recognized watchmaker. The Dual Tow, by the way, chimes when the chronograph pusher is activated.

The first caliber that Claret made back in 1989 was a repeating movement. And under the umbrella of his own eponymous brand, he has also created the Adagio and the Soprano. Both, of course, outfitted with repeating movements.

The new Allegro timepiece follows in this tradition, inspired by the movements that have come before it, but forging its own path thanks to a very technical movement comprising 520 individual components that pleases the eye as much as the ear.

Clear cathedral chimes

The clear chime of the cathedral gongs, which fully encircle the movement twice, is activated thanks to a traditional slide on the side of the case. Pulling this down winds the repeater mechanism, setting components into motion; in fact, the rack is fully visible through a cutaway in the lower portion of the dial. Other related components are visible through the transparent caseback; these include the hammers and the inertia governor. The hammers, of course, hit the gong to make the chime, while the inertia flywheel governor prevents extraneous noise created by the motion of the components.

The cathedral gong is a special type of component that Claret uses with regularity; to say that Claret is a quintessential maker of this type of gong would be to express that mildly. Claret puts a great deal of emphasis on the components' manufacture, too, which necessitates not only using traditional drawn steel, but also minute



Allegro is Christophe Claret's newest minute repeater.



care in assembly and tuning. Additionally, the tone the gongs end up making is also at least partially aided by a patented Claret invention, which minimizes excessive vibration and allows for the clear, crystalline quality of the chimes.

Very unusually, the Allegro is powered by one single mainspring barrel. Generally, a repeating movement utilizes one spring barrel to power the movement's functions (this is found in every movement) and one extra spring barrel to power the chiming function, which needs a lot of energy. The Allegro saves space by using just one barrel yet still has enough power left over to provide sixty hours of power to the manually wound Caliber ALG89.

The gongs are only one of three patented elements in the Allegro's caliber. The other two are constituted by the large date and the micro regulation of the balance using countersunk screws—the latter chosen thanks to its nearly perfect inertia/weight ratio. The balance, balance spring and pallet lever have, by the way, all been manufactured within Claret's own facility. Claret's manufacture is so complete, in fact, that it manufactures close to all the components needed in this aesthetic movement, which is characterized by skeletonized, Charles X-style, stepped bridges.

Complicated, yet beautiful

The timepieces Claret groups under the collection title Traditional Complications are very obviously rooted in traditional watchmaking and contain clear, easy-to-read functions. Aside from the minute repeater and actual time function, the Allegro is outfitted with a large date and a second time zone with day/night indication.

It is housed in a 45mm x 14.11mm case available in three different case metals, all of which are limited to just twenty pieces each: white gold and PVD-coated titanium case with smoky sapphire crystal; red gold and anthracite PVD-coated titanium case with slate-gray metalized sapphire crystal and hands in orange sapphire crystal and titanium; and a slight variation of the latter that involves a bit more SuperLuminova on the hands.



The Aventicum