

REVOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE MACHINE WITH A HEARTBEAT



236

STEPHANIE SEYMOUR
*and the Roger Dubuis
Velvet Haute Couture*

294

THE ROLEX 'PAUL NEWMAN'
*DAYTONA How to identify and
authenticate this grail of grails*

SGD15.00 RM25.00



PPS 1609/06/2013 (025530) MCI (P) 163/12/2013

JAEGER-LECOULTRE

THE NEW DUOMÈTRE SPHÉROTOURBILLON MOON REACHES FOR UNEXPLORED FRONTIERS IN LUNAR HOROLOGY



56

**WHAT
MAKES
US TICK**

**56 DRESS YOUR WRIST:
TIME ON YOUR
HANDS & MONEY ON
YOUR MIND**

Play your cards right and these watches will see you through the high-stakes life

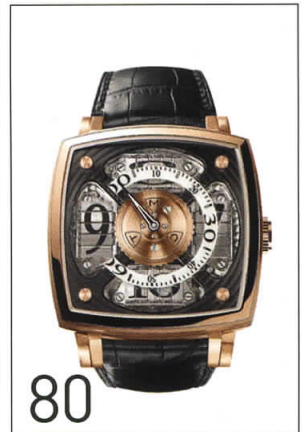
72 BOTTOM TIME

The Omega Seamaster 300 Master Co-Axial plunges into the icy depths of Lake Superior

76 PROMISCUOUS WRIST
The Christophe Claret Maestoso

80 PROMISCUOUS WRIST
The Manufacture Contemporaine du Temps Sequential One

82 TREASURE TROVE
Perusing legendary watch collector Mr. Claude Sfeir's vintage collection with Watch Anish



PROMISCUOUS WRIST NOW VOYAGER: THE CHRISTOPHE CLARET MAESTOSO

by **jack forster**



There is perhaps no more important development in the history of portable timekeeping than the development of the marine chronometer, that device without which reliable navigation at sea would be but a pleasant fantasy. Of course, prior to the evolution of reliable marine timekeepers, many sailors went to an untimely grave, thanks to unavoidable errors in determining a ship's position accurately. Marine chronometers have, therefore, a certain *gravitas* that makes them an appealing potential point of reference for wristwatches, but the technical ability to implement a watch that has more in common with a marine chronometer than mere aesthetics is another matter.

One of the few manufacturers with that

ability is Christophe Claret, and his 2014 Maestoso is not only singularly effective in evoking the bygone Age of Navigation in its aesthetics, but also in its construction — which, let's face it, if you're going to do an homage to the marine chronometer, is the way to do it. Marine chronometers, insofar as they were intended to keep a very exact rate over long periods of time, generally had long power reserves and were often fitted with constant-force mechanisms of one sort or another (*fusées* or a *remontoir d'égalité*), as a way of maintaining constant balance amplitude. Cylindrical balance springs were often a feature for marine chronometers as well, as these were thought to measurably improve isochronism.

The word “chronometer” today means a watch that has been certified by an independent examining agency (i.e. the COSC) to run within certain defined specifications. However, the term originally referred to the chronometer escapement, or detent escapement. The chief distinguishing feature of the chronometer escapement is its use of a detent, or catch, to alternately hold or release the escape wheel, which drives the balance directly. The advantages of such an escapement are many — direct impulse from the escape wheel is more efficient as no energy is lost through a lever, and no oil is required, which gives greater long-term rate stability — but the escapement is more delicate, and without safety features, cannot be used in a wristwatch.

The Maestoso has an architectural appeal that stems from the way it references the traditional stepped-cock construction of marine chronometers.



Christophe Claret's Maestoso is a wonderfully technically complete marine chronometer homage made for the wrist — a rather miraculous achievement given that the case is only 44mm in diameter; large-ish for a wristwatch, but there are certainly watches just as big or bigger that are vastly technically inferior. The Maestoso includes a detent escapement, has a remontoire d'égalité to provide unvarying torque to the balance, and also has a very long power reserve (80 hours minimum). It has also been technically adapted for wear on the wrist, thanks to an anti-shock mounting for the detent (in addition, of course, to the anti-shock assembly for the balance wheel). Aesthetically, it references the traditional stepped-cock construction of marine chronometers as well (Claret refers to these as "Charles X style stepped bridges" — perhaps the term "cock" is a little risqué?), and they give the watch an architectural appeal that is very compelling on the wrist.

So, after all that, what is it like to wear? It's extremely comfortable, first of all. The

placement and curvature of the lugs do much to ease the burden of wearing such a large watch (in this case, the size is actually part of the appeal anyhow; one would struggle to find an extra-flat marine chronometer seductive), and it has a hypnotic charm that grows on one very much. I wore the watch on a weeklong trip overseas and during some fairly vigorous walking, and it kept excellent time. The additional safety features built into it seem to do much to give it the ability to shrug off shocks that the detent escapement so badly needs in a wristwatch. I certainly wouldn't suggest you wear it free climbing or mountain biking, but it's more than capable of coping with anything it would encounter in daily use. There are only two small quibbles I have with the design: a central seconds hand would have done much to enhance the sense of precision timing Claret has worked so hard to evoke (although the architecture of the movement may militate against this), and I found myself wishing for a power-reserve indicator (again, typically a feature of marine chronometers, although the mainspring is

clearly visible through the watch crystal, and gives quite a clear idea of the state of wind of the watch).

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the watch, however, isn't visible — it's auditory. If you've never worn a watch with a detent escapement — which it's pretty likely you haven't — you are in for a small but keen treat the first time you hold the watch to your ear and hear, instead of the ticking of a lever escapement, the stately clack-clack of the detent escapement. It's what pushes the Maestoso over the edge from a merely (if one can use the word) technically sophisticated homage into a multidimensional experience that evokes very richly, a bygone era in timekeeping.

One doesn't necessarily think of romance in the context of precision timing, but to listen to the Maestoso is to be transported back in time to an era when precision timekeeping represented one of the highest evolutions of human ingenuity — and when it was making it possible, for the first time, for man to cross the world without fear. ★