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First Pilot's Watch with Propeller Crown: DuBois et fils offers unique Feature

The DBF009 pilot's watch is operated by a propeller - and uses a historic movement from 1948

For centuries, a watch - whether pocket watch or wristwatch - has been wound and set with a crown. Switzerland's oldest watch manufacturer, DuBois et fils, is now breaking with this tradition. With the DBF009, the manufacture with its own workshop is presenting its first pilot's watch in which the crown is a fully-fledged, rotating propeller with two blades. This means that the watch, which also has an automatic winding mechanism, can be wound by hand and the time can be set. After use, the propeller snaps into its resting position and visually merges with the crown guard on the case. "Pilot's watches have been a traditional product in the watch industry for more than 100 years - but never before has a manufacturer dared to use the crown to create an iconic symbol of aviation," says Thomas Steinemann, CEO of DuBois et fils. However, the technical implementation was not easy: due to the significantly higher forces that can be applied to the crown and winding stem, a completely new case had to be designed to give the crown a stable guide.

From the sketch to the clock

The idea began with a drawing by Stephan Messmer, a watch designer with 25 years of experience. He has already designed watches for Eterna, Carl F. Bucherer, Omega and Rado and was also responsible for the design of the last three DuBois et fils collections. For the pilot's watch, he designed a crown guard in the shape of a propeller. "When Thomas Steinemann saw it, it was clear: the propeller must be able to turn," smiles Stephan Messmer. The realization took longer than originally thought - but in the end the propeller became reality. The movement used in the DBF009 is a Felsa caliber - a stock item from 1948 that has survived unused in new condition to this day. "The movement is robust, yet precise and boasts a sophisticated design. It fits perfectly with what a pilot's watch should be: Accuracy, three hands for perfect readability and the necessary stability, even when things get a little more robust," is how watchmaker Thomas Gronenthal sums up the Felsa 692.

Eight variants with 22 watches each

The movement, which was launched in 1942, is a rare treasure today. No wonder, then, that this watch will certainly not be a mass-produced item: There will be exactly eight dial and case variants, each with a production run of 22 watches. The movement is also considered to be the original Bidynator: the first movement with an oscillating weight winds the mainspring in both directions. It was produced until the 1950s and is still regarded today as a pioneering movement in Swiss and international watchmaking. Thanks to an extensive stock of historical movements and

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spare parts, DuBois et fils can also ensure the longevity of these movements - the spare parts stock lasts for several generations. "We have created a talking piece here - a watch that quickly gets people talking. And the best confirmation of our idea is the enthusiastic reactions of our customers when they turn the propeller for the first time," says DuBois et fils CEO Steinemann. In fact, some watches have already been sold - even though delivery will not begin until March 2025.

Philippe DuBois & Fils SA (www.duboisfils.ch) is the oldest watch factory in Switzerland and a manufacturer of strictly limited small series. The factory has existed without interruption since 1785, and the company was given a new boost by the world's first and successful crowdfunding project in the watch industry. Since then, over 1,000 watch enthusiasts have invested in DuBois et fils. The timepieces from DuBois et fils are produced in limited editions of between 11 and 99 watches and are powered exclusively by historical movements from the stocks of top manufacturers such as Adolf Schild, Felsa, Record and many more. Only one watch brand owns such a treasure and makes the movements transparently available in small quantities via digital tokens. In this way, watch enthusiasts can also participate in the further development of Switzerland's oldest watch factory.

Further information: Philippe DuBois & Fils SA, Hirzbodenweg 95, CH-4052 Basel / Grande Rue 22, CH-2400 Le Locle, Tel. +41 (0)61 266 1785 7 E-Mail: info@duboisfils.ch